

# Province House

National Historic Site

Prince Edward Island

## COLONIAL BUILDING.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Charlottetown,  
Prince Edward Island, 2d May, 1842.

SEALED TENDERS will be received at this  
Office until FRIDAY, the FIRST day of JULY next, for  
the Erection and Completion of the COLONIAL BUILD-  
ING.

Tenders to express the several departments of Work and  
Materials, as under:

Nova Scotia Stone, for the outside Walls, in one tender.  
All Stone-cutters', Masons' and Bricklayers' work and  
materials, (except Nova Scotia Stone, as above), in one  
tender.

All Sawsyers', Carpenters' and Joiners' work and mate-  
rials, in one tender.

All Plasterers' work and materials, in one tender.

All Painters' and Glaziers' work and materials, in one  
tender.

All Slaters' work and materials, in one tender.

All Plumbers' work and materials, in one tender.

Plans, Elevations, Sections and Specifications of the  
whole may be seen on application as above.

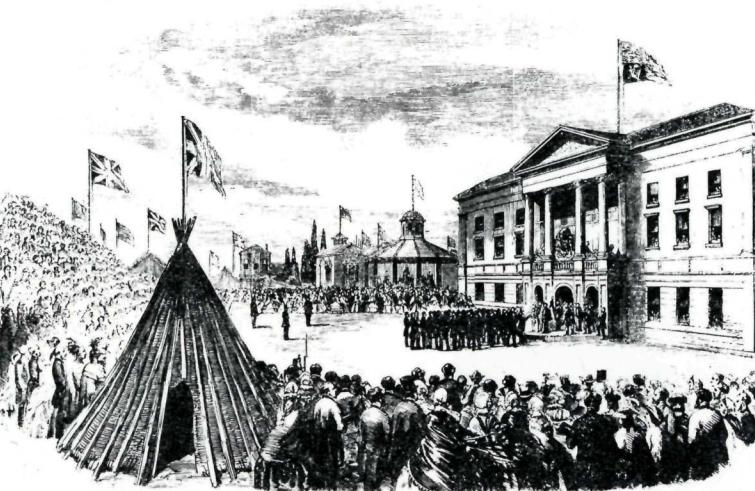
Ample Security will be required for the due performance  
of each Contract.

The Pictou Observer, Halifax Times and Nova-  
Scotian, St. John Courier, and Miramichi Gleaner, will  
please insert the above four times.

Province House was conceived by a colonial governor, built by Islanders and was the birthplace of the Canadian nation. It has contained at one time or another, the seat of colonial government, a law court, an administration complex and entertainment rooms for state visitors. Today, Province House is the legislative centre of Canada's Garden Province, is a significant example of Canada's architectural heritage, and is a National Historic Site.

### The Building

Province House was built and furnished by Islanders; only one of the eight construction contracts awarded was to a non-native to supply Wallace sandstone from Nova Scotia. The plans called for a 3-storey building 120 feet long and 50 feet wide. The craftsmanship that went into the construction, finishing and furnishing of the structure was excellent and in the tradition of the artisans, many of whose reputations were well established throughout the Maritimes and beyond.



### The Beginnings

In 1837 Governor John Harvey recognized that Prince Edward Island required a "Colonial Building" to accommodate public records. This was expanded by the Island Assembly to include offices, the two houses of the Legislature, and the law courts.

A design competition held throughout the Maritime Provinces resulted in the £20 prize being won by an Island architect, Isaac Smith, who proposed a classical Georgian structure, a style popular in the British Colonies at the time. Construction was delayed until 1842: the cornerstone was laid in 1843: and the building was completed and officially opened on January 26, 1847 at a cost of £15,000-£10,000 over the original estimate.

Prince Edward Island had enjoyed its own colonial government since 1769 and Province House was to be the focal point in an active political and social climate. It was here that responsible government was won.

Banquets and balls were held on important occasions such as the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1860 and the "Canadian Delegates", in 1864.

The interior of Province House was undergone extensive renovation as a result of changes in space requirements and installation of modern conveniences such as central heating, plumbing and sprinkler systems. The Confederation Chamber still remains much as it was, including the original table and chairs. There have, however, been few exterior changes to the building since 1847.

Province House was for many years the principal stone building in Charlottetown and has been a

stable factor in the changing landscape of the City over the years.

### Confederation Chamber

A tour of Province House is highlighted by visiting the Confederation Chamber, the cradle of Canada. Between September 1 and 8, 1864, the eight delegates from the Canadas, led by John A. Macdonald and Georges Etienne Cartier, outlined a proposal for the union of all the provinces of British North America. In this room the delegates reached agreement on the broad aspects of what was to be a major cornerstone of Canada's constitution. Around the table are cards showing the names of the Fathers of Confederation.

The Charlottetown agreement was further refined at the Quebec and London conferences and became law in 1867 as the British North America Act. It is ironic that not until 1873 did the Islanders decide to join Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario in Canadian Confederation.



Indian and  
Northern Affairs

Parks Canada

Affairs indiennes  
et du Nord

Parcs Canada

### Restoration

Parks Canada, in co-operation with the government of Prince Edward Island, has begun a program of research and restoration that over the next few years will return much of Province House to its original state. The restoration program will continue the tradition of a 'living' Province House as the building will remain the seat of the legislature and the location of public offices.

Until research and restoration are completed it may be necessary to inconvenience visitors from time to time; also it will not be possible to offer a full range of interpretive programs and services. Your patience, co-operation and suggestions will be appreciated.

Enjoy your visit to Province House; we hope you will discover and enjoy the dignity, charm and heritage that this 'cradle of Canada' offers.

Published by Parks Canada under the authority of the Hon. Judd Buchanan, PC, MP, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs

© Information Canada, 1974.  
Catalogue No. R64-71/1974  
INA Publication No. QS-TO76-000-BB-A1

# Province House

Lieu historique national

Ile-du-Prince-Édouard

## COLONIAL BUILDING.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Charlottetown,  
Prince Edward Island, 2d May, 1842.

SEALED TENDERS will be received at this  
Office until FRIDAY, the FIRST day of JULY next, for  
the Erection and Completion of the COLONIAL BUILD-  
ING.

Tenders to express the several departments of Work and  
Materials, as under:

Nova Scotia Stone, for the outside Walls, in one tender.

All Stone-cutters', Masons' and Bricklayers' work and  
materials, (except Nova Scotia Stone, as above), in one  
tender.

All Sawyers', Carpenters' and Joiners' work and mate-  
rials, in one tender.

All Plasterers' work and materials, in one tender.

All Painters' and Glaziers' work and materials, in one  
tender.

All Slaters' work and materials, in one tender.

All Plumbers' work and materials, in one tender.

Plans, Elevations, Sections and Specifications of the  
whole may be seen on application as above.

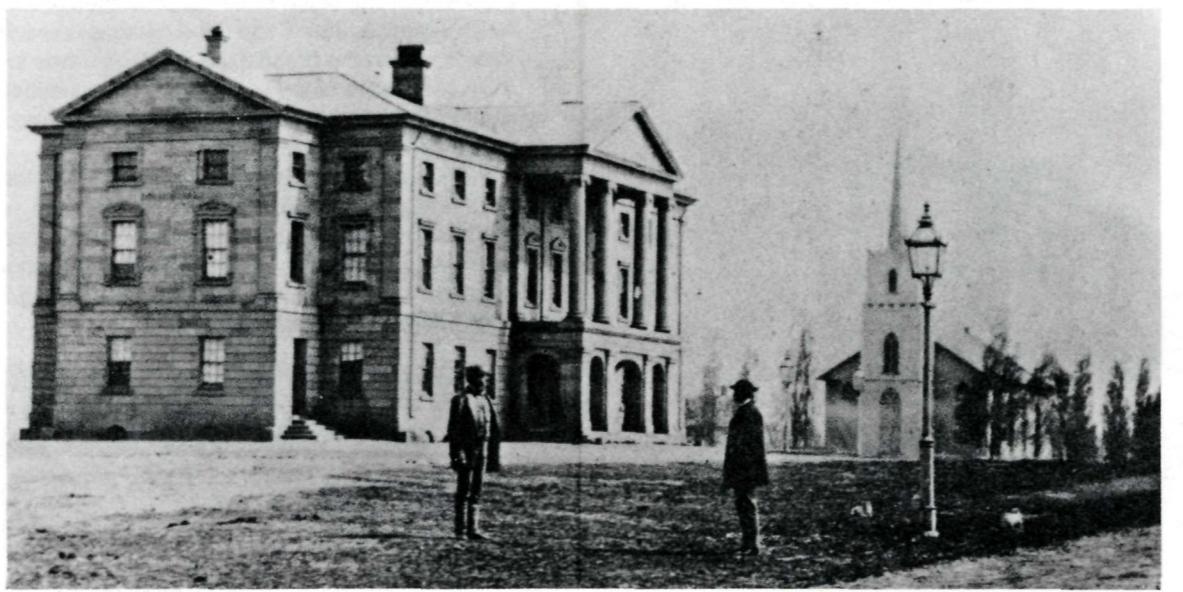
Ample Security will be required for the due performance  
of each Contract.

The Pictou Observer, Halifax Times and Nova-  
Scotian, St. John Courier, and Miramichi Gleaner, will  
please insert the above four times.

## Les débuts

En 1837, le gouverneur John Harvey reconnaît le fait qu'il fallait à l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard un "Edifice colonial" pour préserver les archives publiques. L'Assemblée législative de l'Ile décida plus tard d'agrandir l'édifice de manière à ce qu'il puisse abriter des bureaux, les deux Chambres de la Législature et un palais de justice.

On organisa un concours d'avant-projet s'étendant à toutes les provinces maritimes et comportant un prix en espèce de £20. Le vainqueur fut un habitant de l'Ile, l'architecte Isaac Smith, qui proposait un édifice de style géorgien classique, style en vogue dans les colonies britanniques à cette époque. La construction fut remise jusqu'en 1842: la pierre angulaire fut posée en 1843 et l'édifice fut complété quatre ans plus tard au coût de £15,000, soit £10,000 de plus que prévu à l'origine. L'ouverture officielle put donc avoir lieu le 26 janvier 1847.



## L'édifice

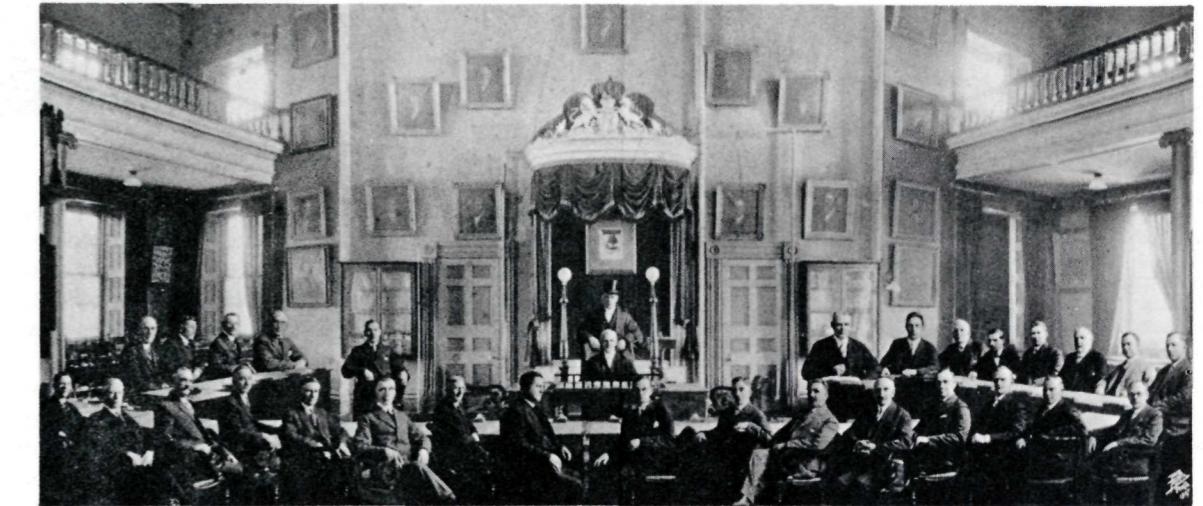
Province House fut conçue par un gouverneur colonial, érigée par des Insulaires et fut le berceau de la nation canadienne. Elle a abrité, à des époques diverses, le siège du gouvernement colonial, un palais de justice, un complexe administratif et des salles de réception pour les visiteurs d'Etats. De nos jours, Province House, qui est le siège de l'Assemblée législative de la province communément appelée "le Jardin du Canada", constitue un exemple marquant de l'héritage architectural canadien et a été déclaré lieu historique national.

Pendant plusieurs années, Province House constituait l'édifice de pierre le plus important dans Charlottetown et fut un élément stable dans le paysage changeant de la ville au cours des années.

## La Chambre de la Confédération

Ce qui provoque le plus d'intérêt lors d'une visite à Province House, c'est la Chambre de la Confédération, berceau du Canada. Du 1er au 8 septembre 1864, les huit délégués des Canadas, dirigés par John A. Macdonald et Georges Etienne Cartier, formulèrent le projet de l'union de toutes les provinces de l'Amérique du Nord britannique. C'est dans cette salle que les délégués s'entendent sur les grandes lignes de ce qui devait devenir la pierre angulaire de la constitution canadienne. Les cartes disposées autour de la table portent le nom des Pères de la Confédération.

L'accord conclu à Charlottetown fut discuté plus en détail lors des conférences de Québec et de Londres, et fut proclamé loi en 1867, sous le nom de l'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord britannique. On constate avec ironie que les habitants de l'Ile attendirent jusqu'en 1873 pour entrer dans la Confédération canadienne, rejoignant ainsi la Nouvelle-Ecosse, le Nouveau-Brunswick, le Québec et l'Ontario.



## La restauration

Parcs Canada, en coopération avec le gouvernement de l'Ile-du-Prince-Édouard, a entrepris un programme de recherche et de restauration qui, au cours des prochaines années, rendra son aspect original à une grande partie de Province House. Le programme de restauration maintiendra la tradition d'une Province House 'dynamique', puisque l'édifice demeurera le siège de la Législature et l'emplacement des bureaux de l'administration publique.

D'ici à ce que le travail de recherche et de restauration soit terminé, il se pourra qu'il incomode les visiteurs de temps à autre. Aussi, il ne sera pas possible d'offrir au public des programmes d'interprétation et des services complets. Nous comptons donc sur votre patience, votre coopération et vos suggestions.

Profitez de votre visite à Province House; nous espérons qu'elle vous fera découvrir et apprécier la dignité, le charme et l'héritage légués par ce 'berceau du Canada'.



Publié par Parcs Canada avec l'autorisation  
de l'hon. Judd Buchanan, CP, député, ministre  
des Affaires indiennes et du Nord.