tion. His work apparently had ended in failure. But over the years, with his great French-Canadian ally, Georges-Etienne Cartier, he had been quietly devising Canada's first coherent political party—an unwritten coalition between the British and French moderates—as opposed to the divided groups calling themselves Reformers.

Up to now he had worked largely by hunch and a strategy of postponement that had given him the nickname "Old Tomorrow," but in his Liberal Conservative Party, a loose union of the two Canadian ethnic groups, he had hit upon the only possible method of governing a future nation and a dual society. His ideas gradually won acceptance, and in 1857 he became premier of the colony.

Macdonald saw clearly that the scattered and divided colonies of British North America had no future apart. For different reasons, another frontier politician had reached a parallel conclusion about his own divided country. And the work of Lincoln was shortly to alter drastically the career of the Canadian.

Macdonald dreaded the new U.S. President's power as commander in chief of the world's largest army during the Civil War. What if the Union Army turned northward after defeating the South? The American government had quarreled, almost to the point of war, with Britain as the tacit friend of the Confederacy. Some senators in Washington proposed reprisals on the helpless British colonies.

This fear of the Republic in arms was now shared by Macdonald's political adversaries. The colonial legislature, meeting in Quebec City, had reached final deadlock. Macdonald held in his hand an order from the British Governor General dissolving the legislature when he learned that George Brown, leader of the Reformers and his lifelong enemy, was now willing to join forces with him.

The two men had not spoken together outside the legislature for many years and loathed each other, but Macdonald did not hesitate. He thrust the royal order into a drawer and hurried to Brown's hotel room. An hour's talk created a joint government whose single purpose was to unite all the British colonies in some kind of confederation. The announcement of these plans turned the legislature into a riot of rejoicing.
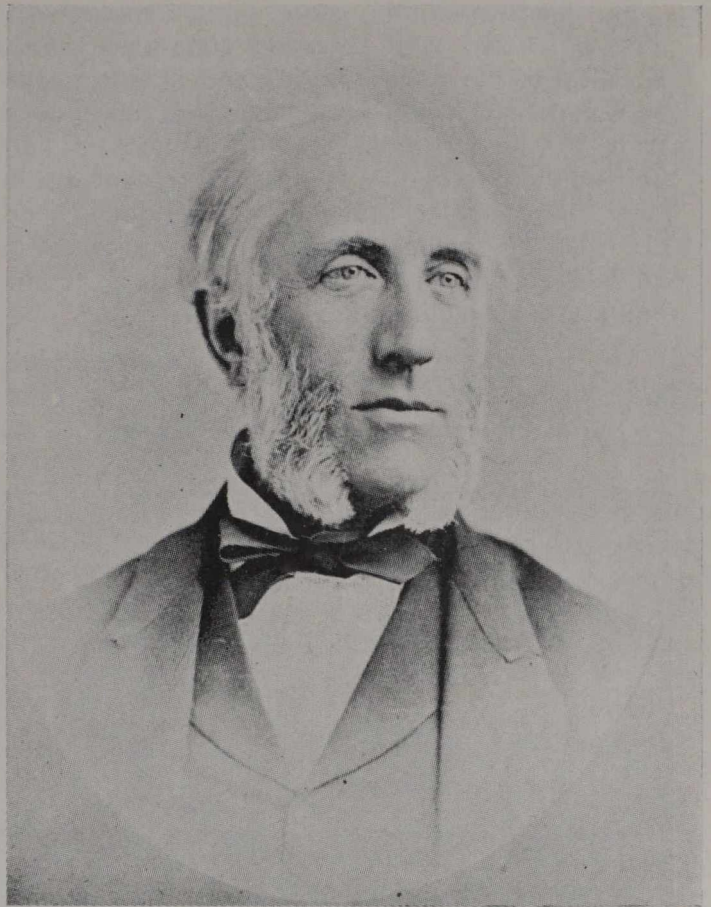
Reformer George Brown, long a political foe of Macdonald, joined Sir John in a "curious partnership of humor and righteousness"—and Canada was born.

Sir Georges Etienne Cartier.