

Voices against Confederation

Men, hurrah for our own native isle, Newfoundland, Not a stranger shall hold one inch of her strand; Her face turns to Britain, her back to the Gulf, Come near at your peril, Canadian Wolf.

- *Anti-Confederation song popular in Newfoundland*

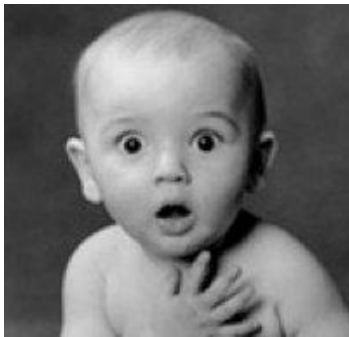
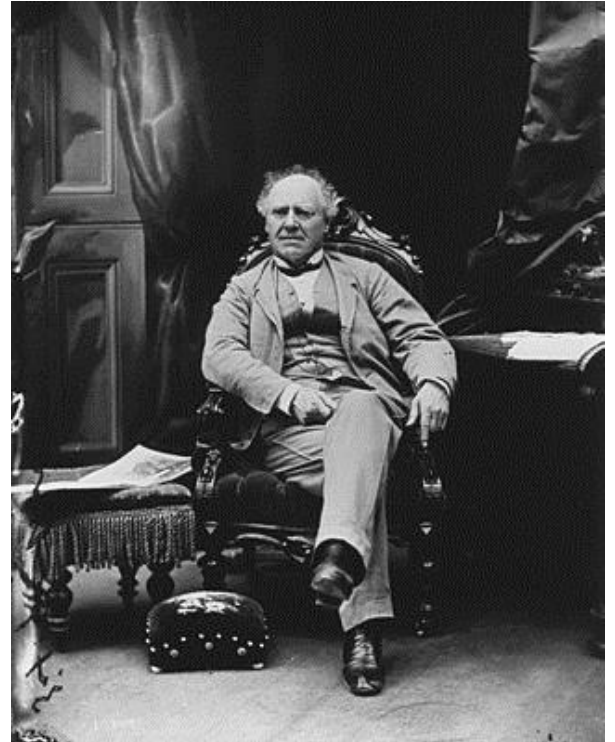
- Anti-Confederation emotions ran high in many colonies, but economic troubles and the constant threat of annexation by the United States forced many colonies to reconsider.
- One of the first orders of business for the new Dominion was to deal with Nova Scotia's desire to leave it.
- P.E.I. & Newfoundland had already rejected the idea of Confederation, and the pro-Confederation party had been voted out of office in New Brunswick.
- With a combined population of only 600,000, Maritimers felt that they would be constantly out-voted in the House of Commons. They also felt their tax dollars would go to projects that would have little impact on them.



This banner was carried by nine year old Robert Dawson, Jr. (1858-1929) of Bridgewater in an Anti-Confederation parade. The people of Nova Scotia strongly believed that their local needs would be better met through their colonial governments, rather than those of a larger country and therefore opposed confederation. These people were known as the Anti-Confederates or "Anties". Ca. 1867. Reference: DesBrisay Museum 488.5.

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- Joseph Howe (right) became a champion for closer ties with Britain and an end of Confederation with Canada. During the first Federal election, Howe's Nova Scotia Party captured 18 of the 19 seats. In provincial elections, the Nova Scotia Party captured 36 of 38 seats.
- Howe traveled to London, England, to argue his case, but was rejected by the Colonial Secretary (The Duke of Buckingham). Undeterred, Howe even toyed with the idea of open rebellion.
- John A. Macdonald realized that his key to keeping Nova Scotia in Confederation was Joseph Howe. Macdonald journeyed to Halifax to attend an anti-Confederation convention and offered to increase Nova Scotia's subsidies from Ottawa by 30%. As well, he offered Howe a federal cabinet portfolio. It worked.



- In 1869 an election was held in Newfoundland that decided the fate of Confederation. Forceful and imaginative propaganda – one rumor was the Newfoundland children would be used as ammunition for Canadian cannons – turned voters against Canada.
- Prince Edward Island was fearful of protecting its tiny population and fragile island identity.
- Few landowners actually lived on PEI – the majority still lived in Britain, providing a very small tax base. Debts mounted for the little island, triggering an economic crisis.
- John A. Macdonald sailed in and agreed to pay the provinces debt, as well as buy-out the absentee landlords. He also agreed to supply the island with federal subsidies & setup a ferry service to connect the island with the mainland.
- On July 1st, 1873, PEI nearly voted unanimously to join Confederation.