

## Confederation Discussed and Delayed

The Québec Conference was a fine beginning, but there was trouble ahead. The Seventy-Two Resolutions had to be accepted by the government of each colony. The Fathers of Confederation went home to convince their people of the idea. Would the people of the colonies be as excited about Confederation as were the delegates to the Charlottetown and Québec conferences?

### Seesaw in New Brunswick

In New Brunswick, Premier Leonard Tilley was a staunch supporter of Confederation. After the Québec Conference, Tilley called an election in New Brunswick. Confederation was the main issue. Those who were opposed to Confederation (the **anti-Confederationists**) poked fun at the whole idea. At the Québec Conference, it had been decided that each province would receive a sum of money each year from the central government. This money was called a **subsidy**. The amount of the subsidy was based on the population of the colony. In the case of New Brunswick, the subsidy amounted to 80¢ per person. Opponents of Confederation complained that Tilley was selling New Brunswickers out to the Canadians for 80¢ each.

On election day in 1865, the anti-Confederationists won easily. It was a black day for those who dreamed of a great united country. Without New Brunswick, there could be no Confederation. New Brunswick was the land link between Canada and the other Atlantic colonies.

But Leonard Tilley did not give up. In the months that followed, he spoke in every part of the colony on the subject of Confederation. He talked about the advantages of the Canadian market for New Brunswick. He said that railway construction would open new lands for settlement and for forestry, plus provide new jobs. His personal efforts helped to win people over to the side of Confederation.



Leonard Tilley became premier of New Brunswick in 1858. He also became a Member of Parliament for the province in the new government at Ottawa after Confederation.

Three other events helped to convince New Brunswickers that there could be no progress without Confederation:

1. The United States ended free trade with the British North American colonies. No longer would New Brunswick's goods enter into the United States tax-free.
2. The British government sent a message encouraging New Brunswickers to join Confederation.
3. The Fenians attacked New Brunswick in 1866. The people were terrified as word arrived of hundreds of Fenians gathering near the border. The New Brunswick militia was called out. During April, small bands of Fenians did cross into the colony.

While the Fenian threat was still present, an election was again called in New Brunswick. This time, people voted in favour of Confederation.