

Historica Canada Education Portal

The Confederation Debates: New Brunswick Intermediate Mini-Unit

This [mini-unit](#) for intermediate/senior-level classes helps students to understand and analyze the key ideas and challenges that preceded New Brunswick's entry into Confederation. The first section deals with the debates in the provincial and/or federal legislatures, while the second section addresses more specifically founding treaty negotiations with the First Nations. Each section can be taught independently.

The activities and attached materials will help students understand the diversity of ideas, commitments, successes and grievances that underlie Canada's founding.

By the end of this mini-unit, your students will have the opportunity to:

1. Use the historical inquiry process—gathering, interpreting and analyzing historical evidence and information from a variety of primary and secondary sources—in order to investigate and make judgements about issues, developments and events of historical importance.
2. Hone their historical thinking skills to identify historical significance, cause and consequence, continuity and change, and historical perspective.
3. Develop knowledge of their province/region within Canada, minority rights and democracy, and appreciate the need for reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.



Primary Source: Albert James Smith's Views on Confederation

When the New Brunswick legislatures debated Confederation between 1865 and 1867, Albert Smith said the following points:

MAJORITY VS. MINORITY RIGHTS

"... the objections to the Bill seemed to be narrowing down to the details. Judges Parker and Ritchie, whose only motives could be to bring juvenile offenders from the paths of vice and iniquity¹ into those of virtue, had taken great interest in this matter, and he thought the House should take hold with them and do something to assist in carrying out so laudable² an object. The training in this school would be sectarian³ and he thought it should be; he did not see how such an Institution could be carried on if it were not sectarian. As to the grant the Governor and Council were not compelled to take action, and give towards its support. All denominations could organize under this law, and amounts could be granted to each as required."



Image held by Library and Archives Canada.

Debates of the New Brunswick House of Assembly, 22 May 1865, pg. 86.

"From the position he occupied as the leader of the Government, he was called upon to answer the speech of the mover of the amendment. He had not been at all surprised at the course pursued by that gentleman, because he had heard of the way he had vilified and traduced⁴ the members of the Government at the time of the last election in York. He had waited to hear it on member was prepared to make the same statements on the floor of the House as he had made on the hustings. He had waited to hear if he would dare say now as he said then, that the Government was a disreputable and disloyal Government, and that the traitor Anglin, the Roman Catholic, was its dictator. Would he dare make those statements now? He wondered how he (Mr. Fisher) had dared to make them; he wondered that he could reconcile them with his conscience. What had been the course that gentleman had pursued? It was said, and he believed it, that he had his emissaries⁵ out, and that from hamlet to hamlet, village to village, from school-house to school house, they went, sowing the seeds of strife, awakening the elements of religious discord in the breasts of the people, stirring up sect against sect. What had been the political canvas throughout the country? How had he tried to frighten the people, excite hostility against him, (Attorney General), and poison their minds against the Government? What was the cry raised? Why, if the Government, if was said, was allowed to stand, if the men who held the reins

¹ Iniquity = unfairness

² Laudable = deserving praise

³ Sectarian = religious prejudice

⁴ Traduced = told lies to

⁵ Emissaries = people sent on a special mission

[The mini-unit includes primary documents from prominent historical figures who contributed to the debate, such as Albert Smith.](#)

Samuel Leonard Tilley in Brief



This summary borrows from the Dictionary of Canadian Biography entry listed in the "Additional Resources" section of this mini-unit.

In 1818, Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, to a family with strong loyalist roots. After completing his basic education, Tilley apprenticed as a druggist in Portland before returning to Saint John and opening a highly successful drugstore. After the 1848 recession, Tilley gradually waded into politics as the treasurer for the New Brunswick Colonial Association (NBCA); claimed Britain was not adequately supporting its colonies; called for protection of agriculture, industry and fisheries; and supported the establishment of a British North American federation. During the 1850 general election, Tilley successfully ran for a Legislative Assembly seat, only to resign in protest when two of his fellow NBCA members abandoned their party to join the Governor's cabinet. Tilley, however, returned to office in 1854 as the Attorney General Charles Fisher's provincial secretary where Tilley, as part of the first responsible government in New Brunswick, introduced the first revenue bill that tried to hold the province of New Brunswick accountable for its finances. Tilley's decision to push through controversial prohibition legislation led to Lieutenant Governor John Henry Thomas Manners-Sutton dissolving the assembly and calling an election, which Tilley lost.



Image held by Library and Archives Canada.

In 1857, Tilley returned again to the polls, this time as a Reformer. The completion of the European and North American Railway between Saint John and Shediac was seen as important progress for the colony. On 14 March 1861, Tilley organized his fellow council members to resign when Fisher was caught in a scandal, which resulted in Fisher's removal and Tilley's consolidation of power. Tilley worked with Arthur Hamilton Gordon, the new Lieutenant Governor in 1861, to pursue funding the Intercolonial Railway, which would connect the Province of Canada to the Maritimes through New Brunswick and increase economic development along its route. He and the newly elected Nova Scotian Premier, Charles Tupper, were unable to convince the Canadians to support a cost-sharing deal to construct the railway. Despite this setback, Tilley fought back by introducing the legislation in 1864 that subsidized additional railway construction within the colony.

After the formation of John A. Macdonald, George Brown and George-Étienne Cartier's Great Coalition in 1864, Tilley insisted during the negotiations at Charlottetown and Quebec City that the Intercolonial Railway was vital to political and economic union with Canada. Tilley's government, however, was defeated in the 1865 general election, and a new government, led by Albert Smith, pursued a new trade deal with the United States as an alternative to Confederation. Following the Fenian aggression on Indian Island on 14 April 1866, however, New Brunswickers reconsidered the Confederation deal and re-elected Tilley's government to continue pursuing Confederation. When Tilley returned home in March 1867 from negotiating the final terms of union in London, England, he was received as a hero. After Confederation, Tilley oversaw the Customs Department as a cabinet minister, and subsequently served as the Minister of Finance in 1873 and 1878 as well as the fourth Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick from 1873 to 1879.

[The mini unit provides short biographies of all historical figures.](#)

Handout: Copies of Treaties of Peace and Friendship



Note: The spelling in these treaties is very inconsistent, so we did not mark misspellings with [sic].

Treaty of 1725 for Ratification at Annapolis Royal

Reproduced from: *"Indian Treaties and Surrenders, from 1680-1890: In Two Volumes, Volume 1."*
Ottawa: S.E. Dawson Printer, 1905: 198.

ARTICLES OF SUBMISSION AND AGREEMENT made at Boston, in New England, by Sanquaaram alias Loron Arexus, François Xavier and Meganumbe, delegates from Penobscott, Naridgwack, St. Johns, Cape Sables and other tribes inhabiting within his Majesty's territories of Nova Scotia or New England.

Whereas His Majesty King George by concession¹ of the Most Christian King, made at the Treaty of Utrecht, is become the rightful possessor of the Province of Nova Scotia or Acadia according to its ancient boundaries: We, the said Sanquaaram alias Loron Arexus, François Xavier and Meganumbe, delegates from said tribes of Penobscott, Naridgwack, St. Johns, Cape Sables and other tribes inhabiting within His Majesty's said territories of Nova Scotia or Acadia and New England, do, in the name and behalf of the said tribes we represent, acknowledge His said Majesty King George's jurisdiction and dominion over the territories of the said Province of Nova Scotia or Acadia, and make our submission to His said Majesty in as ample a manner as we have formerly done to the most Christian King.

And we further promise on behalf of the said tribes we represent that the Indians² shall not molest³ any of His Majesty's subjects or their dependants in their settlements already made or lawfully to be made, or in their carrying on their traffick and other affairs within the said Province.

That if there happens any robbery or outrage committed by any of the Indians, the tribe or tribes they belong to shall cause satisfaction and restitution to be made to the parties injured.

That the Indians shall not help to convey away any soldiers belonging to His Majesty's forts, but on the contrary shall bring back any soldier they shall find endeavouring⁴ to run away.

That in case of any misunderstanding, quarrel or injury between the English and the Indians no private revenge shall be taken, but application shall be made for redress according to His Majesty's laws.

That if the Indians have made any prisoners belonging to the Government of Nova Scotia or Acadia during the course of the war they shall be released at or before the ratification of this treaty.

That this treaty shall be ratified⁵ at Annapolis Royal.

¹ Concession = to give up

² Indians = an archaic term for First Nations Peoples

³ Molest = bother

⁴ Endeavoring = trying to accomplish something

⁵ Ratified = made official

[The mini unit also includes Indigenous primary documents, including texts from the Treaties of Peace and Friendship.](#)

Curriculum Objectives

This mini-unit has been broadly designed for intermediate/senior-level classes. The activities described in the pages, for example, fulfill the following outcomes listed in New Brunswick's "Social Studies 7: Empowerment" and "Canadian History 122" curriculum guides.

The mini-unit can be accessed here:

<http://hcmc.uvic.ca/confederation/pdfs/new-brunswick-provincial-en.pdf>

Background

Before each province and territory became a part of Canada, their local legislatures (and the House of Commons after 1867) debated the extent, purposes and principles of political union between 1865 and 1949. In addition to creating provinces, the British Crown also negotiated a series of Treaties with Canada's Indigenous Peoples. Although these texts, and the records of their negotiation, are equally important to Canada's founding, as the Truth and Reconciliation Committee recently explained, "too many Canadians still do not know the history of Indigenous peoples' contributions to Canada, or understand that by virtue of the historical and modern Treaties negotiated by our government, we are all Treaty people."

The vast majority of these records, however, remain inaccessible and many can only be found in provincial archives. By bringing together these diverse colonial, federal and Indigenous records for the first time, and by embracing novel technologies and dissemination formats, [*The Confederation Debates*](#) encourages Canadians of all ages and walks of life to learn about past challenges, to increase political awareness of historical aspirations and grievances and engage present-day debates, as well as to contribute to local, regional and national understanding and reconciliation.

