

## CONFEDERATION

Although there are many key dates in Canadian history, the most important is July 1st, 1867.

Lower Canada (Quebec), Upper Canada (Ontario), Nova Scotia and New Brunswick became the original members of Confederation. A series of conferences of colonial delegates produced a draft federal Constitution which, with a few minor modifications, the British Parliament enacted into law. The new nation took shape under the premiership of John A. Macdonald (who was knighted in 1867). The men who brought this about are referred to in Canada as the "Fathers of Confederation".

British Columbia joined in 1871. Prince Edward Island in 1873. From the Hudson's Bay Company territories, acquired in 1870, Parliament created Manitoba in 1870, Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905. Newfoundland joined in 1949.

The two Territories of Canada do not have provincial status. Both are headed by a federally appointed Commissioner: in the Yukon, he is assisted by an elected Council; in the Northwest Territories, by a partially elected Council. In both, the Commissioner, with the Council, has substantial powers over local affairs.

### Constitution

The basic constitutional document is the British North America Act of 1867 (which has been amended several times since). The Act sets out Canada's federal structure, parliamentary form of government and the distribution of powers between federal and provincial governments. In several very