

## Fast Forward

### National Historic Sites

Today, John A. Macdonald's home in Kingston, Ontario, is a National Historic Site. Known as Bellevue, it was opened to visitors in 1967 and includes furnishings from the 1840s. If you go to the Visitor's Centre on the grounds, you can see a video presentation on Macdonald's private life and public career. The architect who designed Bellevue also most likely designed Kingston's City Hall, which was completed in 1844. It was the seat of the provincial government when Kingston was the capital of Upper and Lower Canada from 1841 to 1844. In 1973 it was renovated to celebrate Kingston's 300th anniversary. Both Bellevue and Kingston City

Hall are unique buildings and part of Canada's heritage. Your community or region may also have National Historic Sites.



For information on other National Historic Sites, visit this web site

[http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/parks/main\\_e.htm](http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/parks/main_e.htm)

### Political Deadlock

The double shuffle was a sign of how government was working in Canada in the 1860s. Getting any bills (new laws) passed through the Assembly was almost impossible. Members of the government and the Opposition in the Canadian Assembly were nearly even in number. Since they naturally voted against each other, neither side could win. It was like two evenly matched teams playing tug-of-war. So during the early 1860s, the machinery of government gradually ground to a halt. The wheels simply stopped turning. The engine sputtered and stalled. It was **political deadlock**.

George Brown and his Reform Party wanted **representation by population** or "rep by pop." They pointed out that Canada West was larger than Canada East by almost 300 000 people. Therefore, Canada West should have more seats in the Assembly in proportion to its larger population. The people of Canada East would not agree to that because they would be outnumbered in the Assembly!

And besides, when the province had been united in 1841, Canada East had had the larger population but had not received more seats in the Assembly. The two parts of the province had been given an equal number of seats.

So, political deadlock continued. In the three years before 1864, four governments in the Province of Canada resigned and there were two general elections. Neither the Tories nor the Grits could get enough votes to carry on the work of government. John A. Macdonald was so discouraged that he talked of retiring from politics. However, the Conservatives begged him to stay on as their leader and he agreed.

On 14 June 1864, Macdonald's government was once again defeated by two votes. Macdonald could call an election, but what good would that do? Another election would probably change nothing. Neither side could hope to win enough seats in the Assembly to get any bills passed. It was George Brown who stepped forward with a solution.