

planted fur in economic importance and an allied shipbuilding industry began to flourish on the Atlantic seaboard.

Thus were the foundations laid for the second great wave of immigration. Between 1815 and 1850 some 800,000 settlers arrived from the British Isles, mostly from famine-ravaged Ireland. This was more than double the total population of all British colonies in North America in 1800.

Responsible Government

Meanwhile both Upper and Lower Canada were facing political unrest. Many of the governors, strong-willed and arbitrary, acted in direct opposition to the will of the elected assemblies. In 1837 there were two brief revolts. One, in Lower Canada, was led by Louis Joseph Papineau, a reformer who believed that many measures of the British Government were unfair to his French-speaking compatriots. The other, in Upper Canada, was led by William Lyon Mackenzie, an editor and politician, who charged that the ruling clique or "Family Compact" was governing in a manner contrary to the wishes of the people. These twin uprisings were swiftly quelled but they resulted in an investigation of the administrative needs of the troubled colony.

The new Governor who made this investigation was a sensitive aristocrat—John Lambton, Earl of Durham. His report, presented in 1839, was a milestone in the nation's development. It recommended legislative union of Upper and Lower Canada and the ultimate union of all British North America. It also recommended responsible government for the colonies: that is, one headed by a gover-

nor who, although appointed by London, would act only on the advice of a government responsible to the people of Canada.

The first recommendation, the union of the two Canadas, was implemented in 1841. Responsible government followed more slowly. In 1849 another remarkable Governor, Lord Elgin, was faced with a highly controversial bill allowing compensation for property losses suffered during the rebellions of 1837. Rejecting demands of the Opposition in the Legislature that he refer the matter to the British Government, he determined to endorse the policy of the Cabinet, with its elected majority, and signed the bill. Tumultuous scenes, culminating in the burning of the Parliament Buildings, took place in Montreal. But the British Colonial Office sustained his decision, and responsible government has never since been seriously challenged in Canada.

Confederation

The American Revolution had split British North America. To the South was a united and independent nation. To the North, stretching from the fur trading posts of the Pacific Coast to the fishing, farming and lumbering communities of the Atlantic, was a series of isolated colonies whose only common bond was a continuing allegiance to Britain.

By the middle of the nineteenth century a few imaginative leaders had seen the vision of a single nation incorporating these scattered settlements and stretching from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island. These aspirations had sound economic as well as political justification. There was the scheme for a railway to



The Fathers of Confederation

join the Atlantic seaboard with Upper and Lower Canada; there was also the need to link the western settlements with the established eastern communities to ensure their mutual development. More important was the feeling that all would benefit under some form of economic and political union. But the chief factor, perhaps, was the belief that only a strong transcontinental union could prevent encroachment and possibly eventual absorption by the expanding United States.

Maritime federation was already in the air, and in 1864 the Governments of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick called a meeting in Charlottetown to discuss the matter. The newly united provinces of Upper and Lower Canada asked, and were granted, permission to state their views regarding the federation of all British colonies in North America. As a result of these and later