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Toward Confederation

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- **Confederation** was the union of colonies in British North America into a federation.
- **Federation** is a federal union in which:
 1. members keep some power & give other powers to a central government.

Economic Pressure

- 1846 – The British government repealed the **Corn Laws**, which gave preferential treatment to goods imported from British colonies. This put the British North American colonies into an economic depression.
- Canadians began to look into a union of all of the BNA colonies as a way of helping their economy.

Lord Elgin & Responsible Government

- James Bruce, the **Lord of Elgin** was the governor sent by the British to implement responsible government.
- Elgin set out to make Canada a semi-independent nation (still part of the British Empire) & introduce democracy.
- 1849 – the new government of Canada passed the **Rebellion Losses Bill**. This Bill gave financial compensation to anyone who had lost property during the rebellion (including the rebels). Anti-rebel forces were outraged and called it rewarding treason. As a result:
 1. Elgin's carriage was attacked
 2. There was two days of rioting
 3. The parliament buildings were burnt down.
- Lord Elgin had laid the foundation for Canadian democracy by signing a bill he didn't agree with – an example of responsible government.
- Some angry merchants published the Annexation Manifesto, a plan for the United States to take over Canada.

Building a Nation

- The idea of confederation was unpopular with:
 - Canada East (French culture afraid of assimilation)
 - Maritime colonies (not much in common with Canada)
- A union or confederation would mean a central government that would control defence, foreign affairs, currency, postage and taxation.
- Confederation would cost a lot of money, which had to be paid in taxes. People needed to be convinced that it was a good idea.
- Minority groups (Aboriginals, Metis, Acadians etc.) weren't consulted in this.

