

LIFE OF SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

BY HIS NEPHEW

Colonel J. PENNINGTON MACPHERSON, M.A., A.D.C.

EXTRACT FROM PREFACE.

"Is it any wonder, that, in the dark days of 1873-78, when Sir John A. Macdonald had been so borne down by the wave of public opinion which followed what was supposed to have been his wrong-doing in connection with the Pacific Railway that it was thought he could never rise again, I should offer my spare time and such ability as I might possess to hand down to posterity the story of his life up to that date?

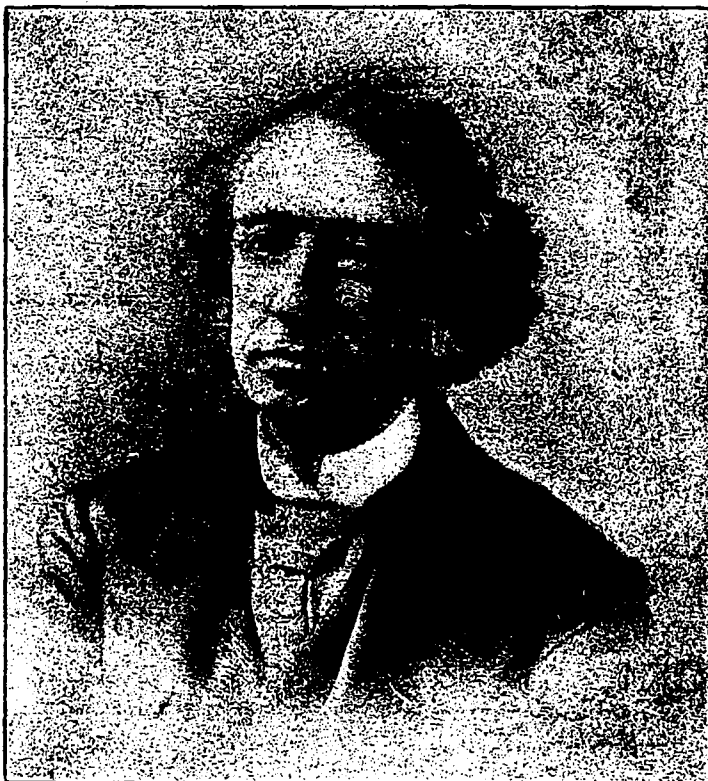
"He accepted my offer and gave me letters to Mr. Shannon, of the *Kingston News*, and to late Dr. Barker, of the *Kingston Whig*, asking them to allow me the use of their files; and to the late Dr. Todd, Parliamentary Librarian, requesting him to afford me every facility in the way of books. It was my intention to submit to him, for revision, every chapter as it was written, but he came back to power before I had accomplished much, and then the demands upon his time were so heavy and urgent that the reading had always to be postponed to a more convenient season.

"Had it not been for that overwhelming sense of duty which impelled him to throw himself into the late contest with such force, energy and utter disregard of self that his own life was the penalty, we might have looked forward to an early retirement from active politics and the enjoyment of a long evening of life, during which he would have had the leisure necessary to thoroughly revise my work and to add such matter as would have made it an invaluable history of the country. As it is I have been thrown on my own resources, and have even been prevented by the demand for immediate publication, from obtaining the kindly criticism of friends to the extent that I would have liked.

Although I have been at the task for over twelve years, only a very few, beyond those above mentioned as having been written to by Sir John A. Macdonald, were aware of the fact. These exceptions were his son Hugh John, his brother-in-law the Rev. Dr. Williamson, and Mr. George Johnson, Dominion Statistician, and to these I have only been able to submit a portion of the whole work. I am

aware of the great value that would attach to these pages were I able to say that they had been revised and approved by the late Premier. I also realize that, in saying that he was cognizant of what I was doing and contemplated going over the manuscript, there is a possibility that a certain amount of responsibility for the opinions expressed therein may be attached to him. To avoid all danger of this I shall give *fac similes* of some letters received from him which will corroborate my statements, both as to his knowledge of my work and intention to revise it, and his inability to give the necessary time thereto. To these I will add a third, which contains his opinion of a book now being pushed by enterprising publishers, and which is advertised as having been re-written by a gentleman who was the secretary of the Commercial Union Club. This biography is said, by the *Empire*, to

show a marked partiality for the doctrine of commercial union with the States, and to be prefaced by a tacit endorsement of the very policy against which Sir John A. Macdonald fought so strongly and so successfully. As the author has written to that paper and not contradicted that statement it must be accepted as correct, and friends and opponents alike will agree in condemning so unfair and improper a procedure."



Earle Publishing House, PUBLISHERS

ST. JOHN, N.B.

GRIP PRINTING and PUBLISHING COMPANY

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