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**Confederation Game**

The year is 1867 and the colonies of British North America are facing a number of problems as separate areas. As a result, the Confederation Conference has been called with one purpose in mind: to arrive at a common basis upon which a nation can be formed. The approach to this conference will have to be very informal and secrecy is a must. No one but the delegates are allowed to attend these meetings and press releases will not be given out until the conference ends.

The six colonies present: **Canada East, Canada West, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and PEI**.

Inside the conference itself there will be a “no holds barred” attitude. Argument and debate are the tools of the delegates. Each person is fighting for the good of the region he/she represents as well as what is good for the potential nation as a whole. But each delegate must constantly be aware that re-election is very important and, therefore, the wishes of his/her constituents must be taken into consideration when voting.

During the conference a series of eight proposals will be put forward by members of the six groups attending. They are the following:

1. Intercolonial Trade $50,000,000

2. Maritime Subsidy $20,000,000

3. Colonial Debts $50,000,000

4. Intercolonial Railway $50,000,000

5. Canadian Pacific Railway $100,000,000

6. Purchase of Hudson’s Bay Company Land $300,000,000

7. Defense Bill $80,000,000

8. Federal System $50,000,000

The proposals total $700,000,000. However, all proposals cannot be passed as the total budget is only **$500,000,000**. It is up to the delegates from each area to argue for the proposals that will benefit their own riding but, keep in mind, the whole nation should benefit as well. How you vote will determine if you are re-elected.

Each colony will have a leader (Father of Confederation), and each leader will have to present the bill that they are responsible for.

The leaders are:

* **Alexander Campbell**, Canada West; **George Brown**, Canada West
* **Alexander Galt**, Canada East; **George Etienne Cartier**, Canada East
* **Thomas Haviland**, Prince Edward Island
* **Ambrose Shea**, Newfoundland
* **Charles Tupper**, Nova Scotia
* **Sir Leonard Tilley**, New Brunswick

Each colony must prepare a short speech on each bill (proposal). The speech does not need to be long, can last 1-5 minutes. In the speech, the colonist leaders must talk about why that specific bill would be either beneficial or detrimental (good or bad) to their colony. Colonists of each colony should work together for each speech.

After preparing the speeches, the colonists of each colony will vote amongst their group on what bills they feel their colony should pursue to pass. Keep in mind: only $500,000,000 can be spent!

Colonists then proceed to present their speech to the other delegates. Most colonists will have two speeches.

After each colony has said their speech on a specific bill, the colonies are permitted to debate on that bill. The goal is to try and convince the other colonies that the specific bill would benefit them or that it would not, depending on the goal of the colony.

Once all eight bills have been discussed and debated on, there will be a final debate, where as a group, you will debate and decide on which bills will be passed and which will not. The **$500,000,000** limit is still in effect.

Once the Bills have been decided upon and the money spent, delegates should spend a couple of minutes with their colleagues from their colony and decide whether or not their colony should join Confederation. Then the Queen polls each of the colonies to see if they will join or not. Results vary. A colony should not join if all the Bills they are in favour of don’t pass. The opposite is also true.

**Confederation Bills**

**Proposal #1**: To establish free trade between the British North American colonies by the Union of these Colonies.

•Sponsor: **Alexander Campbell**, Canada West

•Cost: $50,000,000

•Explanation: During the 1850's and 1860's, the colonies in Canada suffered two serious setbacks. Great Britain no longer gave the colonies a preference in trading. The colonies had lost the protection of the British navigation laws that had helped their fledgling trade and industries. Secondly, the Americans withdrew their free trade agreement with British North America. Thus, assured markets were lost and each colony found itself trying to trade in competition with countries with resources and capital. Previously there had been little trade between the colonies, but now they began to see each other as markets for their various products. The trade was, of course, dependent on the construction of a railway, but the movement of products within a protected area would remove competition from other countries and allow the economies to thrive.

•Pros: The prospect of free trade appealed to all the provinces. The Maritimes saw markets for their fish, coal and manufactured goods while also increasing the use of their seaports with increased products from the interior of Canada. The Canadas saw trade as a way of utilizing the system of canals and railroads that had been built but never used effectively. And, they would gain secure ocean ports so essential for year-round trade.

•Cons: Free trade among the colonies would cause the loss of revenue from tariffs. The Maritimes particularly objected to the loss of these monies as tariffs were a major source of finance for their colonial governments. Moreover, the industries of the various areas would come into competition. New Brunswick, for example, would be competing with Quebec in the lumber industry. The Maritimes felt that their struggling manufacturing concerns might be unable to contend with the more established industries in the Canadas.

**Proposal #2**: To solve Maritime Economic problems through an annual subsidy from the central government.

•Sponsor: **Thomas Haviland**, Prince Edward Island

•Cost: $20,000,000

•Explanation: During the pre-confederation years, the Maritimes had experienced a period of prosperity. This was based on the export of wood and fish, wooden shipbuilding and the carrying trade. The continued success of each of these industries was essential for the overall development and growth of the colonies. By the mid-eighteen sixties, it was evident that the time of prosperity was over. The timber resources were almost exhausted and those that remained were inaccessible because of poor overland transportation facilities. The fishing industry was no longer protected by British navigation laws and it had to face the competition of the New England States and the West Indies. Finally, the coming of the steamship assured the decline of the Maritime economy. Steamships were taking on more of the carrying trade causing sailing ships to make longer voyages at smaller profits. Steamships were crossing the Atlantic regularly in less time than the best of the sailing ships. Thus, the Maritime colonies had to seek new avenues of trade and commerce to restore their falling economy.

•Pros: The Maritime colonies would benefit from a guarantee of economic subsidy to compensate for their losses.

•Cons: However, the Maritime colonies learned that such dependence on a federal government might inhibit their economic growth and weaken their bargaining position with the other areas.

**Proposal #3**: To have the debts of the colonies assumed by the Federal Government.

•Sponsor: **Ambrose Shea**, Newfoundland

* Cost: $50,000,000

•Explanation: Some of the British North American colonies were seriously in debt. In the Canadas, the failure of the railroads and the St. Lawrence Canal system to stimulate trade left the colony with a debt of about $40,000,000. Because their railway programs had failed, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick owed $10,000,000. The other Atlantic colonies had various debts, but they were not as unmanageable. The union would provide a solution to the debt-ridden colonies in that the Federal Government would take over their debts.

•Pros: This proposal would help those colonies with financial difficulties to begin again on a firm financial footing.

•Cons: The debts of Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island were minimal compared to those of other three colonies. Therefore, they felt this proposition would be of little practical use to them. The Maritime colonies also feared that financial control would pass to a central government and the greater financial interests in the Canadas, particularly in Montreal, would have an increased say in Maritime economies.

**Proposal #4**: To Build an Intercolonial Railway.

•Sponsor: **Charles Tupper**, Nova Scotia

•Cost: $50,000,000

•Explanation: The Intercolonial Railway was a scheme to connect the Canadas with the colonies. The proposed route would be from Riviere-du-Loup in Lower Canada to Shediac; New Brunswick to Truro, Nova Scotia. The new railway would link existing routes in the Maritimes so that Saint John and Halifax would be joined to Upper and Lower Canada. The new Federal Government would assume the cost of such a project thus removing any question of equality of payment among the provinces. Railroads had been found to be extremely expensive to construct and the eastern colonies had stopped railway building.

•Pros: The Intercolonial Railway would provide the Canadas with a year-round seaport. It would create a new source of markets for both the Canadas and Maritimes. There would be free trade between the areas that would stimulate the prosperity of all. The railway would assure a method of troop movement that would protect any area in the Maritimes that was threatened. New Brunswick saw the Intercolonial as a way of increasing the prosperity of the colony as the majority of the road would be through that province.

•Cons: Newfoundland and P.E.I. could see no benefit from the railway.

**Proposal #5**: To construct a railway to the Pacific Ocean.

•Sponsor: **Alexander Galt**, Canada East.

•Cost: $100,000,000

•Explanation: The Canadian Pacific Railway was to link the Canadas to the Pacific Ocean. The route was to be wholly in Canada, running north of Lake Superior, across the Northwest, and through the Rocky Mountains to Vancouver. The railway would serve to secure the Northwest in that troops could be deployed to defend the area. It would also help in uniting British Columbia with the new nation. With the transportation facilities provided by the C.P.R., the Northwest could be opened up for settlement and trade goods could travel from east to west.

•Pros: The railway would retain the Hudson's Bay area for Canada in that it would provide an effective method of defending the country. It would allow the Canadas to expand into new areas and stimulate the economy by providing a port on the Pacific. New capital would be available to help the debt-ridden railways and by further expansion it was felt they would be able to make a profit.

•Cons: The main disadvantages to the Canadian Pacific Railway were seen in the Atlantic colonies. Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island would realize little benefit from the C.P.R. All of the Atlantic colonies could see an increase in the financial influence of Montreal as the railway program progressed and they feared that their needs would be neglected.

**Proposal #6**: To purchase the Hudson's Bay Company land.

•Sponsor: **George Brown**, Canada West

•Cost: $300,000,000

•Explanation: The Hudson's Bay Company land consisted of a great portion of present-day Quebec, Ontario, the Prairie Provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. This vast amount of land was essential for the future development of Canada according to many of the delegates to the Confederation Conference.

•Pros: The purchase of the Northwest would provide an essential hinterland both for future development and expansion of the new country. It would create a vital link with British Columbia, and with the building of a railway, it was possible that British Columbia would join the new country. Also, this land would be secured for Canada and the chance of an American take-over would diminish. For the Canadas, the Northwest would provide an area for investments and future profits.

•Cons: The cost of the venture was one of the big factors against it. The Maritimes were oriented toward the sea and this vast western hinterland held little interest for them. They could see no advantage for themselves in its purchase. They feared that capital that might have been used to their advantage would now be concentrated on the development of the hinterland.

**Proposal #7**: To form a Federal Government to provide a strong defense for the British North American Colonies.

•Sponsor: **Leonard Tilley**, New Brunswick

•Cost: $80,000,000

•Explanation: In the pre-confederation years, the question of defense was a concern of all the British Colonies in North America. The relationship between Britain and the United States had been strained because of incidents during the American Civil War. The military situation in the colonies was extremely weak; it had become too expensive for Britain to maintain a large standing army in each colony. The main defensive units consisted of poorly equipped militia. A group of Irish extremists known as the Fenians had formed an army in the States. Their purpose was to attack British North America and provoke a war between Britain and the United States. By doing this, they hoped to have British military strength removed from Ireland so a successful revolution could take place. Raids by the Fenians in Upper Canada and New Brunswick in 1866 graphically illustrated the need for a unified defense program. With union would come railroads that would provide a fast, efficient way of moving troops if the need arose.

•Pros: The creation of a unified defense program would enable an army of professional soldiers to be formed. This would protect the country in the face of any aggressive act by any group or country. A well defended country could prosper without fear of external influences.

•Cons: Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland could not relate to these problems because of their geographic position. Traditionally, they relied on the sea as a major part of their defense. A standing army would be of little value to them as their first line of defense was the British Navy.

**Proposal #8**: To form a Federal System of Government.

•Sponsor: **George Etienne Cartier**, Canada East

•Cost: $50,000,000

•Explanation: A Federal system of government is one in which a number of regions form another level of government to look after common areas of interest. Each area then controls its own local matters.
The proposed Federal system in Canada gave the Dominion government a total of 29 areas of control. Some of them were:

- trade and commerce
- raising money by taxation
- postal service
- the census
- defense measures
- salaries of civil and other officers
- navigation and shipping
- fisheries
- issue of money
- banking
- weights and measures
- patents and copyrights
- First Nations and lands reserved for First Nations
- criminal law
- penitentiaries

The provinces could make laws in the following areas:

- direct taxation within the province
- appointment and payment of provincial officers
- management and sale of public lands belonging to the province
- establishment and operation of prisons for the province
- establishment and operation of hospitals and asylums
- issuance of licenses to shops, saloons, taverns, etc.
- development of railways, canals, telegraph, roads, steamship lines, etc.
- administration of justice within the province
- education

•Pros: The Federal system provided advantages to all areas. For example, a centrally run method of defense would ensure the security of the new nation. Moreover, each province could remain in control of important matters to its particular area and be able to retain its distinct regional character. Canada East was concerned that the French culture would be lost if they were not allowed to be, "maitre chez nous," masters in our own house. Thus, the Federal system provided for both unity and diversity.

•Cons: There were drawbacks to a federal system as opposed to a central and single government. Some delegates argued that an additional level of government would be created that would have to be administered at the expense of the taxpayer. Moreover, it was easy to foresee conflict over each government's authority. Other opponents of the proposed federal system contended that since this system was based on representation by population, that meant that the smaller provinces would have fewer representatives in Parliament. These areas were concerned that their interests would not be considered as important as the interests of those areas with larger representation.