

high seas by the British Navy. This was owing to British insistence on control over neutral ships approaching Europe, then largely dominated by Napoleon. The second element in the United States was more vociferous: a group from the new western tier of states, Kentucky (1792), Ohio (1802), and Indiana Territory (a state in 1816), called the War Hawks, wanted Canada, especially Upper Canada, to be part of the United States. These elements joined to produce a clear but by no means overwhelming majority for a war resolution in the American Congress in June 1812. Canada was successfully defended, though not without difficulty, by British troops, British North American defence regiments, militia and Indians. At sea, despite some individual setbacks, the British Navy was able to control the coasts around the Atlantic seaboard. By the end of the war Britain had possession of Maine as far south as the Penobscot, and controlled Michilimackinac and part of what is now Michigan and Wisconsin.

The Peace of Ghent was made in December 1814, while the Congress of Vienna was preoccupied with the much more formidable question of a general European settlement. It was owing to these preoccupations that Great Britain accepted the *status quo ante bellum* as a definition of boundaries. The main issues between Britain and the United States were left until the Convention of 1818. This Convention regulated the North Atlantic fisheries' question and settled the western boundary between British North America and the United States as the 49th parallel from Lake of the Woods westward to the Rockies. The country west of the Rockies was left under joint occupation of both countries from the northern border of Spanish California, 42°N, to the southern border of Russian Alaska at 54° 40'N. Altogether, the settlement kept the British North American border relatively peaceful until the disruptions caused by the Rebellions of 1837.

2.2.5 The 1837 rebellion

In the 1830s serious problems arose in Lower Canada. Though similar structural and constitutional issues developed in other provinces, notably Upper Canada and Nova Scotia, in Lower Canada there was a complex of issues. There was the obvious constitutional one: an Assembly with a French Canadian majority trying to acquire, under the vigorous leadership of Louis-Joseph Papineau (1786-1871), control over an Executive Council composed mainly of British Canadians with a few French Canadian supporters. The British element wanted to keep control of the Executive Council and at the same time persuade the Assembly to spend more money on commercial development, such as improving the canal system, but the Assembly resisted. More deep-seated problems were, however, the agricultural crisis in Lower Canada caused by declining yields of wheat and other grains on old, long-used seigneurial lands, (wheat rust and declining yields became especially obvious in the area of the Richelieu valley by the 1830s), and the commercial crisis of 1837 which affected both the United States and British North America. These crises exacerbated all the other grievances.

The catalyst of the trouble was a constitutional quarrel with the British government and the Executive Council of Lower Canada. Sporadic fighting broke out in November 1837 in Montreal and warrants were issued by the Governor General for the arrest of the *Patriote* leaders. Fighting began in the Richelieu valley by mid-November and was put down by British troops and much more ruthlessly by British Canadian militia, who used the opportunity to settle numerous old scores. In Upper Canada a smaller rebellion took place under the volatile leadership of William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861). It too was put down by local militia — all the regular British troops having been sent to Lower Canada. Mackenzie however escaped, as had Papineau, to the United States, where both took the lead in fomenting border troubles for the next year. Americans, in New York state especially, believed that the time was now ripe for Lower Canada and Upper Canada to fall into American hands or, at the very least, that they should help the two colonies become separate republics.

2.3 Responsible government and Confederation

Lord Durham (1792-1840) was commissioned by the British government as Governor General to find the causes of the Lower and Upper Canada troubles and to recommend changes. He arrived in Quebec City in May 1838.

The result of these recommendations, incorporated in his *Report on the affairs of British North America*, was the union of the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada into the one province of Canada in 1841. Durham believed that the French Canadians would have to be assimilated within an Anglo-Saxon community. Union was naturally disliked in Lower