

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 7, 1868

The Speaker took the Chair at ten minutes past three.

Sir J. A. Macdonald amid profound silence and attention, and manifestly struggling to repress extreme emotion, which frequently interrupted his delivery, and made him almost inaudible in some passages, rose and said that it was with feelings of pain amounting to anguish that he addressed the Chair. He who only that morning had charmed them with the eloquence, elevated them by his statesmanship and instructed them by his wisdom, the echo of whose voice was yet ringing in their ears, had passed from among them, foully murdered. If ever a soldier who had fallen on the field of battle in the front rank of the fray had deserved well of his country, Thomas D'Arcy McGee had deserved well of Canada and her people. He felt that the unaffected heartfelt sorrow which oppressed them could not but prevent their present proper expression of their feeling, and he himself felt peculiar disability—utter incapability—in attempting to address himself to the subject then, suffering as he did from the sudden and awful loss, not only of one who had been his true and faithful friend—not only of one who had acted with him for some years—but of one with whose varied richness and intellectual gifts, he had also had the happiness to enjoy an intimate communion. By-and-by the House would have the melancholy pleasure of considering the character and disposition of their late friend and colleague, but to-day the shock was too recent, the atrocity too vividly horrible. Kind, generous, one whose heart was open to every man, whose friendship was sincere, and whose quarrels were written in water, he might have lived a long life had he but chosen the path of ease. He had lived a respected life, and had died a heroic death—a martyr to the cause of his country. How easy it might have been for him to sail along the tide of popularity, had he been swayed by no higher aims. But he had been slain—he feared he had been slain—because he had in preference taken the line of duty. He could not help being struck by, and could not

refrain from directing the recollection of the House to a few words which had formed part of the last address which he had spoken there, and the report of which he would read. Mr. McGee had said that “he hoped that mere temporary or local popularity would never be made in that House a test of worth. He that rested simply on popularity, and would risk right in hunting for popularity, would soon find that which he hunted for, slip away from him. Base indeed would he be who would not risk popularity for a good cause—that of his country.” He who spoke those words had gone from us, and it would be long before we should see his like again. “In wit, a man; simplicity, a child.” Every word with which his splendid eloquence expressed his ingenious impulse had been uttered on behalf, and in the direction only of what was right, good and just. He could only say now, on behalf of the Government, that, if he had left them amid so deep felt a regret, they must remember that the blow would fall heavily upon his widow and orphans. These he had left behind him as a sacred legacy, and they would be wanting in their duty to the country, if they failed to accept the sacred trust, and took care to shelter from all risk of want, the dear ones whom he had confided to their care. He concluded by moving that the House, when it adjourned that day, do stand adjourned to the following Tuesday (14th April), at half-past seven, and that the House do then adjourn.

Mr. Mackenzie said—In rising to second this motion, I find it almost impossible to proceed. But last night we were all charmed by the eloquence of our departed friend, who is now numbered with our honoured dead, and none of us dreamed when we separated last that we should so very soon be called in this way to record our affection for him who has been thus suddenly cut off. It was my own lot for many years to work in political harmony with him, and it was my lot sometimes to oppose him; but through all the vicissitudes of political warfare, we ever found him possessing that generous disposition, characteristic of the man and his country; and it will be long, as the honourable knight at the head of the Government has said, before we