

Jan 1970
TOWN HALL

On The Main Street

Tremendous torrents of water have flowed over the dam since the day one of the greatest of politicians spent a few hours in Lindsay. This notorious gentleman was none other than Sir John A. MacDonald — a politician, a lawyer, parliamentarian and statesman. The probability is that there are very few, if any, ever heard their ancestors mention what was, at that time, an historic event.

The late Sir Sam Hughes used to occasionally recall the visit and he collected facts from newspaper files stored in the public library.

The writer recalls a conversation with the late Sam Howe Sr., a popular tinsmith by trade, who had a shop at his residence on Ridout Street. The story goes that a public holiday was declared and schools and all places of business were closed. Kent Street was decorated with banners and miniature evergreen trees were fastened to the street light poles.

The official welcome took place at the Town Hall and Sir John addressed a throng of people, from a platform erected at the south side, which looked down Kent Street. Schools were closed and Kent Street merchants turned keys in the locks — everybody had the day off from work.

It is interesting to note that the Kent Street windows in the town hall were replicas of the first windows in the first House of Commons. The beautiful and historic windows disappeared when a town council decided on extensive alterations to the hall which included the lowering of the ceiling.

Many years ago the town hall auditorium extended from the west wall easterly to the east wall. The upstairs hall was reached by using a wide set of stairs. All traces of these old "landmarks" vanished when the south-east steps were removed in favor of the present layout.

History also records that there was an outside entrance to the hall, a steep number of steps at the south-west corner. The town clerk's office and treasurer's office were on the second floor and one of the first town clerks was a Miss Currie, followed by Fred Knowlson and later by Duncan Rae, a merchant. Rae served the town as clerk for many years.

When the clerk's office was on the second floor, the ground floor was a market place and farmers' wives displayed butter, eggs, sage, cheese and pickles, produce