

THE PATH TO CONFEDERATION: 1860–1867

**WAS CONFEDERATION
THE BEST OPTION FOR
THE COLONIES?**

LEARNING GOALS

As you work through this chapter, you will

- understand the significance of Confederation
- identify the reasons for and challenges to Confederation
- analyze perspectives on the process of unifying British North America
- closely read primary source texts

Every July 1, many Canadians celebrate Canada Day. They paint their faces with red maple leaves, attend fireworks displays, and reflect on what Canada means to them. Why is July 1 officially Canada's birthday? The answer has a lot to do with the people in this painting.

These are politicians and other leaders who attended at least one of three conferences between 1864 and 1867. The first conference was held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and was to include representatives from the Maritime colonies only. The goal of this meeting was to discuss a possible union of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick into one colony. However, representatives from the Province of Canada asked to attend. Their goal was to persuade the Maritime colonies of the benefits of an even larger union of colonies, known as Confederation. Two more conferences established the details of Confederation.

Artist Rex Woods created this painting, entitled *The Fathers of Confederation*, in 1967. What do you notice about the people in the painting? Who do you think may have been excluded from attending the conferences?

In this chapter, you will explore why some colonies joined together to form the Dominion of Canada on July 1, 1867. You will also consider whose voices were not heard in the decision making.

