

HOW DID THE PROVINCES RESIST FEDERAL CONTROL?

Imagine you were in a situation where you disagreed with a friend or family member. If you felt like you were being treated unfairly, would you try to keep the peace or change the situation? The 1880s were not just a time of conflict between the federal government and certain groups of people. The federal government also found itself in conflict and negotiations with the provinces and their people.

Confederation promised that all provinces would benefit from the union, but most provinces now felt the federal government had too much control. Macdonald did not hide his desire to control the provinces. Read **Figure 4.32**, an excerpt from a speech he made to the House of Commons in 1865. Now compare **Figure 4.32** to the political cartoon in **Figure 4.33**, which was illustrated 17 years later, in 1882. How does the cartoon support or challenge Macdonald's goals from 1865?

“This is to be one united province, with the local governments and legislatures subordinate [controlled by] to the General Government.”

— Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald

FIGURE 4.32 An excerpt from Macdonald's speech during the Confederation debates in 1865. The federal government is referred to as the “General Government” in his speech. **Analyze:** What kind of relationship does he want the federal government to have with provincial governments?

FIGHTING FOR PROVINCIAL LAND RIGHTS

During the 1880s, some people challenged Macdonald's vision of an all-powerful federal government. One of them was Oliver Mowat, Ontario's premier from 1872 to 1896. He believed in Confederation, but he also wanted the provinces to have more control over their affairs. The federal government and the Ontario government often clashed over land ownership.

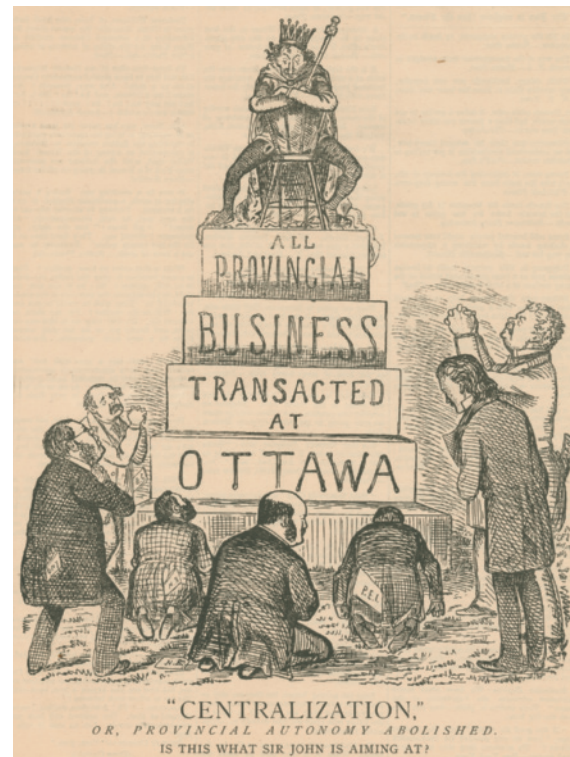


FIGURE 4.33 Published in the *Grip* on February 11, 1882, this cartoon by artist J.W. Bengough illustrates Macdonald's desire to control, or transact, all provincial business. **Analyze:** What details and symbols help to show the cartoonist's opinion of Macdonald?

How do you think a similar conflict would be handled today?

Their disagreement was over lands gained by the Numbered Treaties (see Chapter 3, **Figure 3.37**). The federal government believed that, because it had signed these land agreements with First Nations, it controlled these lands. Federal government officials often leased, or rented, these lands to businesses owned by their friends. The money from these leases gave the federal government income to support new businesses and to increase employment.

THE ST. CATHARINES MILLING AND LUMBER COMPANY

In 1888, the federal government gave the St. Catharines Milling and Lumber Company a lease on land in Ontario. The company wanted to cut down timber on this leased land and sell it. Premier Mowat claimed the federal government had no right to lease out Ontario's land. The Ontario government also wanted to stop the company from taking timber away from Ontario. Finally, the Ontario government decided to take the St. Catharines Milling and Lumber Company to the Supreme Court of Canada, the highest court in Canada.

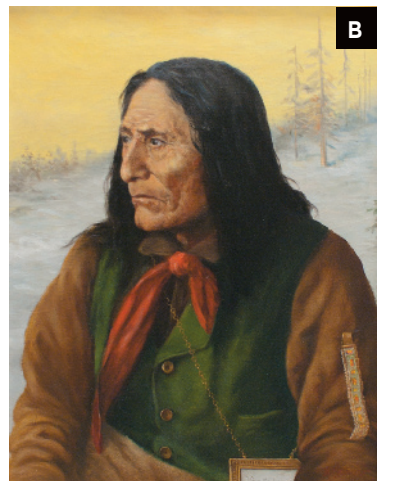
In court, the Ontario government argued that the Numbered Treaties did not give the federal government actual ownership of the treaty land. The Ontario government used the First Nations view of land ownership as its main argument. This idea is expressed in **Figure 4.34A**, a quote from Chief Crowfoot (**Figure 4.34B**) of the Siksika Nation. How is Chief Crowfoot's perspective different from that of the provincial and federal governments?

FIGURE 4.34 (A) A quote from Chief Crowfoot during the Treaty 7 discussions in 1877. (B) An undated painting of Crowfoot by Father Henry Metzger.

Analyze: Who does Crowfoot believe owns the land?

“We cannot sell the lives of men and animals, and so, we cannot sell the land. It was put here by the Great Spirit and we cannot sell it because it does not really belong to us.”

— Chief Crowfoot, Siksika First Nation



Crown land public land managed by the federal or provincial government that has not yet been sold for private ownership

The government of Ontario succeeded in convincing the courts that First Nations peoples did not believe in owning land. Therefore, First Nations could not give away what they did not own. The court sided with the province. The court stated that First Nations did not own any land until the federal government gave land to them in the form of reserves. This meant that everything aside from the reserves belonged to the provinces in the form of **Crown land**.

FIGHTING FOR ECONOMIC STRENGTH

Many industries in the Maritimes were struggling after Confederation. Shipping and shipbuilding were in decline. The coal and iron industries in Nova Scotia were doing well, but it was not enough to stop people from leaving the Maritimes to find work elsewhere. Maritime business owners tried to invest their profits in railroads and new industries. However, they could not compete with the industries in Ontario and Québec, which were bigger and had better access to markets in central and western Canada.

“I am an Anti Confederate. I cannot forget the manner in which Nova Scotia was forced into the union.... At all events I do not conceal from anybody the fact that I regard Confederation as a wrong and a substantial injury to Nova Scotia and I would gladly join in any legitimate movement which would give promise of obtaining repeal.”

— William S. Fielding, premier of Nova Scotia

A MARITIME UNION

Nova Scotia’s Liberal premier William S. Fielding needed to find a way to help bring Nova Scotia out of its economic decline. Read **Figure 4.35**, a quote from a letter Fielding wrote in 1886 to an Ontario politician. What is Fielding’s perspective on how Nova Scotia joined Confederation?

In May 1886, Fielding introduced a motion in the Nova Scotia legislature to create a Maritime union. The union would be the

first step in leaving Confederation. However, the response to Fielding’s union was not what he had hoped for. In 1887, support from Nova Scotia voters helped John A. Macdonald’s Conservative government win the federal election. New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island did not support the idea of a Maritime union, and in the end, none of the Maritime provinces left Confederation.

DEFENDING LANGUAGE, RELIGIOUS, AND EDUCATION RIGHTS

Before Confederation, New Brunswick’s Catholic schools were not part of an official, separate school system, but they were still supported by the province. This meant, for example, Catholic schools could use different textbooks than non-Catholic schools. Catholic schools could also choose to teach in French.

In 1871, New Brunswick reformed its educational system. It decided to stop giving public funds to schools that taught Catholicism and French. Concerned Catholics in the province petitioned the federal government to protect their educational rights as a religious minority. The federal government refused to get involved.

On January 27, 1875, a protest was held at Caraquet, a centre of Acadian religion and culture in New Brunswick. The protest quickly became violent. To escape the police, a group of Acadian protesters scrambled into an attic to hide. Police officers soon discovered the men and climbed through the attic opening to arrest them. Gunshots rang out and, as the gun smoke cleared, two men lay dead. The victims were an Acadian man, Louis Mailloux, and a volunteer policeman, Constable Gifford.

What consequences could this have for other provinces with large Francophone Catholic populations?



FIGURE 4.36 This illustration, entitled *New Brunswick: The Caraquet Riots, Death of Constable Gifford*, by an unknown artist, was published in the *Canadian Illustrated News* on February 13, 1875. Constable Gifford is the man on the right who has been shot. **Analyze:** Based on this illustration, how prepared were the protesters for violence?

Examine **Figure 4.36**, which depicts the deadly scene. Based on this representation, what can you learn about the Caraquet incident? After the incident, the provincial government agreed to allow Catholic and French instruction, but only after school. There was still no formal Catholic school system in New Brunswick.

QUÉBEC PROTECTS ITS INTERESTS

The Caraquet incident and the inaction by the federal government angered Québec politician Honoré Mercier. Mercier had always felt that the French Catholics could not depend on the federal government to defend them. For 20 years, John A. Macdonald and his government had enjoyed the support of the Catholic Church and Québec voters. However, Louis Riel’s trial in 1885 divided the country over religion and language. Macdonald’s decision to appease English voters and sentence Louis Riel to death was the final straw for Mercier. He became even more determined to protect French and Catholic rights. Read **Figure 4.37**, a quote from Mercier in 1885. Did Mercier believe increased federal control would protect Québec?

Mercier won the 1886 provincial election and became premier of Québec. What does Mercier’s win reveal about political attitudes in Québec toward federal control at the time?

“We felt that the murder of Riel was a declaration of war against Québec; and that, therefore, French Canadians had a duty to ... unite in a crusade to preserve the nation in Québec from encroaching [intruding] federal power.”

— Honoré Mercier, Québec politician

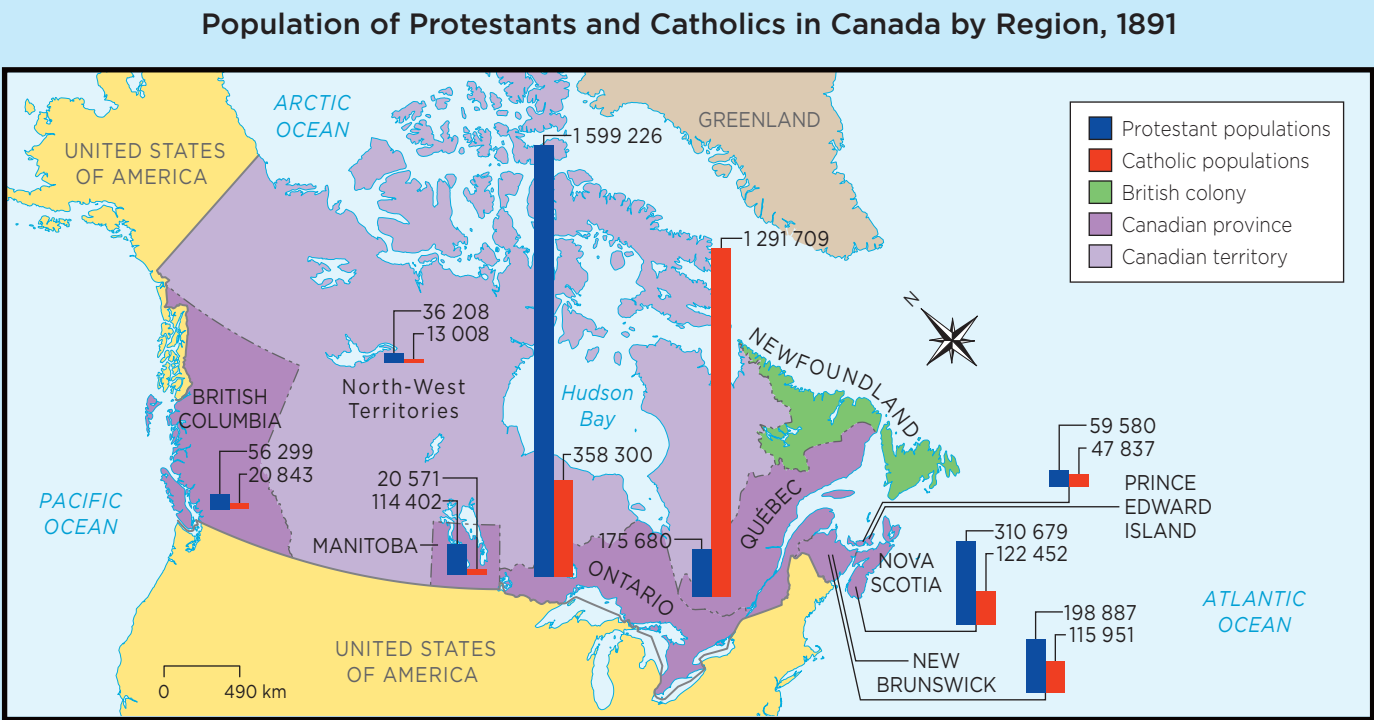
FIGURE 4.37 This quote from Mercier is from an 1885 speech asking Canadiens to form an all-French-Canadian political party. **Analyze:** What is the significance of Mercier’s use of the word *encroaching* in this quote?

ANALYZING A DEMOGRAPHIC MAP

A thematic map that shows data about populations is known as a demographic map. A demographic map can help you see spatial relationships between population information (*what*) and the location of the information (*where*).

The demographic map in **Figure 4.38** shows the number of Protestants and Catholics living in each region of Canada in 1891. How can knowing this population breakdown help you understand some of the issues and conflicts of this time?

FIGURE 4.38 A demographic map showing the number of Protestants and Catholics across Canada in 1891



“It is not religion which is at the bottom of this matter but ... a race feeling.... Don't we find the French today more French than when they were conquered ... on the Plains of Abraham? Do they mix with us, assimilate ... No, everything with them is conducted on the French model; ... I say that they are the great danger to the Confederacy.”

— D'Alton McCarthy, chief lawyer for the federal government

FIGURE 4.39 A quote from McCarthy in a February 1887 speech to English-speaking Ontarians. During this period, “race” was used to distinguish the English from the French. **Analyze:** What is the significance of McCarthy speaking about the Plains of Abraham in this quote?

How did members of the federal government feel about Québec's anger? D'Alton McCarthy was the chief lawyer for the federal government. He had represented the government in the St. Catharines Milling and Lumber Company case against Ontario. Although McCarthy had lost the court battle with Ontario, his support for a dominant federal government remained strong. McCarthy also believed that Canada would benefit from having just one culture. He wanted all Canadians to speak English and follow British Protestant culture. **Figure 4.39** is a quote from McCarthy. How does McCarthy describe Québec's resistance to the federal government and how the resistance affects Confederation (which he calls “the Confederacy”)?

THE MANITOBA SCHOOLS ACT

Conflicts between provincial and federal governments over education, language, and religion were also happening in western Canada. From 1870 to 1890, Manitoba supported public school systems for two cultures: French and Catholic, and English and Protestant. This two-part public school system was part of the 1870 *Manitoba Act*, passed by the

federal government. The *Manitoba Act* promised language rights to French speakers and funding for Catholic schools. But, as you learned earlier, during the 1880s, many of the French-speaking Métis had moved out of Manitoba. This left the remaining Métis and French-speaking settlers from eastern Canada greatly outnumbered by incoming English-speaking Protestant settlers. The new English Protestant majority were not happy supporting French and Catholic public schools. This led to the Manitoba government passing the *Public Schools Act, 1890* that cancelled funding for Catholic schools and eliminated French as an official language in the province. Manitoba's Catholics appealed to the federal government to help overturn the Schools Act. Macdonald refused to get involved, fearing his involvement would strengthen the province's resistance to federal control. What do these events in Manitoba further reveal about the resistance to federal control? What do they reveal about relations between English Canadians and French Canadians?

HOW TO ANALYZE A DEMOGRAPHIC MAP

Read the title and legend. What is the map's purpose? What locations are shown? What do the bar graphs represent?

STEP 1

Look at how the data and locations are connected. For example, which provinces have a higher Protestant population? Which have a higher Catholic population?

STEP 2

Look for patterns. For example, are there more Protestants or Catholics living in Canada at this time?

STEP 3

STEP 4

Look for connections to other topics. What social or political issues could you anticipate in some of these areas?

CHECK-IN

- HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** What were the most important issues that divided the country during this period? What is their significance for Canada today?
- CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE** What effect did political resistance from French-speaking Catholics have on Protestant and English Canadians?
- INTERPRET AND ANALYZE** How were First Nations ideas of land ownership used to the advantage of Ontario's government in the St. Catharines Milling and Lumber Company case?