

settlers built a village at Port La Joye — the island's first capital. Another colony was set up in 1731 and included fisheries, a model farm, a forge and other enterprises. More Acadian immigrants came to the island following their expulsion from Nova Scotia and stayed there until 1758 when they were transported to France after the British conquest. Captain Samuel Holland then surveyed the island and influential petitioners were awarded sections of land through a lottery system. This absentee ownership policy dominated island affairs for nearly a century, and created much hardship for immigrants who became tenant farmers.

In 1850, the Liberal Party, formed by members of the earlier Reform Party, advocated responsible government for the island — an administration answerable to the island's legislature. Their opponents were forerunners of today's Conservative party. That same year the Liberals were elected and one year later the British government acceded to their demands for responsible government.

A Liberal Party government in 1853 passed the Land Purchase Act. This allowed the administration to purchase the land of proprietors willing to part with it, then resell to the tenants living on it.

The years from 1854 to 1865 were stormy as the island's legislature tried to assist the administration in buying

out the remaining landlords, attempts that were vetoed by the British government. Land reform and questions of schools and railway building provided the controversial issues of the day.

On September 1, 1864 delegates from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Upper and Lower Canada met in Charlottetown to discuss proposals for the union of British North America. In 1867 the British North America Act was passed forming the Dominion of Canada and on July 1, 1873 Prince Edward Island joined the Confederation.

#### *Early trade*

In the first 20 years following Confederation, the island prospered. As before, its economy was centred on agriculture, fisheries, local manufacturing, and shipbuilding. The population increased and small industries thrived.

During the 1870s and 1880s there was a marked upswing in agricultural activity. Farmers sold their produce to merchants in Charlottetown and Summerside who shipped goods to the mainland for markets in central Canada. At the same time there was rapid growth in the island's fishing industry. The number of fishermen trebled and the number of vessels more than doubled. And the silver-black fox made many men rich before the industry collapsed in the 1930s. (By 1979, the fox-farming industry was making a modest comeback.) Between 1840 and