

Pre-Confederation

Part II: Canada: 1860 - 1890

Factors leading to Confederation:

1. War and fear of American expansion into British North America:

- The US were fighting a civil war between the northern and southern states (big issue: should they split, mainly over states' rights and slavery)
- Eventually the northern states won
- British sympathies were with the southern states and the colonies were worried that the US would attack at the wars conclusion
- In 1866, the US bought Alaska which made B.C. vulnerable to attack
- Fear of an American takeover was one factor drawing the colonies together

2. Fenian Raids

- British NA colonies were raided by Irish American troops after the civil war.
- Fenians moved to America from Ireland to escape British rule were determined to free Ireland by capturing Canada and exchanging it for Ireland's freedom
- Results:
 - i. John A. MacDonalld turned the raids into a reason for union of the colonies
 - ii. Growing resentment against the US government (US papers encouraged the Fenians)

3. Trouble with trade

- Before 1846 colonies had trading agreement with Britain which favoured Canadian products
- 1846 free trade was introduced and any country could import goods tax free into Great Britain
- The colonies could no longer guarantee trade at favourable rates with Britain
- In 1854 the reciprocity treaty was signed with the US allowing certain goods enter without tax (tariffs).
- In 1865 the US felt they were losing money and were still mad at Britain and cancelled the treaty
- There were taxes between the colonies and if they were eliminated, trading would be cheaper and easier

4. Need for rail links

- Easier for trade and defence if there was a railway
- In 1850 there was only 106km of railway
- 1850-67 3570 km of tracks was added from the Grand Trunk railway linking Canada West to Halifax in Nova Scotia
- Costs for railway construction were high and some Maritime colonies were on the verge of bankruptcy.
- If the colonies united, the costs could be shared

5. Changing British attitudes

- Small group of Britain's (little Englanders) thought colonies were a burden to the British government because their defence was costly
- British agreed and felt it was time for the colonies to become somewhat independent and pay their own way

Charlottetown Conference

- In August, 1864 Politicians from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island met in Charlottetown to discuss a union of the maritime colonies.
- They were hoping for this for several years.
- In addition, they received a request from Politicians in Canada asking if they could join the discussions too - the Canadians wanted to talk about an even wider union.
- **Why?** Stalemate and political deadlock in the Province of Canada.
- Equal seats for both East and West Canada.
- Done to give advantage to Canada West which had a smaller population in 1841.
- By 1860, Canada West had a larger population and wanted Rep by pop.
- But Canada East would not agree to change.
- No one political party was able to form a majority in the legislature.

Result of the conference?

- They set aside an idea of a Maritime union and agreed to meet with Canadians for further discussions

Quebec Conference

- In October 1864, 7 delegates from NB, 7 from PEI, 5 from NS and 12 from Canada East/West met in **Quebec City**.
- The fathers of Confederation agreed that the union must be a strong one and must not be broken by any one province.
- The central government must be more powerful in every way than the government of the provinces.
- The delegates drew up the *Seventy-Two Resolutions* - these resolutions provided a plan for the new partnership of the colonies and had to be accepted by the government of each colony.

Other Concerns

- ✓ Where would the money come from?
- ✓ What powers would the PM have?
- ✓ Would there be 2 houses of parliament or would it be like the old system?
- ✓ Would there be an elected House of Commons to make laws?
- ✓ Would other colonies (ie: BC) be allowed to enter later?

Reactions to the Confederation Proposal in the Colonies

1. Rejection in PEI:

- Size: PEI feared it would be swamped in the union
- They would only have 5 members in the House of Commons out of 194

2. See- Saw debate in NB:

- Anti-Confederationists said they would not sell Canada for \$080 a person
- Premier Tilly supported confederation
- First election-anti confederation party won (confederation party lost)
- NB was a major component for confederation to occur, it couldn't happen without them
- Tilley travelled NB trying to convince people it was necessary
- US had ended reciprocity with Britain
- Letter from Britain encouraging confederation
- Fenians attack in NB frightened many citizens to support Tilley
- Second election confederation party won

3. Success in Canada West (Ontario):

- Powerful Nation would emerge (great leaders; uniting would make the nation more powerful with Ontario playing a pivotal role)
- Better trade would result (Barriers would be removed between colonies)
- A strong new country would encourage immigration
- Businesses would be in a better position to compete and trade with the US)
- Colonies stand strong together (better defence)

4. Debate in Canada East (Quebec):

- French would become a less influential as an even smaller minority in an English speaking country.
- Cartier convinced French to support Confederation (they would not lose language rights, their religion or control of their education schools)
- 26 of 48 voted to accept confederation

5. Division in NS:

- Premier Charles Tupper wanted union
- Joseph Howe led the anti-confederation forces but could not convince most Nova Scotians they were being sold down the river for \$0.40 a person
- Very little support
- Fear of Fenian raids in NB

6. Rejection in NF:

- Flatly rejected
- CF. Bennett led fight against confederation
- Warned the new government would tax their fishing gear, etc.....

The Essential Elements of the London Conference, 1866

- As a result of the British North American colonies still belonging to Britain, the union could not become official until the British Parliament approved it.
- So sixteen delegates met with members of the British parliament to discuss the matter.
- In the spring of 1867, the **British North America Act**, called the **BNA Act** was introduced in the British parliament.
- The **Dominion of Canada** was created by the BNA Act.
- It united 4 provinces: **New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the two Canada's, renamed Ontario and Quebec.**

- The Act was based on the *Seventy-Two Resolutions* worked out at the Quebec conference.
- Queen Victoria signed the Act and **July 1, 1867** was proclaimed the day Canada would become a self-governing country.

The Role of the Governor General at the Time of Confederation

- Because there was no talk of separation from Britain, the Governor General would be the Queen's representative in Canada.
- All legislation passed by the House of Commons and the Senate needed the approval of the Governor General.

The structures of the House of Commons in comparison to the structure of the Senate are as follows:

- The House of Commons would consist of elected representatives from each of the provinces.
- Quebec was guaranteed 65 members to ensure a strong voice for the French-speaking population.
- The other provinces would elect members on the basis of their populations.
- Canada would have a second house of appointed members called the Senate.
- There were to be 72 lifetime members in the Senate: 24 from Quebec, 24 from Ontario, and 24 from the Maritimes.
- The main duty of the Senate was to double check all laws passed by the elected House of Commons.
- Its other role was to equally represent the interests of Canadian regions.

Division of Powers (Federal and Provincial) (BNA Act)

- The Provincial Government was responsible for education, property rights, mines and forests, the licensing of businesses, and raising money by taxes (such as provincial sales taxes) for provincial purposes, and other matters of provincial concern.
- The Federal Government would control trade, defence, foreign affairs, banks, shipping, fisheries, and criminal law.
- It was also given the power to tax people.
- The federal government could reject any law passed by the provinces.
- As it relates to finances, the federal government took over all the debts of the provinces.
- In addition, it took over most of the provinces sources of income, such as customs duties.
- Every province was given so much money every year by the federal government - the amount was based solely on the population of the province.

The BNA Act protected the rights of French - Canadians

- French Canadians would keep their own province, language, religion, and schools.
- Both Roman Catholic and Protestant schools were guaranteed.
- English and French Languages were to be used in the central Parliament, in the Parliament of Quebec, and in federal courts.

Definitions

Fenians: were a large number of Irish who settled in the United States to get away from the British rule.

Reciprocity: is an agreement between countries allowing trade to take place without the burden of tariffs or taxes.

Constitutional Monarchy: is a democratic government that has a King or Queen as head of state.

Dominion: The Dominion of Canada was created by the BNA Act. It united four provinces: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the two Canada's, renamed Ontario and Quebec.

Red River Settlement

- founded in 1812, by the Hudson Bay Company
- Around Fort Garry, present-day Winnipeg
- By the 1860's, approximately 12,000 settlers lived in the colony
- Mostly farmers and merchants
- Also had a large number of settlers known as the **Metis**

The Metis

- were of mixed heritage: Native and European
- they spoke mostly French
- had a very distinct culture
- called themselves the "Metis Nation"
- also referred to as the backbone of the Fur Trade in the West

- bought furs from the Native peoples and sold them to the Hudson Bay Company agents

Background to the Rebellion

- in the late 1860's, the Federal Government was concerned about U. S. expansion
- thus, they decided to settle the West or risk losing it
- they purchased the entire North West region from the Hudson Bay Company
- and sent surveyors into the Red River to measure the land
- The Metis were not consulted
- They feared they would lose their land
- The Metis turned to **Louis Riel** for leadership
- They reacted by resisting the land surveyors
- **Riel's reason:** "the Canadian Government had no right to make surveys before the land had been transferred to Canada"
- Red River Rebellion began

The Red River Rebellion, 1869-1870

- Riel formed the **National Committee of Metis**
- This was set up to decide how to protect Metis lands
- They blocked the Governor (**William McDougall**) from entering the colony
- Then he set up a government of their own, known as the **Provisional Government**
- Outsiders thought this was an act of Rebellion
- However, Riel **never** considered himself a rebel
- He stated they were fighting against **2 things**:
 - i. The Hudson Bay Company had sold their land to Canada without telling them
 - ii. The Canadian Government was taking over without consulting them
- Riel's "Provisional Government issued a "**Metis Bill of Rights**" to Ottawa

- It contained the following:
 1. the territory has the right to enter Canada's Confederation as a province
 2. be able to send 4 members of Parliament to Ottawa
 3. have control over their local affairs
 4. French and English languages should be equal in schools and law courts
 5. Be able to keep their customs and their way of life
- These "rights" were considered fair by Ottawa

Thomas Scott

- Most people in the Red River supported Riel, except for a small group known as the "**Canadians**" (came from Ontario)
- These people rioted, and a number of them, including an English Protestant, **Thomas Scott**, was jailed by Riel.
- Riel then ordered him to be executed
- The English Protestant population of Ontario was outraged, and demanded revenge against French Catholic Metis
- They demanded Riel be hanged to Scott's murder
- Meanwhile, the people of Quebec said Riel's actions were justified
- Therefore, tensions mounted over the situation at Red River, quickly becoming a national crisis in **French-English Relations**

Aftermath of the Rebellion

- Macdonald had to act quickly
- His government, along with Riel's, worked out an agreement called the **Manitoba Act**
- Therefore, on July 15, 1870 the Red River settlement joined Confederation
- The settlement became Canada's fifth province, **Manitoba**
- The Metis were granted voting rights and a Member of Parliament
- Each Metis family received 240 acres by a land grant
- French and English were made official languages

- These actions satisfied the French Canada
- To satisfy the English Canadians, Macdonald sent a military force to Red River to help keep order
- Macdonald had resolved a crisis in French-English relations

National Expansion and Growth: 1870's

- Soon after Manitoba's entry into Confederation events quickly unfolded which led to a rapid and sizable increase in Canada's territory.

British Columbia Enters Confederation

- In 1870, B.C. was still a British colony with several options to consider:
 1. Remain as it was a colony. This was the preferred choice of the Governor and the Social Elite of the colony.
 2. Await American domination:
 - Manifest Destiny.
 - Many in colony favoured this arrangement.
 - Border dispute
 - North – South trade route.
 3. To become a part of the Canadian Confederation.
- B.C. demanded:
 - Responsible Government.
 - Road link to Ontario.
 - Federal Government would assume B.C.'s debt.
- Canada met each of these demands and more.
- Promised to provide a railway link with the East. To start within 2 years, and be completed in 10 years.
- In return, Canada would receive:
 - Completion of link to Pacific, **“from sea to sea.”**
 - Rich supply of natural resources (gold, and timber).
- **July 20, 1871, British Columbia becomes Canada's 6th province.**

Prince Edward Island Joins Confederation

- Soon regretted its initial rejection of Confederation.
- By 1873, the railway debt strangled the island economy.
- Residents faced with a choice of increased taxation (to finance the railway) or join Canada.
- **July 1, 1873, Prince Edward Island becomes Canada's 7th province.**

Benefits to the Island:

1. Canadian government relieves P.E.I of its debt.
2. Provides \$800,000 to buy back land from absentee owners.
3. Promise of permanent ferry link and telegraph to the island.

❖ **In 1880, Canada was granted ownership of the vast Arctic Islands thereby greatly enlarging its territorial holdings.**

The Treaty of Washington: 1873

- Canada's first true international experience as a sovereign nation began in 1871, when Prime Minister John A. Macdonald represented Canadian interests at a conference called between the U.S. and Britain to resolve their differences.
- The U.S. sought compensation for losses caused by the **Alabama**, a British warship used by the South against the North during the Civil War.
- The U.S. wanted to regain fishing rights in Canadian and Newfoundland waters which it had lost in 1866.
- Macdonald hoped to use the fishing rights as a basis for a new trade agreement (Reciprocity) with the U.S. – He was not successful.
- The Treaty of Washington signed in 1873 restored friendly Anglo-American relations.
- Under its terms, Canada and the U.S. reached agreement on:
 1. Border disputes in the West.
 2. Fishing and navigation along the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes.
 3. The purchase of fishing rights for Americans in Canadian and Newfoundland waters.
- **The Treaty is noteworthy in that it marked Canada's first foray into external affairs as an independent nation.**

The Building of the Railroad

- Once the threat of a U.S. invasion into Canada had been removed by the Treaty of Washington, the government of Canada was able to press on with the business of nation building.
- An essential part of this involved the completion of a Continental rail link between the East and the West.
- The National Dream required a railway:
 1. To transport settlers to the West.
 2. To move the Prairie grain (and beef) to the Eastern Market.
- The dream was quickly beset by problems many of which threatened its fulfillment.
- Problems which plagued the building of the Railway included:
 1. The rugged terrain of Northern and Western Ontario and especially of the Rocky Mountains presented an almost impenetrable barrier to the laying of track. **Therefore, cost a lot of money.**
 2. **The Pacific Scandal:**
 - The Canadian Pacific Railway Company (CPR) was formed to build the railway.
 - By 1873, scandal rocked the nation bringing it perilously close to total abandonment.
 - The scandal occurred when news leaked out that the CPR had donated or contributed large amounts of money to the Conservative Party.
 - Many considered this bribery.
 - Macdonald's government forced to resign over the affair in 1873.
 - The railway was in jeopardy.
 - New government (Liberals) and its Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie were much less willing to spend large amounts of money on the railway.
 - Macdonald's return to power in 1878 would save the railway.

The Role of Chinese Workers

- During its construction, thousands of workers were brought into the country from China, for the purpose of working on the railroad.

Reason:

1. They were experienced in this type of work.
2. They provided a cheap source of labour – worked for ½ wages demanded by Canadian labourers.

3. They were willing to undertake dangerous tasks, especially in the Rocky Mountains.
 - Several hundred Chinese workers lost their lives during the building of the railroad.
 - The Chinese experienced a great deal of persecution and discrimination at the hands of Canadians:
 1. Racism was rampant – “Coolies.”
 2. They lived in segregation.
 3. Could only get low paying jobs that nobody else wanted.
 4. Had to pay a discriminatory “head tax” to enter Canada – **No other group had to pay this tax!**

The Last Spike

- In November, 1885 the railway was finally completed.
- The “last spike” ceremony held in Craigellachie, British Columbia.
- The ribbon of steel linked the Pacific to the Atlantic.
- The dream became a reality:
 1. The West was opened.
 2. B.C. was linked to the East.
 3. Flow of trade – West to the East.
 4. Easier to defend the nation.

The National Policy

- John A. Macdonald’s political career was nearly ruined by the Pacific Scandal which led to his resignation in 1873.
- The election of 1873 saw the Conservatives crushed at the polls.
- Unfortunately, for the new Liberal Government and its Prime Minister (Mackenzie), the country was just beginning to enter a long economic depression.
- As this depression deepened, Canadians became very critical of Mackenzie’s Liberal Government blaming them for doing nothing to solve their woes.
- Macdonald realized that he would be given a second chance to govern if he could come up with a plan to convince Canadians to support him.
- In the election of 1878, Macdonald unveiled his **National Policy** which led to his re-election.
 - **The National Policy involved 3 proposals:**
 1. To impose a protective tariff on American goods coming into the country. This would protect domestic industry against being forced out of business by cheap imports.
 2. Completion of the railway - spearheaded by **Cornelius Van Horne**
 3. Large scale immigration into the West.