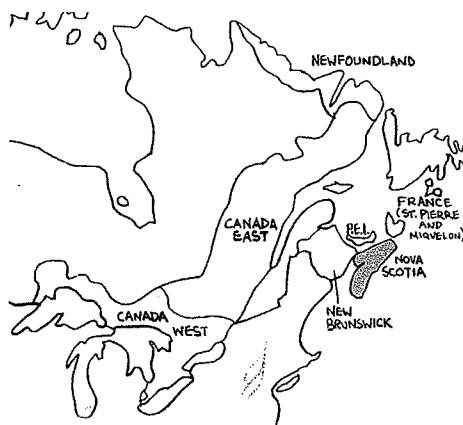


Nova Scotia – Background

Population (circa 1860): 331,000

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)



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.

Politics is highly sophisticated in Nova Scotia. The first British North American colony to achieve responsible government, in 1848, 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.

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 Scotian 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.

Nova Scotia – Viewpoints

Drawn from D. Creighton, *Dominion of the North: The History of Canada* (Macmillan, 1957); H.H. Herstein, L.J. Hughes & R.C. Kirbyson, *Challenge and Survival: The History of Canada* (Prentice, 1970) and P.B. Waite, *Confederation, 1854-1867* (Holt, 1972).

1. 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?

2. M.I. Wilkins on the Union of British North America (Halifax *British Colonist*, 13 June 1854)

A union of the B.N.A. Colonies I believe to be indispensable. . . . We may become independent without casting off our allegiance [to Britain]. Colonies are like children. . . . when they arrive at maturity they require different treatment. . . . They have a right to look about the world and set up for themselves. . . . But does it follow from this that all connection between them must cease? By no means. With regard to a federal union I will waste few words. There is an old saying but a very true one that "Union is strength."

3. 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 the 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 or interest in it!

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

(H)aving got power, Tupper intends to keep it at 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.

5. 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.

6. John A. Macdonald for the Intercolonial Railway
(A speech in Halifax, 12 September 1864)

(T)his railway must be a national work, and Canada will cheerfully contribute to the utmost extent in order to make that important link, without which no political connection can be complete. What will be the consequence to this city, prosperous as it is, from that communication? Montreal is at this moment competing with New York for the trade of the great West. Build the road and Halifax will become one of the great emporiums of the world. All the great resources of the west will come over the immense railways of Canada to the bosom of your harbour.