

Statesman's Birthdate Jan. 11

Sir John A. MacDonald - - The Great Canadian

(Sir John A. Macdonald's birthday, ignored on Parliament Hill and by the press of Canada, was remembered by Gordon Sinclair, nationally known radio and television personality and by Bruce Smith of the C.B.C.

Mr. Sinclair's tributes to Sir John A. on his radio program "Let's Be Personal" from C.F.R.B. on January 11, 1960 and 1961 are here combined, with some slight changes, into a single text. It is made available in this form in the hope that it will stimulate interest in the life and role of the Great Canadian, and that in future years his birthday will be observed in a manner worthy of his massive contribution to the nation.

By Gordon Sinclair
We often hear the expression "Father of His Country."

Well Saturday is the birthday of the Father of Canada.

Sir John A. Macdonald — in my book the greatest Canadian statesman — was born in Glasgow, Scotland on January 11th - 146 years ago.

He was not only the first Prime Minister of Canada but in a parliamentary life of 47 years, Sir John was a cabinet minister for 33 years, holding almost every post.

Prime Minister 19 Years
He became the first Prime Minister of Canada in 1867, and until his death in 1891 there were only five years when he was not Prime Minister.

Sir John A. was not only the father of his country but without Macdonald — and those who stood with him — there would be no Canada stretching from coast to coast today. There would be no national economy.

Amidst the greatest of hardship, at a time when power tools were unknown and money was almost impossible to find, Macdonald's government completed the CPR and thus helped to bind the nation-to-be into a coast to coast pattern.

With scoop shovels and horses, Chinese coolies and timbers for trestle, the railway went through the forest, the muskeg, the great plains and the rocky mountains. It went through on human toil, human courage and imagination.

No Pattern, Few Friends
Macdonald had to put down rebellion and meet the constant cry of secession from the Maritimes. He had to feel his way toward a national policy with no pattern to guide him and few friends to help him.

While skillful in the handling of men, he was perhaps not a man of great intellect nor was he a great debater. He was often overcome by melancholy. He had trouble at home.

No man in all Canadian political life ever stood up to such intense criticism as did Sir John.

In fact there was a time in 1887 when every newspaper in Canada, except the Montreal Gazette, was denouncing Macdonald because of his national views and national vision of a national Canada.

Synonymous Words
You can't separate the word Macdonald from the word national.

He refused to compromise and refused to surrender his idea and his aim of a Canada that stretched from sea to sea. Such was his intensely determined Canadianism.

Historians agree, as do those Canadians who think about it, that without Macdonald the vision of Confederation would have dissolved, we would have separated into geographical fragments, and much of what is now Canada would long ago have been taken over by the United States. The very word Canada might be missing today but for the herculean efforts of this often tried but always determined Scot.

Defying Nature
The whole burden of the assault against Macdonald was that it was simply not physically, financially or politically possible to keep a thin line of more than 3,000 miles bordering the United States a going concern.

All the natural flow was North and South, how then could this stubborn man feel that he could defy nature and cause the flow to go East and West.

Let's get out of his madness, they said, cut our losses while we can and be our separate selves.

Every day, in some part of the country, this cry was raised.

To go over some old newspapers and see the bitterness of the attacks in word and picture is to wonder how the rugged old warrior ever stood up to it.

Could Have Quit
Far, far simpler for him to throw it all up, remind himself that failure often comes from effort, and quit trying.

But until the day of his death on Saturday, June the 6th, 1891, Macdonald, often tormented by

his own doubts, refused to accept this defeatism.

It makes me wonder what Sir John would think if he came back today to see hundreds of our largest corporations owned and controlled by the United States where all of the policy decisions are made.

What would he think of Canada selling her raw materials for a dime and buying back the finished product for a dollar, and of Canada without a flag of her own?

U.S. Lovers
What would he think of Canadians who advocate that our economy should be integrated with that of the United States and of those who go further and argue that it is the destiny of Canada to become part of the United States?

In his own lifetime Sir John left no doubt where he stood on such questions. He gave a firm and resounding answer to the slogan 'Manifest Destiny' a century ago. He would be equally emphatic today in rejecting the so-called 'continentalist theory' which would in effect reduce our country to a donkey economy.

Macdonald would say that Canadians in our day, no less than in his own, must be imbued with national purpose; must be concerned with national development; and must remain steadfast in their national loyalty. To Canadian youth Sir John would say: "You have a country to serve and a nation to build! Do not fail in your duty!" He would, I think, commend to all of us the words he used in the closing days of his life.

Strong Allegiance
"With my utmost effort, with my latest breath, I will oppose the 'veiled treason' which would lure our people from their allegiance."

Throughout most of his political life, Sir John was a parliamentary opponent of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and yet it was Laurier who paid the greatest tribute to him at the time of his death:

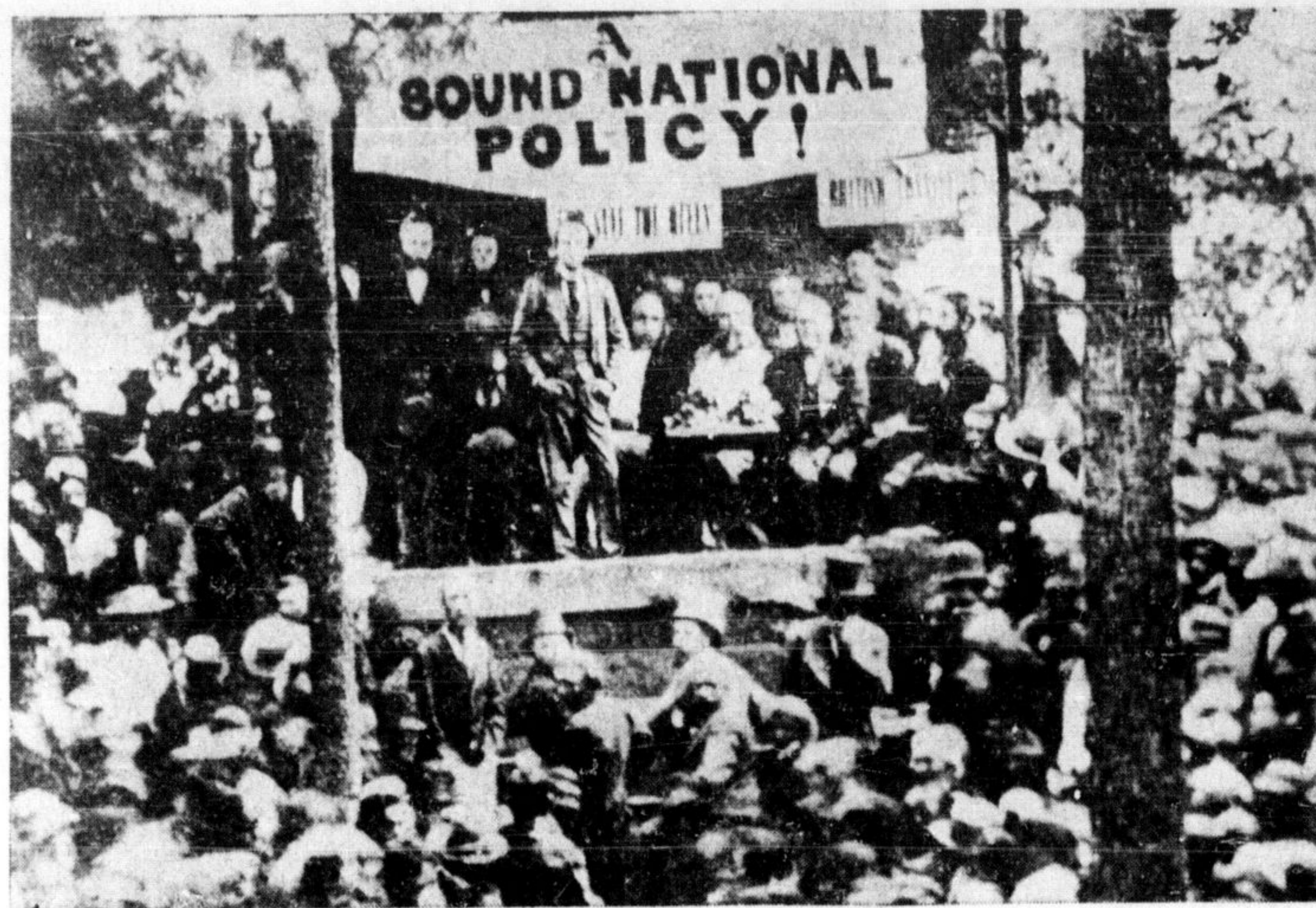
"Today we deplore the loss of him whom we all unite in saying was the foremost Canadian of his time and who filled the largest place in Canadian history. In fact the place of Sir John A. Macdonald in this country was so large and so absorbing that it is almost impossible to conceive that the politics of this country — the fate of this country — will continue without him. There were in his life, features so prominent and so conspicuous that already they shine with a radiance which time cannot alter. . . His actions displayed a far reaching vision beyond the event of the day, and still higher, permeating the whole, a broad patriotism, a devotion to Canada's welfare, Canada's advancement and Canada's glory. It may be said without any exaggeration whatsoever that the life of Sir John A. Macdonald, from the day he entered parliament, is the history of Canada. He was connected and associated with all of the events, all of the facts and all of the developments which brought Canada from the position that Canada then occupied . . . the position of two small provinces having nothing in common but the common allegiance and united by a bond of paper but nothing else . . . to the present state of development which Canada has reached."

Small Canada
And if you are interested in our growth since 1891, consider that when Sir John died the total population of Canada was less than five millions and only 349,346 of these lived west of the Great Lakes.
Less than the population of Hamilton lived west of Ontario. The total budget for all Canada in the year that Sir John died was \$36,343,567. That is just about the amount this one province of Ontario now spends on mental hospitals alone.

So far as I know no school or institution in all Ontario, unless it is Macdonald Hall at the Ontario Agricultural College, bears Sir John's name. There are a few schools named for him, in Quebec.

How strange that in the city of Toronto, where he was so often acclaimed in his lifetime, not even a public building bears his name. Perhaps the city fathers will decide to name the great expanse in front of the new City Hall, Macdonald Square; perhaps on the occasion of his 150th birthday a few years hence they will rename stately University Avenue, Macdonald Drive; perhaps other Canadian cities will also decide to honor his memory. I say perhaps, because on January 11th last year, Sir John's birthday passed unnoticed throughout the nation — even on Parliament Hill. The press of Canada likewise ignored the event. No doubt it will be the same this year.

Not on Calendars
Take a look at the calendar



SIR JOHN A. McDONALD visited Milton in 1877 when he attended a Conservative picnic and meeting in P. L. Robertson's Park or Livingstone Park. W. Beatty, Omagh, was the local Conservative candidate in that election. It is interesting to note that Halton voted Reform as long as the Conservative administration of Sir John A. McDonald ruled, but elected a Tory candidate when the Reform ministry of the Hon. Alexander led the country.

on your wall. You will probably find that it notes the birthdays of several U.S. Presidents and perhaps of many other celebrities, but no mention of Sir John A. or for that matter, of any other Canadian.

How are we to explain this gross neglect of the great Patriot statesman, whose vision, high courage and unremitting toil put our people on the road to nationhood; who established what is now called the Canadian Identity; who set before us a clear-cut National Purpose, and above all else, whose National Policies gave Canadians sovereign control of what is often described as the world's richest half continent, the real development of which has hardly begun.

How can we fail to think of Sir John A. when we hear the words of the stirring Canadian folk song:

"This land is your land, this land is my land,
From Bonavista to Vancouver Island,
From the Arctic Circle to the Great Lakes waters;
This land was made for you and me."

Almost seventy years have now passed since Macdonald was laid to rest beside his mother at Kingston, the city in which he grew to manhood, practiced law and represented in parliament for most of his life.

Hon. W. F. Nickle, for many years Attorney-General of Ontario, was a mere youth in Kingston when Sir John was buried there. On June 6th every year

A NEW YEAR — 1964



This is the time of year when we should all add up our assets and count our blessings. Some of these are spelled 'assets' and some are spelled 'assets'.

The 'assets' of course, keep a roof over our heads but the other 'assets' of living in a free society and being able to seek happiness in our own way make life under that roof worthwhile.

This is the time of year for pledges. We're going to play safe by sticking to the ones we've made throughout the year. That is, we promise to sell used cars as good as honest reconditioning can make them at the lowest possible price and to spare no effort to help you get the maximum satisfaction out of your new car.

There are a few operators in our business who maintain that the honest approach in advertising doesn't pay. The only technique that works is to outsmart the public with gimmicks they say, and in so operating they encourage the public to attempt to outsmart the dealer. We're still going to go on disagreeing with that thinking.

We'd like to thank our many customers for the confidence they have shown in us by buying their car from us and letting us service it. We'll continue to try to deserve that confidence.

While some parts of our country may have temporary economic distress, the overall picture and future forecasts are very bright. We need only to work together to make them come true.

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thereafter, until his own death, he laid a wreath on the grave of the old chief. I believe his son, Hon. William M. Nickle, now Minister of Commerce and Development for Ontario, has been carrying on the practice.

What other Canadian more richly merits our country's homage and gratitude? But I wonder if on this day — Sir John's birthday — anyone else will bother to pay tribute to the Father of Canada.

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