

= John A. Macdonald =

Sir John Alexander Macdonald GCB KCMG PC QC ( 11 January 1815 ? 6 June 1891 ) was the first Prime Minister of Canada ( 1867 ? 1873 , 1878 ? 1891 ) . The dominant figure of Canadian Confederation , he had a political career which spanned almost half a century . He drank heavily , and in 1873 was voted out during the Pacific Scandal , in which his party took bribes from businessmen seeking the contract to build the Pacific Railway . Macdonald 's greatest achievements were building and guiding a successful national government for the new Dominion , using patronage to forge a strong Conservative Party , promoting the protective tariff of the National Policy , and building the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway . Economic growth was slow during his years in office , as Canada verged on stagnation ; many residents migrated to the fast @-@ growing United States . He fought to block provincial efforts to take power back from Ottawa . His most controversial move was to approve the execution of Métis leader Louis Riel for treason in 1885 ; it alienated many Francophones .

Macdonald was born in Scotland ; when he was a boy his family immigrated to Kingston in the colony of Upper Canada ( today in eastern Ontario ) . As a lawyer he was involved in several high @-@ profile cases and quickly became prominent in Kingston , which elected him in 1844 to the legislature of the colonial United Province of Canada . By 1857 had become premier under the colony 's unstable political system .

When in 1864 no party proved capable of governing for long , Macdonald agreed to a proposal from his political rival , George Brown , that the parties unite in a Great Coalition to seek federation and political reform . Macdonald was the leading figure in the subsequent discussions and conferences , which resulted in the British North America Act and the birth of Canada as a nation on 1 July 1867 . Macdonald was the first Prime Minister of the new nation , and served 19 years ; only William Lyon Mackenzie King served longer .

= = Early years , 1815 ? 1830 = =

John Alexander Macdonald was born in Ramshorn parish in Glasgow , Scotland , on 11 January 1815 . His father was Hugh Macdonald , an unsuccessful merchant , who had married John 's mother , Helen Shaw , on 21 October 1811 . John Alexander Macdonald was the third of five children . After Hugh Macdonald 's business ventures left him in debt , the family immigrated to Kingston , in Upper Canada ( today the southern and eastern portions of Ontario ) , in 1820 , where there were already a number of Macdonald relatives and connections .

The Macdonalds initially lived with another family , but then resided over a store which Hugh Macdonald ran . Soon after their arrival , John 's younger brother James died from a blow to the head by a servant who was supposed to look after the boys . After Hugh 's store failed , the family moved to Hay Bay ( south of Napanee , Ontario ) , west of Kingston , where Hugh unsuccessfully ran another shop . His father , in 1829 , was appointed a magistrate for the Midland District . John Macdonald 's mother was a lifelong influence on her son , helping him in his difficult first marriage and remaining a force in his life until her 1862 death .

John initially attended local schools . When he was aged 10 , his family scraped together the money to send him to Midland District Grammar School in Kingston . Macdonald 's formal schooling ended at 15 , a common school @-@ leaving age at a time when only children from the most prosperous families were able to attend university . Nevertheless , Macdonald later regretted leaving school when he did , remarking to his secretary Joseph Pope that if he had attended university , he might have embarked on a literary career .

= = Law career , 1830 ? 1843 = =

= = Legal training and early career , 1830 ? 1837 = = =

Macdonald 's parents decided he should become a lawyer after leaving school . As Donald Creighton ( who penned a two @-@ volume biography of Macdonald in the 1950s ) wrote , " law was a broad , well @-@ trodden path to comfort , influence , even to power " . It was also " the obvious choice for a boy who seemed as attracted to study as he was uninterested in trade . " Besides , Macdonald needed to start earning money immediately to support his family because his father 's businesses were again failing . " I had no boyhood , " he complained many years later . " From the age of 15 , I began to earn my own living . "

Macdonald travelled by steamboat to Toronto ( known until 1834 as York ) , where he passed an examination set by The Law Society of Upper Canada , including mathematics , Latin , and history . British North America had no law schools in 1830 ; students were examined when beginning and ending their tutelage . Between the two examinations , they were apprenticed , or articulated to established lawyers . Macdonald began his apprenticeship with George Mackenzie , a prominent young lawyer who was a well @-@ regarded member of Kingston 's rising Scottish community . Mackenzie practised corporate law , a lucrative speciality that Macdonald himself would later pursue . Macdonald was a promising student , and in the summer of 1833 , managed the Mackenzie office when his employer went on a business trip to Montreal and Quebec in Lower Canada ( today the southern portion of the province of Quebec ) . Later that year , Macdonald was sent to manage the law office of a Mackenzie cousin who had fallen ill .

In August 1834 , George Mackenzie died of cholera . With his supervising lawyer dead , Macdonald remained at the cousin 's law office in Hallowell ( today Picton , Ontario ) . In 1835 , Macdonald returned to Kingston , and even though not yet of age nor qualified , began his practice as a lawyer , hoping to gain his former employer 's clients . Macdonald 's parents and sisters also returned to Kingston , and Hugh Macdonald became a bank clerk .

Soon after Macdonald was called to the Bar in February 1836 , he arranged to take in two students ; both became , like Macdonald , Fathers of Confederation . Oliver Mowat became premier of Ontario , and Alexander Campbell a federal cabinet minister and Lieutenant Governor of Ontario . One early client was Eliza Grimason , an Irish immigrant then aged sixteen , who sought advice concerning a shop she and her husband wanted to buy . Grimason would become one of Macdonald 's richest and most loyal supporters , and may have also become his lover . Macdonald joined many local organisations , seeking to become well known in the town . He also sought out high @-@ profile cases , representing accused child rapist William Brass . Brass was hanged for his crime , but Macdonald attracted positive press comments for the quality of his defence . According to his biographer , Richard Gwyn :

As a criminal lawyer who took on dramatic cases , Macdonald got himself noticed well beyond the narrow confines of the Kingston business community . He was operating now in the arena where he would spend by far the greatest part of his life ? the court of public opinion . And , while there , he was learning the arts of argument and of persuasion that would serve him all his political life .

= = = Legal prominence , 1837 ? 43 = = =

All male Upper Canadians between 18 and 60 years of age were members of the Sedentary Militia , which was called into active duty during the Rebellions of 1837 . Macdonald served as a private in the militia , patrolling the area around Kingston , but the town saw no real action and Macdonald was not called upon to fire on the enemy .

Although most of the trials resulting from the Upper Canada Rebellion took place in Toronto , Macdonald represented one of the defendants in the one trial to take place in Kingston . All the Kingston defendants were acquitted , and a local paper described Macdonald as " one of the youngest barristers in the Province [ who ] is rapidly rising in his profession " .

In late 1838 , Macdonald agreed to advise one of a group of American raiders who had crossed the border to liberate Canada from what they saw as the yoke of British colonial oppression . The inept invaders had been captured after the Battle of the Windmill ( near Prescott , Ontario ) , in which 16 Canadians were killed and 60 wounded . Public opinion was inflamed against the prisoners , as they were accused of mutilating the body of a dead Canadian lieutenant . Macdonald biographer Donald

Creighton wrote that Kingston was " mad with grief and rage and horror " at the allegations . Macdonald could not represent the prisoners , as they were tried by court @-@ martial and civilian counsel had no standing . At the request of Kingston relatives of Daniel George , paymaster of the ill @-@ fated invasion , Macdonald agreed to advise George , who , like the other prisoners , had to conduct his own defence . George was convicted and hanged . According to Macdonald biographer Donald Swainson , " By 1838 , Macdonald 's position was secure . He was a public figure , a popular young man , and a senior lawyer . "

The British Parliament merged Upper and Lower Canada into the Province of Canada effective in 1841 . Kingston became the initial capital of the new province ; Upper Canada and Lower Canada became known as Canada West and Canada East .

Macdonald continued to expand his practice while being appointed director of many companies , mainly in Kingston . Macdonald became both a director of and a lawyer for the new Commercial Bank of the Midland District . Throughout the 1840s , Macdonald invested heavily in real estate , including commercial properties in downtown Toronto . Meanwhile , he was suffering from some illness , and in 1841 , his father died . Sick and grieving , he decided to take a lengthy holiday in Britain in early 1842 . He left for the journey well supplied with money , as he spent the last three days before his departure gambling at the card game loo and winning substantially . Sometime during his two months in Britain , he met his first cousin , Isabella Clark . As Macdonald did not mention her in his letters home , the circumstances of their meeting are not known . In late 1842 , Isabella journeyed to Kingston to visit with a sister . The visit stretched for nearly a year before John and Isabella Macdonald married on 1 September 1843 .

= = Political rise , 1843 ? 64 = =

= = = Parliamentary advancement , 1843 ? 57 = = =

In February 1843 , Macdonald announced his candidacy for the post of alderman in Kingston 's Fourth Ward . On 29 March 1843 , Macdonald celebrated his first election victory , with 156 votes against 43 for his opponent , a Colonel Jackson . He also suffered what he termed his first downfall , as his supporters , carrying the victorious candidate , accidentally dropped him onto a slushy street .

In March 1844 , Macdonald was asked by local businessmen to stand as Conservative candidate for Kingston in the upcoming legislative election . Macdonald followed the contemporary custom of supplying the voters with large quantities of alcohol . In the era preceding the secret ballot when votes were publicly declared , Macdonald defeated his opponent , Anthony Manahan , by 275 " shouts " to 42 when the two @-@ day election concluded on 15 October 1844 . At that time , the Legislative Assembly met in Montreal . Macdonald was never an orator , and especially disliked the bombastic addresses of the time . Instead , he found a niche in becoming an expert on election law and parliamentary procedure .

In 1844 , Isabella fell ill . She recovered , but the illness recurred the following year , and she became an invalid . John Macdonald took his wife to Savannah , Georgia , in the United States in 1845 , hoping that the sea air and warmth would cure her ailments . Although John Macdonald was able to return to Canada after six months , Isabella remained in the United States for three years . He visited her again in New York at the end of 1846 , and returned several months later when she informed him she was pregnant . In August 1847 their son John Alexander Macdonald Jr. was born in New York , but as Isabella remained ill , relatives cared for the infant .

Although he was often absent due to his wife 's illness , Macdonald was able to gain professional and political advancement . In 1846 , he was made a Queen 's Counsel . The same year , he was offered the non @-@ cabinet post of Solicitor General , but declined it . In 1847 , the Joint Premier , William Henry Draper , appointed Macdonald as Receiver General . Accepting the government post required Macdonald to give up his law firm income and spend most of his time in Montreal , away from Isabella . When elections were held in December 1848 and January 1848 , Macdonald was

easily reelected for Kingston , but the Conservatives lost seats and were forced to resign when the legislature reconvened in March 1848 . Macdonald returned to Kingston when the legislature was not sitting , and Isabella joined him there in June . In August , the child John Jr. died suddenly . In March 1850 , Isabella Macdonald gave birth to another boy , Hugh John Macdonald , and his father wrote , " We have got Johnny back again , almost his image . " Macdonald began to drink heavily around this time , both in public and in private , which Patricia Phenix , who studied Macdonald 's private life , attributes to his family troubles .

The Liberals , or Grits , maintained power in the 1851 election , but soon , they were divided by a parliamentary scandal . In September , the government resigned , and a coalition government uniting parties from both parts of the province under Sir Allan MacNab took power . Macdonald did much of the work of putting the government together and served as Attorney General . The coalition which came to power in 1854 became known as the Liberal @-@ Conservatives ( referred to , for short , as the Conservatives ) . In 1855 , George @-@ Étienne Cartier of Canada East ( today Quebec ) joined the Cabinet . Until Cartier 's 1873 death , he would be Macdonald 's political partner . In 1856 , MacNab was eased out as premier by Macdonald , who became the leader of the Canada West Conservatives . Though the most powerful man in the government he remained as Attorney General , with Sir Étienne @-@ Paschal Taché as premier .

= = = Colonial leader , 1838 ? 64 = = =

In July 1857 , Macdonald departed for Britain to promote Canadian government projects . On his return to Canada , he was appointed premier in place of the retiring Taché , just in time to lead the Conservatives in a general election . Macdonald was elected in Kingston by 1 @,@ 189 votes to 9 for John Shaw , who was subsequently hanged in effigy ; however , other Conservatives did badly in Canada West , and only French @-@ Canadian support kept Macdonald in power . On 28 December , Isabella Macdonald died , leaving John A. Macdonald a widower with a seven @-@ year @-@ old son . Hugh John Macdonald would be principally raised by his paternal aunt and her husband .

In 1838 , the Assembly had voted to move the seat of government permanently to Quebec City . Macdonald had opposed that , and used his power to force the Assembly to reconsider in 1857 . Macdonald proposed that Queen Victoria decide which city should be Canada 's capital . Opponents , especially from Canada East , argued that the Queen would not make the decision in isolation ; she would be bound to receive informal advice from her Canadian ministers . Nevertheless , Macdonald 's scheme was adopted , with Canada East support assured by allowing Quebec City to serve a three @-@ year term as the seat of government before the Assembly moved to the permanent capital . Macdonald privately asked the Colonial Office to ensure that the Queen would not respond for at least 10 months , or until after the general election . In February 1858 , the Queen 's choice was announced , much to the dismay of many legislators from both parts of the province : the isolated Canada West town of Ottawa .

On 28 July 1838 , an opposition Canada East member proposed an address to the Queen informing her that Ottawa was an unsuitable place for a national capital . Macdonald 's Canada East party members crossed the floor to vote for the address , and the government was defeated . Macdonald resigned , and the Governor General , Sir Edmund Walker Head , invited opposition leader George Brown to form a government . Under the law at that time , Brown and his ministers lost their seats in the Assembly by accepting office , and had to face by @-@ elections . This gave Macdonald a majority pending the by @-@ elections , and he promptly defeated the government . Head refused Brown 's request for a dissolution of the Assembly , and Brown and his ministers resigned . Head then asked Macdonald to form a government . The law allowed anyone who had held a ministerial position within the last thirty days to accept a new position without needing to face a by @-@ election ; Macdonald and his ministers accepted new positions , then completed what was dubbed the " Double Shuffle " by returning to their old posts . In an effort to give the appearance of fairness , Head insisted that Cartier be titular premier , with Macdonald as his deputy .

In the late 1850s and early 1860s , Canada enjoyed a period of great prosperity . The railroad and

telegraph improved communications . According to Macdonald biographer Richard Gwyn , " In short , Canadians began to become a single community . " At the same time , the provincial government became increasingly difficult to manage . An act affecting both Canada East and Canada West required a " double majority " ? a majority of legislators from each of the two sections of the province . This led to increasing deadlock in the Assembly . The two sections each elected 65 legislators , even though Canada West had a larger population . One of Brown 's major demands was " rep by pop " , that is , representation by population , which would lead to Canada West having more seats , and was bitterly opposed by Canada East .

The American Civil War led to fears in Canada and in Britain that once the Americans had concluded their internal warfare , they would invade Canada again . Britain asked the Canadians to pay a part of the expense of defence , and a Militia Bill was introduced in the Assembly in 1862 . The opposition objected to the expense , and Canada East representatives feared that French @-@ Canadians would have to fight in a British @-@ instigated war . At the time , Macdonald was drinking heavily , and he failed to provide much leadership on behalf of the bill . The government fell over the bill , and the Grits took over under the leadership of John Sandfield Macdonald ( no relation to John A. Macdonald ) . John A. Macdonald did not remain out of power long ; the parties remained closely matched , with a handful of independents able to destroy any government . The new government fell in May 1863 , but Head allowed a new election , which made little change to party strength . In December 1863 , Canada West MP Albert Norton Richards accepted the post of Solicitor @-@ General , and so had to face a by @-@ election . John A. Macdonald campaigned against Richards personally , and Richards was defeated by a Conservative . The switch in seats cost the Grits their majority , and they resigned in March . John A. Macdonald returned to office with Taché as titular premier . The Taché @-@ Macdonald government was defeated in June . The parties were deadlocked to such an extent that , according to Swainson , " It was clear to everybody that the constitution of the Province of Canada was dead " .

= = Confederation of Canada , 1864 ? 67 = =

As his government had fallen again , Macdonald approached the new governor general , Lord Monck , and obtained a dissolution . Before he could act on it , he was approached by Brown through intermediaries ; the Grit leader felt that the crisis gave the parties the opportunity to join together for constitutional reform . Brown had led a parliamentary committee on confederation among the British North American colonies , which had reported back just before the Taché @-@ Macdonald government fell . Brown was more interested in representation by population ; Macdonald 's priority was a federation that the other colonies could join . The two compromised and agreed that the new government would support the " federative principle " ? a conveniently elastic phrase . The discussions were not public knowledge and Macdonald stunned the assembly by announcing that the dissolution was being postponed because of progress in negotiations with Brown ? the two men were not only political rivals , but were known to hate each other .

The parties resolved their differences , joining in the Great Coalition , with only the Parti rouge of Canada East , led by Jean @-@ Baptiste @-@ Éric Dorion , remaining apart . A conference , called by the Colonial Office , was scheduled for 1 September 1864 in Charlottetown , Prince Edward Island ; the Maritimes were to consider a union . The Canadians obtained permission to send a delegation ? led by Macdonald , Cartier , and Brown ? to what became known as the Charlottetown Conference . At its conclusion , the Maritime delegations expressed a willingness to join a confederation if the details could be worked out .

In October 1864 , delegates for confederation met in Quebec City for the Quebec Conference , where the Seventy @-@ Two Resolutions were agreed to ? they would form the basis of Canada 's government . The Great Coalition was endangered by Taché 's 1865 death : Lord Monck asked Macdonald to become premier , but Brown felt that he had as good a claim on the position as his coalition partner . The disagreement was resolved by appointing another compromise candidate to serve as titular premier , Narcisse @-@ Fortunat Belleau .

In 1865 , after lengthy debates , Canada 's legislative assembly approved confederation by 91

votes to 33 . However , none of the Maritimes had approved the plan . In 1866 , Macdonald and his colleagues financed pro @-@ confederation candidates in the New Brunswick general election , resulting in a pro @-@ confederation assembly . Shortly after the election , Nova Scotia 's premier , Charles Tupper , pushed a pro @-@ confederation resolution through that colony 's legislature . A final conference , to be held in London , was needed before the British parliament could formalise the union . Maritime delegates left for London in July 1866 , but Macdonald , who was drinking heavily again , did not leave until November , angering the Maritimers . In December 1866 , Macdonald both led the London Conference , winning acclaim for his handling of the discussions , and wooed and won his second wife , Agnes Bernard . Bernard was the sister of Macdonald 's private secretary , Hewitt Bernard ; the couple first met in Quebec in 1860 , but Macdonald had seen and admired her as early as 1856 . In January 1867 , while still in London , he was seriously burned in his hotel room when his candle set fire to the chair he had fallen asleep in , but Macdonald refused to miss any sessions of the conference . In February , he married Agnes at St George 's , Hanover Square . On 8 March , the British North America Act , which would thereafter serve as the major part of Canada 's constitution , passed the House of Commons ( it had previously passed the House of Lords ) . Queen Victoria gave the bill Royal Assent on 29 March 1867 .

Macdonald had favoured the union coming into force on 15 July , fearing that the preparations would not be completed any earlier . The British favoured an earlier date and , on 22 May , it was announced that the Dominion of Canada would come into existence on 1 July . Lord Monck appointed Macdonald as the new nation 's first prime minister . With the birth of the Dominion , Canada East and Canada West became separate provinces , known as Quebec and Ontario . Macdonald was knighted on that first observance of what came to be known as Canada Day , 1 July 1867 .

= = Prime Minister of Canada = =

Canada 's economic growth was quite slow at only 1 % annually 1867 @-@ 1896 . Canada verged on stagnation so many residents emigrated to the United States , where growth was much more rapid . Macdonald 's solution was to build the transcontinental railroad to stimulate growth , and to implement a " National Policy " of high tariffs that would protect the small Canadian firms from American competition .

= = = First majority , 1867 ? 71 = = =

Macdonald and his government faced immediate problems upon formation of the new country . Much work remained to do in creating a federal government . Nova Scotia was already threatening to withdraw from the union ; the Intercolonial Railway , which would both conciliate the Maritimes and bind them closer to the rest of Canada , was not yet built . Anglo @-@ American relations were in a poor state , and Canadian foreign relations were matters handled from London . The withdrawal of the Americans in 1866 from the Reciprocity Treaty had increased tariffs on Canadian goods in US markets . Much of present @-@ day Canada remained outside confederation ? in addition to the separate colonies of Prince Edward Island , Newfoundland , and British Columbia , which remained governed by the British , vast areas in the north and west belonged to the British and to the Hudson 's Bay Company . American and British opinion was that the experiment of Confederation would quickly unravel , and the nascent nation absorbed by the United States .

In August 1867 , the new nation 's first general election was held ; Macdonald 's party won easily , with strong support in both large provinces , and a majority from New Brunswick . Parliament convened in November , surprisingly without Brown , who was defeated in Ontario and never served as a member of the House of Commons of Canada . By 1869 , Nova Scotia had agreed to remain part of Canada after a promise of better financial terms ? the first of many provinces to negotiate concessions from Ottawa . Pressure from London and Ottawa failed to gain the accession of Newfoundland , whose voters rejected a Confederation platform in a general election in October 1869 .

In 1869 , John and Agnes Macdonald had a daughter , Mary . It soon became apparent that Mary had ongoing developmental issues . She was never able to walk , nor did she ever fully develop mentally . Hewitt Bernard , Deputy Minister of Justice and Macdonald 's former secretary , also lived in the Macdonald house in Ottawa , together with Bernard 's widowed mother . In May 1870 , John Macdonald fell ill with gallstones ; coupled with his frequent drinking , he may have developed a severe case of acute pancreatitis . In July , he moved to Prince Edward Island to convalesce , most likely conducting discussions aimed at drawing the island into Confederation at a time when some there supported joining the United States . The island joined Confederation in 1873 .

Macdonald had once been tepid on the question of westward expansion of the Canadian provinces ; as Prime Minister he became a strong supporter of a bicoastal Canada . Immediately upon Confederation , he sent commissioners to London who in due course successfully negotiated the transfer of Rupert 's Land and the North @-@ Western Territory to Canada . The Hudson 's Bay Company received \$ 1 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 , and retained some trading posts as well as one @-@ twentieth of the best farmland . Prior to the effective date of acquisition , the Canadian government faced unrest in the Red River Colony ( today southeastern Manitoba , centred on Winnipeg ) . The local people , including the Métis , were fearful that rule would be imposed on them which did not take into account their interests , and rose in the Red River Rebellion led by Louis Riel . Unwilling to pay for a territory in insurrection , Macdonald had troops put down the uprising before 15 July 1870 formal transfer , but as a result of the unrest , the Red River Colony joined Confederation as the province of Manitoba , while the rest of the purchased lands became the North @-@ West Territories . Following the North @-@ West Rebellion of 1885 Macdonald implemented restrictions upon the movement of indigenous groups , requiring them to receive formal permission from an Indian Department Official in order to go off reserve .

Macdonald also wished to secure the Colony of British Columbia . There was interest in the United States in bringing about the colony 's annexation , and Macdonald wished to ensure his new nation had a Pacific outlet . The colony had an extremely large debt that would have to be assumed should it join Confederation . Negotiations were conducted in 1870 , principally during Macdonald 's illness and recuperation , with Cartier leading the Canadian delegation . Cartier offered British Columbia a railroad linking it to the eastern provinces within 10 years . The British Columbians , who privately had been prepared to accept far less generous terms , quickly agreed and joined Confederation in 1871 . The Canadian Parliament ratified the terms after a debate over the high cost that cabinet member Alexander Morris described as the worst fight the Conservatives had had since Confederation .

There were continuing disputes with the Americans over deep @-@ sea fishing rights , and in early 1871 , an Anglo @-@ American commission was appointed to settle outstanding matters between the British ( and Canadians ) and the Americans . Canada was hoping to secure compensation for damage done by Fenians raiding Canada from bases in the United States . Macdonald was appointed a British commissioner , a post he was reluctant to accept as he realised Canadian interests might be sacrificed for the mother country . This proved to be the case ; Canada received no compensation for the raids and no significant trade advantages in the settlement , which required Canada to open her waters to American fishermen . Macdonald returned home to defend the Treaty of Washington against a political firestorm .

= = = Second majority and Pacific Scandal , 1872 ? 73 = = =

In the run @-@ up to the 1872 election , Macdonald had yet to formulate a railway policy , or to devise the loan guarantees that would be needed to secure the construction . During the previous year , Macdonald had met with potential railway financiers such as Hugh Allan and considerable financial discussion took place . Nevertheless , the greatest political problem Macdonald faced was the Washington treaty , which had not yet been debated in Parliament .

In early 1872 , Macdonald submitted the treaty for ratification , and it passed the Commons with a majority of 66 . The general election was held through late August and early September ( future Canadian elections would be conducted , for the most part , on one day ) . Redistribution had given

Ontario increased representation in the House ; Macdonald spent much time campaigning in the province , for the most part outside Kingston . Widespread bribery of voters took place throughout Canada , a practice especially effective in the era when votes were publicly declared ; in future elections the secret ballot would be used . Macdonald and the Conservatives saw their majority reduced from 35 to 8 . The Liberals ( as the Grits were coming to be known ) did better than the Conservatives in Ontario , forcing the government to rely on the votes of Western and Maritime MPs who did not fully support the party .

Macdonald had hoped to award the charter for the railway in early 1872 , but negotiations dragged on between the government and the financiers . Macdonald 's government awarded the Allan group the charter in late 1872 . In 1873 , when Parliament opened , Liberal MP Lucius Seth Huntington charged that government ministers had been bribed with large , undisclosed political contributions to award the charter . Documents soon came to light which substantiated what came to be known as the Pacific Scandal . The Allan @-@ led financiers , who were secretly backed by the United States 's Northern Pacific Railway , had donated \$ 179 @,@ 000 to the Tory election funds , they had received the charter , and Opposition newspapers began to publish telegrams signed by government ministers requesting large sums from the railway interest at the time the charter was under consideration . Macdonald had taken \$ 45 @,@ 000 in contributions from the railway interest himself . Substantial sums went to Cartier , who waged an expensive fight to try to retain his seat in Montreal East ( he was defeated , but was subsequently returned for the Manitoba seat of Provencher ) . During the campaign Cartier had fallen ill with Bright 's disease , which may have been causing his judgment to lapse ; he died in May 1873 while seeking treatment in London .

Even before Cartier 's death , Macdonald attempted to use delay to extricate the government . The Opposition responded by leaking documents to friendly newspapers . On 18 July , three papers published a telegram dated August 1872 from Macdonald requesting another \$ 10 @,@ 000 and promising " it will be the last time of asking " . Macdonald was able to get a prorogation of Parliament in August by appointing a Royal Commission to look into the matter , but when Parliament reconvened in late October , the Liberals , feeling Macdonald could be defeated over the issue , applied immense pressure to wavering members .

On 3 November , Macdonald rose in the Commons to defend the government , and according to his biographer P.B. Waite , gave " the speech of his life , and , in a sense , for his life " . He began his speech at 9 p.m. , looking frail and ill , an appearance which quickly improved . As he spoke , he consumed glass after glass of gin and water . He denied that there had been a corrupt bargain , and stated that such contributions were common to both political parties . After five hours , Macdonald concluded ,

I leave it with this House with every confidence . I am equal to either fortune . I can see past the decision of this House either for or against me , but whether it be against me or for me , I know , and it is no vain boast to say so , for even my enemies will admit that I am no boaster , that there does not exist in Canada a man who has given more of his time , more of his heart , more of his wealth , or more of his intellect and power , as it may be , for the good of this Dominion of Canada .

Macdonald 's speech was seen as a personal triumph , but it did little to salvage the fortunes of his government . With eroding support both in the Commons and among the public , Macdonald went to the Governor General , Lord Dufferin on 5 November and resigned ; Liberal leader Alexander Mackenzie became the second Prime Minister of Canada . Following the resignation , Macdonald returned home and told his wife Agnes , " Well , that 's got along with " , and when asked what he meant , told her of his resignation , and stated , " It 's a relief to be out of it . " He is not known to have spoken of the events of the Pacific Scandal again . When Macdonald announced his resignation in the Commons , Conservative and Liberal MPs traded places on the benches of the House of Commons , though one Conservative MP , British Columbia 's Amor De Cosmos remained in his place , thereby joining the Liberals .

On 6 November 1873 , Macdonald offered his resignation as party leader to his caucus ; it was refused . Mackenzie called an election for January 1874 ; the Conservatives were reduced to 70 seats out of the 206 in the Commons , giving Mackenzie a massive majority . The Conservatives bested the Liberals only in British Columbia ; Mackenzie had called the terms by which the province



had joined Confederation " impossible " . Macdonald was returned in Kingston but was unseated on an election contest when bribery was proven ; he won the ensuing by @-@ election by 17 votes . According to Swainson , most observers viewed Macdonald as finished in politics , " a used @-@ up and dishonoured man " .

= = = Opposition , 1873 ? 78 = = =

Macdonald was content to lead the Conservatives in a relaxed manner in opposition and await Liberal mistakes . He took long holidays and resumed his law practice , moving his family to Toronto and going into partnership with his son Hugh John . One mistake that Macdonald believed the Liberals had made was a free @-@ trade agreement with Washington , negotiated in 1874 ; Macdonald had come to believe that protection was necessary to build Canadian industry . The Panic of 1873 had led to a worldwide depression ; the Liberals found it difficult to finance the railroad in such a climate , and were generally opposed to the line anyway ? the slow pace of construction led to British Columbia claims that the agreement under which it had entered Confederation was in jeopardy of being broken .

By 1876 , Macdonald and the Conservatives had adopted protection as party policy . This view was widely promoted in speeches at a number of political picnics , held across Ontario during the summer of 1876 . Macdonald 's proposals struck a chord with the public , and the Conservatives began to win a string of by @-@ elections . By the end of 1876 , the Tories had picked up 14 seats as a result of by @-@ elections , reducing Mackenzie 's Liberal majority from 70 to 42 . Despite the success , Macdonald considered retirement , wishing only to reverse the voters ' verdict of 1874 ? he considered Charles Tupper his heir apparent .

When Parliament convened in 1877 , the Conservatives were confident and the Liberals defensive . After the Tories had a successful session in the early part of the year , another series of picnics commenced in a wide belt around Toronto . Macdonald even campaigned in Quebec , which he had rarely done , leaving speechmaking there to Cartier . More picnics followed in 1878 , promoting proposals which would come to be collectively called the " National Policy " : high tariffs , rapid construction of the transcontinental railway ( the Canadian Pacific Railway or CPR ) , rapid agricultural development of the West using the railroad , and policies which would attract immigrants to Canada . These picnics allowed Macdonald venues to show off his talents at campaigning , and were often lighthearted ? at one , the Tory leader blamed agricultural pests on the Grits , and promised the insects would go away if the Conservatives were elected .

The final days of the 3rd Canadian Parliament were marked by explosive conflict , as Macdonald and Tupper alleged that MP and railway financier Donald Smith had been allowed to build the Pembina branch of the CPR ( connecting to American lines ) as a reward for betraying the Conservatives during the Pacific Scandal . The altercation continued even after the Commons had been summoned to the Senate to hear the dissolution read , as Macdonald spoke the final words recorded in the 3rd Parliament : " That fellow Smith is the biggest liar I ever saw ! "

The election was called for 17 September 1878 . Fearful that Macdonald would be defeated in Kingston , his supporters tried to get him to run in the safe Conservative riding of Cardwell ; having represented his hometown for 35 years , he stood there again . In the election , Macdonald was defeated in his riding by Alexander Gunn , but the Conservatives swept to victory . Macdonald remained in the House of Commons , having quickly secured his election for Marquette , Manitoba ; elections there were held later than in Ontario . His acceptance of office vacated his parliamentary seat , and Macdonald decided to stand for the British Columbia seat of Victoria , where the election was to be held on 21 October . Macdonald was duly returned for Victoria , although he had never visited either Marquette or Victoria .

= = = Third and fourth majorities , 1878 ? 87 = = =

Part of the National Policy was implemented in the budget presented in February 1879 . Under that budget , Canada became a high @-@ tariff nation like the United States and Germany . The tariffs

were designed to protect and build Canadian industry ? finished textiles received a tariff of 34 % , but the machinery to make them entered Canada free . Macdonald continued to fight for higher tariffs for the remainder of his life .

By the 1880s , Macdonald was becoming more frail , but he maintained his political acuity . In 1883 , he secured the " Intoxicating Liquors Bill " which took the regulation system away from the provinces , in part to stymie his foe Premier Mowat . In his own case , Macdonald took better control of his drinking and binges had ended . " The great drinking @-@ bouts , the gargantuan in sobriety 's of his middle years , were dwindling away now into memories . " As the budget moved forward , Macdonald studied the railway issue , and found the picture unexpectedly good . Although little money had been spent on the project under Mackenzie , several hundred miles of track had been built and nearly the entire route surveyed . In 1880 , Macdonald found a syndicate , led by George Stephen , willing to undertake the CPR project . Donald Smith ( later Lord Strathcona ) was a major partner in the syndicate , but because of the ill will between him and the Conservatives , Smith 's participation was initially not made public , though it was well @-@ known to Macdonald . In 1880 , the Dominion took over Britain 's remaining Arctic territories , which extended Canada to its present @-@ day boundaries , with the exception of Newfoundland , which would not enter Confederation until 1949 . Also in 1880 , Canada sent its first diplomatic representative abroad , Sir Alexander Galt as High Commissioner to Britain . With good economic times , Macdonald and the Conservatives were returned with a slightly decreased majority in 1882 . Macdonald was returned for the Ontario riding of Carleton .

The transcontinental railroad project was heavily subsidised by the government . The CPR was granted 25 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 acres ( 100 @,@ 000 km<sup>2</sup> ; 39 @,@ 000 sq mi ) of land along the route of the railroad , and \$ 25 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 from the government . In addition , the government was pledged to build \$ 32 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 of other railways to support the CPR . The entire project was extremely costly , especially for a nation with only 4 @.@ 1 million people in 1881 . Between 1880 and 1885 , as the railway was slowly built , the CPR repeatedly came close to financial ruin . Not only was the terrain in the Rocky Mountains difficult , the route north of Lake Superior proved treacherous , as tracks and engines sank into the muskeg . When Canadian guarantees of the CPR 's bonds failed to make them salable in a declining economy , Macdonald obtained a loan to the corporation from the Treasury ? the bill authorizing it passed the Senate just before the firm would have become insolvent .

The Northwest again saw unrest . Many of the Manitoban Métis had moved into the territories . Negotiations between the Métis and the Government to settle grievances over land rights proved difficult , Riel had lived in exile in the United States since 1870 , he journeyed to Regina with the connivance of Macdonald 's government , who believed he would prove a leader they could deal with . Instead , the Métis rose the following year under Riel in the North @-@ West Rebellion . Macdonald put down the rebellion with militia troops transported by rail , and Riel was captured , tried for treason , convicted , and hanged . Macdonald refused to consider reprieving Riel , who was of uncertain mental health . The hanging of Riel proved bitterly controversial , and alienated many Quebecers ( like Riel , Catholic and culturally French Canadian ) from the Conservatives ? they soon realign themselves with the Liberals .

The CPR was almost bankrupt , but its essential role in rushing troops to the crisis proved its worth , and Parliament provided money for its completion . On 7 November 1885 , CPR manager William Van Horne who wired Macdonald from Craigellachie , British Columbia that the last spike was driven home .

In the summer of 1886 , Macdonald traveled for the only time to western Canada , traveling from town to town by private railway car , and addressing large crowds . Macdonald traveled with his wife , and to get a better view , the two would sometimes sit in front of the locomotive on the train 's cowcatcher . On 13 August 1886 , Macdonald used a silver hammer and pounded a gold spike to complete the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway .

In 1886 , another dispute arose over fishing rights with the United States . Americans fishermen had been using treaty provisions allowing them to land in Canada to take on wood and water as a cover for clandestine inshore fishing . Several vessels were detained in Canadian ports , to the

outrage of Americans , who demanded their release . Macdonald sought to pass a Fisheries Act which would override some of the treaty provisions , to the dismay of the British , who were still responsible for external relations . The British government instructed the Governor General , Lord Lansdowne , to reserve Royal Assent for the bill , effectively placing it on hold without vetoing it . After considerable discussion , the British government allowed Royal Assent at the end of 1886 , and indicated it would send a warship to protect the fisheries if no agreement was reached with the Americans .

= = = Fifth and sixth majorities , 1887 ? 91 ; death = = =

Fearing continued loss of political strength as poor economic times continued , Macdonald planned to hold an election by the end of 1886 , but had not yet issued the writ when an Ontario provincial election was called by Macdonald 's former student , Liberal Ontario Premier Oliver Mowat . The provincial election was seen as a bellwether for the federal poll . Despite considerable campaigning by the Prime Minister , Mowat 's Liberals were returned in Ontario , and increased their majority . Macdonald finally dissolved Parliament on 15 January 1887 for an election on 22 February . During the campaign , Macdonald suffered another blow when the Quebec provincial Liberals were able to form a government ( four months after the October 1886 Quebec election ) , forcing the Conservatives from power in Quebec City . Nevertheless , Macdonald and his cabinet campaigned hard in the winter election , with Tupper ( the new High Commissioner to London ) postponing his departure to try to bolster Conservative hopes in Nova Scotia . The Liberal leader , Edward Blake , ran an uninspiring campaign , and the Conservatives were returned nationally with a majority of 35 , winning easily in Ontario , Nova Scotia and Manitoba . The Tories even took a narrow majority of Quebec 's seats despite resentment over Riel 's hanging . Macdonald became MP for Kingston once again . Even the younger ministers , such as future Prime Minister John Thompson , who sometimes differed with Macdonald on policy , admitted the Prime Minister was an essential electoral asset for the Conservatives .

Blake , whom Macdonald biographer Gwyn describes as the Liberal Party 's " worst campaigner until Stéphane Dion early in the twenty @-@ first century " , resigned after the defeat , to be replaced by Wilfrid Laurier . Under Laurier 's early leadership , the Liberals , who had accepted much of the National Policy under Blake while questioning details , rejected it entirely , calling for " unrestricted reciprocity " , or free trade , with the United States . Advocates of Laurier 's plan argued that north ? south trade made more economic sense than trying to trade across the vast , empty prairies , using a CPR which was already provoking resentment for what were seen as high freight rates . Macdonald was willing to see some reciprocity with the United States , but was reluctant to lower many tariffs . American advocates of what they dubbed " commercial union " saw it as a prelude to political union , and did not scruple to say so , causing additional controversy in Canada .

Macdonald called an election for 5 March 1891 . The Liberals were heavily financed by American interests ; the Conservatives drew much financial support from the CPR . The 76 @-@ year @-@ old Prime Minister collapsed during the campaign , and conducted political activities from his brother @-@ in @-@ law 's house in Kingston . The Conservatives gained slightly in the popular vote , but their majority was trimmed to 27 . The parties broke even in the central part of the country but the Conservatives dominated in the Maritimes and Western Canada , leading Liberal MP Richard John Cartwright to claim that Macdonald 's majority was dependent on " the shreds and patches of Confederation " . After the election , Laurier and his Liberals grudgingly accepted the National Policy , and when Laurier himself later became Prime Minister , he adopted it with only minor changes .

After the election , Macdonald suffered a stroke , which left him partially paralysed and unable to speak . " The Old Chieftain " lingered for days , remaining mentally alert , before dying in the late evening of Saturday , 6 June 1891 . Thousands filed by his open casket in the Senate Chamber ; his body was transported by funeral train to his hometown of Kingston , with crowds greeting the train at each stop . On arrival in Kingston , Macdonald lay in state again in City Hall , wearing the uniform of an Imperial Privy Counselor . He was buried in Cataraqui Cemetery in Kingston , his grave near that of his first wife , Isabella .

Wilfrid Laurier paid tribute to Macdonald in the House of Commons :

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 . His loss overwhelms us .

= = Memorials = =

Macdonald served just under 19 years as Prime Minister , a length of service only surpassed by William Lyon Mackenzie King . Unlike his American counterpart , George Washington , no cities or political subdivisions are named for Macdonald ( with the exception of a small Manitoba village ) , nor are there any massive monuments . A peak in the Rockies , Mount Macdonald ( c . 1887 ) at Rogers Pass , is named for him . In 2001 , Parliament designated 11 January as Sir John A. Macdonald Day , but the day is not a federal holiday and generally passes unremarked . Since 1971 he has appeared on the Canadian ten @-@ dollar note . In 2015 the Royal Canadian Mint featured Macdonald 's face on the Canadian two dollar coin , the Toonie , to celebrate his 200th birthday . He also gives his name to Ottawa 's Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway ( River Parkway before 2012 ) , Ottawa Macdonald ? Cartier International Airport ( renamed in 1993 ) and Ontario Highway 401 ( the Macdonald ? Cartier Freeway c . 1968 ) , though these facilities are rarely referred to using his name .

A number of sites associated with Macdonald are preserved . His gravesite has been designated a National Historic Site of Canada . Bellevue House in Kingston , where the Macdonald family lived in the 1840s , is also a National Historic Site administered by Parks Canada , and has been restored to that time period . His Ottawa home , Earnscliffe , still stands and is today the official residence of the British High Commissioner to Canada . Statues have been erected to Macdonald across Canada ; one stands on Parliament Hill in Ottawa ( by Louis @-@ Philippe Hebert c . 1895 ) . A statue of Macdonald stands atop a granite plinth originally intended for a statue of Queen Victoria in Toronto 's Queen 's Park , looking south on University Avenue . Macdonald 's statue also stands in Kingston 's City Park ; the Kingston Historical Society annually holds a memorial service in his honour .

A square outside of Union Station ( Toronto ) will be named in his honour .

A memorial was erected around 1895 on the front buttress of St David 's Church on Ingram Street in Glasgow next to the Ramshorn Cemetery , near his birthplace in Glasgow .

= = Legacy = =

Historian Thomas H.B. Symons argues that Macdonald 's greatest achievement was building a strong sense of community that tied together the British and the French elements. Conservative Senator Hugh Segal believes that Macdonald 's true monument is Canada itself : " Without Macdonald we 'd be a country that begins somewhere at the Manitoba @-@ Ontario border that probably goes throughout the east . Newfoundland would be like Alaska and I think that would also go for Manitoba , Saskatchewan , Alberta and B.C. We 'd be buying our oil from the United States . It would diminish our quality of life and range of careers , and our role in the world would have been substantially reduced . " Macdonald 's biographers note his contribution to establishing Canada as a nation . He was not an innovator ; instead he adopted ideas such as Confederation , the CPR , and the protective tariff and focused the political forces in Canada to make them realities . Swainson suggests that Macdonald 's desire for a free and tolerant Canada became part of its national outlook : " He not only helped to create Canada , but contributed immeasurably to its character . " Gwyn notes that Macdonald 's reputation is mixed , and somewhat negative :

Macdonald is viewed by many Canadian historians , and by many ordinary Canadians , as an exceptionally clever , very charming politician who possessed little else -- no vision , no creativity , and no ideas but the tactical stratagems of a pragmatist and opportunist @-@ as well as being corrupt and cynical , and a drunk .

Gwyn himself has a higher opinion of Macdonald :

his accomplishments were staggering : Confederation above all , but almost as important , if not

more so , extending the country across the continent by a railway that was , objectively , a fiscal and economic insanity ... On the ledger 's other side , he was responsible for the CPR scandal , the execution of Louis Riel , and for the head tax on Chinese workers . He 's thus not easy to scan . His private life was mostly barren . Yet few other Canadian leaders ? Pierre Trudeau , John Diefenbaker for a time , Wilfrid Laurier ? had the same capacity to inspire love .

Macdonald was survived by Susan Agnes , son Hugh and daughter Mary ( d . 1933 ) . Both Susan and Mary left Canada for England , where they both lived for the rest of their lives .

= = = Historiography = = =

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