**Nova Scotia**

**Population**

This colony was settled by many different people: British, Irish, Scottish, German, Mic Maq’, and Acadian. The total population of 350 000 was quite large for this colony. A large part of the inhabitants lived along the coast, in the Annapolis Valley and in the city of Halifax.

**Urban Centre:** Halifax (29,580)

**Key Figures:** Charles Tupper (1821-1915)

 William A. Henry (1816-1888)

 Jonathon McCully (1809-1877)

 Adams G. Archibald (1814-1892)

 Robert B. Dickey (1811-1903)

 John William Ritchie (1808-1890)

**Economy**

Nova Scotia plays a key role in sea communications between Great Britain and the United States. It is common for ships bound for New York and Boston to stop at Halifax and for ships bound for Liverpool and London to also dock here. For many seafaring Nova Scotians, the British West Indies feels closer than Quebec. Above all, Halifax is the central base for the British Navy in the West Atlantic. With an ice-free harbour and the citadel, a grand fortress on a hill overlooking the harbour and the city, Halifax stands out as a symbol of Imperial Britain’s power.

A great majority of Nova Scotians make their living, in one way or another, from the ocean. Almost half of the colony’s residents are fishermen, while others work on ships exporting cod and importing coal and wool. Over one-third of Nova Scotia’s exports are fish and fish products. Shipbuilding is an enormously prosperous industry, and Nova Scotians produce and own more ships than residents in any other British North American colony.

The colony’s main economic base was fishing, shipping, shipbuilding, agriculture and natural resources (e.g. timber).

The presence of a railway would lead to the creation of a new manufacturing industry.

**Security / Protection**

Halifax was a garrison city, which helped the country’s protection, linked with their close ties to the United States.

The significant British military and naval presence in Halifax reduces the immediate threat of an American attack. But Great Britain’s reluctance to defend the colonies in the future makes closer ties between the British North American provinces crucial to security. Any change in British policy would have a serious effect on Nova Scotia because of this close relationship.

There is no railway connection between Nova Scotia and the Canadas. Many prominent British North Americans believe an Intercolonial Railway must end in Halifax. The Intercolonial would not only help in the defence of British North America, but it would also open up other North American markets to Nova Scotia businesses. Since the 1850s, Nova Scotia has relied on reciprocity (free trade) with the United States. It is crucial to Nova Scotia’s future to secure other North American markets, in case the United States imposes tariffs on Nova Scotian goods.

**Self-Sustainability**

Politics is highly sophisticated in Nova Scotia. The first British North American colony to achieve responsible government, in 1948, Nova Scotian politics is marked by its leaders. First, Joseph Howe, and later, Charles Tupper, brought unity to the colony by bringing together various regional and cultural interests. A federal union, though not initiated by the Nova Scotians, is something to be considered, discussed, and debated.

**Nova Scotia Viewpoints**

**Anti-Confederate on Nova Scotia’s natural connection to the United States (1865)**

Look at the geographical position of this continent and consider what seems to be the most natural arrangement. We have thirty millions of people directly before us [the United States], in every way more convenient to us than Canada; they are of the same stock, same feelings as ourselves… I do not think that the people of Nova Scotia want annexation to the United States, but why should you drive them against their interests and inclinations into a union with Canada – with which they have no natural means of communication, and no sympathy?

**Charles Tupper on the need for a new nation (Halifax *Evening Reporter*, 23 January 1862)**

It must be evident to everyone that as we are now situated we are entirely without name or nationality, destitute of all influence and of means of occupying that position to which we may justly aspire. What is a British [North] American but a man dependent on an Empire which, however glorious, gives him no share of interest at all!

**On Charles Tupper (Halifax *Citizen*, 5 November 1864)**

Having got power, Tupper intends to keep it all hazard, and hence he flies to the Confederation scheme… We have very little faith in Confederation as a practical measure; but we have a good deal of faith in Tupper as a political intriguer. Nothing can serve his turn better just now than to divert public attention from Provincial politics. He would annex this province to Canada, or to Massachusetts, or to the moon, or propose to do so, if by that means he could keep people from talking about his school bill, his retrenchment, his railway duplicity, his tyranny to officials.

**On Union (Halifax *British Colonist*, 28 February 1865)**

Union is immediately necessary on account of commercial causes… Union is immediately necessary so as to abolish all differences in currency, and in trade regulations. Each little Province has now its own Government, and even its own postage stamp. Prince Edward Island has one system of currency; Nova Scotia another; New Brunswick another; Newfoundland a fourth; and Canada a fifth. Here is endless confusion and a fruitful source of local jealousy, of sectional alienation, and narrow provincialism… Union is immediately necessary for political reasons. The Nova Scotian is now without a country. He cannot call himself an American. He is not an Englishman. As a Nova Scotian he is nothing.

Information collected from Critical Challenges Across the Curriculum.

Go to <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-3080-e.html> for more information.



**Prince Edward Island**

**Population**

Prince Edward Island was the smallest colony, with a population of 87,000 inhabitants and one official city, Charlottetown. It was settled by persons of British, Irish, Scottish, Acadian descent, along with a minority of MicMaq’ and Black communities.

**Urban Centre:** Charlottetown

**Key Figures:** John Hamilton Gray (1812-1887)

 Edward Palmer (1809-1889)

 William H. Pope (1825-1879)

 Andrew A. Macdonald (1829-1912)

 George Coles (1810-1875)

 Thomas H. Haviland (1822-1895)

 Edward Whelan (1824-1867)

Made up of small, agricultural communities, Prince Edward Island is only one hundred miles long and thirty miles wide. The population is equally divided between Irish Catholics and Scottish Protestants. Largely self-sufficient, many of the residents have never been off the island. During the winter months, PEI is completely cut off by ice from the mainland.

Charlottetown is the colony’s urban centre. In fact, no one on the island lives more than a day’s journey from the city. With rich church architecture and the impressive Legislature Building, Charlottetown is the colonial capital.

**Economy**

The main economic base for this colony was farming, timber and shipbuilding. Farming, with the island’s rich and fertile lands, is the main source of income. A great many people live on agricultural exports (potatoes, cereal and livestock) to America’s New England states (as well as to England, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick). Though a number are fishermen, the United States dominates the island’s fishery.

Sixty percent of the farmers on the island rent their land (they are tenant farmers). These islanders rent farms from people who live in Britain (absentee landlords). For over one hundred years, these tenant farmers have been clearing and working the land they do not own and sending rent to their landlords in Britain. Prince Edward Island wants Great Britain to force the landlords to sell their farms at a reasonable price, to the colonies.

**Self-Sustainability**

Prince Edward Island had received responsible government in 1851. The political situation was somewhat complex as most of the land was rented out at a high price by owners who were absent from the region. This affected politics because the parties were divided; the Reformers, led by George Coles, were anti-landowners, and the Conservatives, led by Colonel John Hamilton Gray, supported the landowners.

After three to four generations as tenant farmers, resentment has grown and left islanders suspicious of outsiders. To many, Ottawa is as distastefully distant as Imperial London. As an island, a railway link with the other colonies is not an issue. Ultimately, PEI is content to remain independent and detached from BNA society.

Though PEI does not directly border on the United States and islanders do not fear an American attack, Britain’s changing relationship with the colonies is of some concern. Great Britain’s reluctance to defend the colonies in the future has made closer ties between the British North American provinces important to security.

**Creating a Union**

Charlottetown was said to have been chosen for the first Conference because Prince Edward Island was so apprehensive towards joining a union with Maritimes, or Canada, due to their fear of losing their political powers and independence. The only aspect of Confederation that they were somewhat interested in was the proposed idea of buying the land from the current landowners, and offering it to the people.

**Prince Edward Island Viewpoints**

**Edward Palmer at Quebec Conference (1864)**

I fear our little Island is to be sacrificed [in the Federal Union]. The Canaidan ministers or their leaders are clever and ingenious men. They are in this position: their government must stand or fall in the accomplishment or failure of the Union… The paltry proportion of representation we are *now* likely to have in both branches of the central Legislature is little more than nominal, and leaves us at the mercy of the other Provinces… In short, I am thoroughly disgusted at the course things have taken here and would be disposed to “sit…and weep” for years, if I thought our Island people would be taken in by the scheme.

**On Union (Charlottetown *Examiner*, 22 August 1864)**

Shall we, then, think seriously about a Federal Union. We believe we ought. Great Britain is constantly urging upon our attention a Union of some kind. The only kind of Union we can have is a Federal one. That means little or nothing short of separation from Great Britain… If we make up our minds for an Independent Federation… we must prepare t bid goodbye to old Mother England.

**On Debt (Charlottetown *Examiner*, 22 October 1864)**

Canada proposes to deal with the Maritime Provinces in the most broad and liberal spirit. She emphatically declare that the burden of her debt shall fall upon Upper and Lower Canada – *and upon Upper and Lower Canada alone.*

**Prospects of Confederation in Prince Edward Island (*Charlottetown Islander*, 6 January 1865)**

The majority of people are under the impression that Confederation would ruin the Island. They have been told that if the Island should be united with the other Provinces, under a Federal government, the people would be heavily taxed –that they would be marched away to the frontiers of Upper Canada to fight for the Canadians; and that the completion of the intercolonial Railroad would bring the produce of Canada to St. John and Halifax, and thus injure the farmers of P.E. Island. Firmly believing that all these evils would come upon them were they to enter the Confederation the people, with but few exceptions, are unanimous in the cry “away with Confederation—we will have nothing to do with it.” Confederation, in the terms of the resolutions of the [Quebec] Conference, will, we assume, at the coming Session be almost unanimously rejected in both Houses of the Legislature of this Island.

Information collected from Critical Challenges Across the Curriculum.

Go to <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-3110-e.html> for more information.



**Newfoundland**

**Population**

In 1860 there were 140,000 people living in the colony of Newfoundland. Their population was made up of Vikings, Indians, British decent, and more.

**Urban Centre:** Saint John’s (30,475)

**Key Figures:** Frederick B.T. Carter (1819-1900)

 Ambrosa Shea (1815-1905)

Newfoundland is largely unknown to the other British North American colonies, especially the Canadas. Without Labrador, it is nearly the size of the other three Maritime colonies put together. Most of the island is uninhabited. Its coasts are chartered, but the island’s interior – consisting of dense forest, swamps, rock, without roads of any kind – remains unmapped. The land is so rugged that fewer than one hundred square miles are cultivated.

The colony’s population settled in the southeast corner of the island. St. John’s, the colony’s capital and urban centre, is at the easternmost point of North America. These geographical factors make Newfoundland’s link with Britain – to the east across the Atlantic – more immediate than its ties to North America. From its earliest days, Newfoundland has traded fish with Britain, in exchange for manufactured goods. The colonists wear British-made clothes, read British newspapers and magazines and, for many, London feels closer than Ottawa.

**Economy**

Newfoundland’s main economic base was the fishing industry, along with smaller markets in timber and minerals. The fishing admirals were the colony’s government officials. Farming is poor due to the soil structure

Fishing and seal hunting, traditionally the backbone of the Newfoundland economy, have been virtually nonexistent for years. Without these staple industries, many Newfoundlanders are nearly destitute. Debt is common among fishermen, and one-third of all money generated in Newfoundland is used to help the poor.

**Self-Sustainability - Government**

The colony wanted an immediate responsible government, but Britain did not think they had a strong enough economy to maintain a government. After constant persistence, Newfoundland received approval for a responsible government in 1855.

Britain’s new attitude towards the colonies has left many Newfoundlanders worried. Since the early eighteenth century, French fishermen have caught fish in Newfoundland’s waters and dried them on the island’s west shore. Newfoundlanders suspect that the French would like to use this land for more than drying fish. Newfoundland relies on the British navy for protection. Though Newfoundland does not directly border on the United States and there is no threat of an American attack, Britain’s reluctance to provide colonial defence in the future worries Newfoundland. As an island, a rail link with the other BNA colonies is irrelevant. But without the support of the British navy, Newfoundlanders wonder how they will defend themselves.

Pre-Confederation Conferences: Newfoundland’s interest in Confederation was perceived as minimal, so an invitation to attend the Charlottetown Conference was not extended to the colony. Macdonald did invite the colony to the Quebec Conference in 1864, which they attended. Changes were made to include the new colony into the Union’s Resolutions.

**Newfoundland Viewpoints**

**Anti-Union (St. John’s *Patriot,* 29 November 1864)**

We have no faith in a political union with Canada at all. We deem it – “Better to endure the ills we have, than flee to others that we know not of.”

**Complexity of Confederation (St John’s *Patriot*, 6 December 1864)**

Nor can we duly comprehend the magnitude of being the contemptible fag-end of such a compact… This Federal scheme is an after-thought of the Canadians. We cannot deny that it is a brilliant thing on paper – this Confederation this Great United British America, which shall reach from “Newfoundland to the Rocky Mountains” but its brilliancy does not dazzle us as to the duties which must necessarily fall to our share… That TAXATION for all local purposes will be resorted to, is as plain as ABC.

**The need for change (St. John’s *Newfoundlander,* 5 January 1865)**

If any of the Provinces more than another should seek a change, it is this. We do not mean to assert that we should adopt a change blindly, but unlike our Sister Colonies, our circumstances—the condition of our Trade—the depressed state of our people, demand a change, even if Confederation had never been proposed.

Information collected from Critical Challenges Across the Curriculum.

Go to <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-3060-e.html> for more information.

