

from Ireland, Scotland and England flooded into Canada, helping to push back the frontiers and develop new settlements. In 1824 the population of British North America (excluding Newfoundland) was 200,000. By 1861 the population of the four separate colonies which had seceded was over 1,100,000.

Upper Canada (Ontario), Lower Canada (Quebec), New Brunswick, and New Brunswick, each with its own system of parliamentary government -- were drawn together in making plans for union or confederation for a variety of reasons: certain difficulties had arisen in the functioning of the political system; the need for a common plan of defence was felt; the development of trade and some kind of inter-colonial organization desirable; and, in the minds of the leaders at least, there was the idea of laying the foundation for a nation that would stretch from sea to sea, taking in the whole territory to the east of the Great Lakes.

July 1, 1867, was proclaimed the birthday of the Dominion of Canada. Confederation inaugurated an era of expansion and tremendous development. The Canadian Pacific Railway linking the Atlantic and Pacific coasts made possible the settling of the west, and helped to unite the provinces in one vast country. The government encouraged settlement from the railways and the government, immigrants not only from the British Isles but from all parts of Europe poured into Canada. Some settled in the great agricultural lands of the west, while others, one of the world's leading grain producers, sought to settle in the urban centers of the east and played a part in the industrialization of the central section of the continent between 1871 and 1911 the population doubled.

Problems of assimilation and internal development, along with the achievement of self-government and union, Canada soon turned to external relations with the Empire and the world and to the development of its nationhood. Fighting side by side with Britain in the First World War, Canada was now the last nation to speak for itself in international matters, and demanded -- and obtained -- representation at the Peace Conference and in the League of Nations.

The logical outcome of the growing independence and independence of the Dominion in world affairs was reached in the enactment of the Statute of Westminster, in 1931. This gave statutory effect to the Declaration made at an Imperial Conference held in 1926 that the various members of the British Commonwealth of Nations were autonomous communities equal in status, and no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs. They are united only by a common allegiance to the Crown.

Free to make treaties and trade agreements, free to declare war or stay a peace, Canada can be no longer regarded as a dependent of Britain as it once was. Like the other dominions, she has a separate system of diplomatic representation. When the Second World War broke out Canada declared war on its own behalf, even before the United Kingdom's declaration. With world-wide international importance and advance to the position of fourth largest exporter in the world, Canada is now recognized by other nations as a country in its own right.