

*Historic Sites and Monuments*

wife and because several of his political associates and clients lived in the neighbourhood.

**An hon. Member:** A rural setting in Kingston?

**Mr. Benson:** I should like to point out that this particular house which was then in a rural area is now in the heart of the city in a prized residential area.

Before moving into "Bellevue", Sir John successfully contested the election of February, 1848, although the Tory party to which he belonged was defeated.

When this question was first brought to his attention, the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) decided immediately that the present government should acquire this property, and I concur in this decision to have the Kingston house preserved. Although it is true that Sir John A. Macdonald did not live there for a long period, it is the last house in Kingston still standing with which Sir John A. Macdonald had a connection, and I believe it is fitting that Kingston, the riding which was represented by him should possess some suitable monument to remind people of his connection with the constituency.

As I mentioned earlier, it was decided on December 23, after negotiations in which I am pleased to have played a part, that the federal government should purchase this property from its owner, Dr. J. M. R. Beveridge, at a cost of \$35,000. The Prime Minister stated at the time of the purchase that it would be suitably renovated and kept as an historic monument in the city of Kingston to Sir John A. Macdonald. As a matter of fact, in January, 1964, a team of national parks branch specialists examined the house. A preliminary plan for restoration has since been drawn up. This will cover essential repairs to the house, restoration of interior details to the period of the 1840's, refurnishing of the rooms and appropriate landscaping of the grounds. In this connection I should like to pay tribute to the Kingston historical association and to Mr. Phelps of Kingston who have expressed great interest in this project. The association has gone so far as to indicate it will assist the government of Canada to whatever extent may be necessary so as to ensure that this property is outfitted as a fitting monument to Sir John A. Macdonald.

I believe that in addition to this Kingston property there is another residence in Canada, Earnscliffe, in Ottawa, presently occupied by the United Kingdom high commissioner, which had a long association with Sir John A. Macdonald, and it is my personal feeling that the government of Canada should ultimately acquire this property and establish the former home of Sir John A. Macdonald in the

capital of Canada as a fitting memorial to him. I believe it was altogether right that the government should have purchased the property in Kingston, because Sir John A. Macdonald is looked upon as Kingston's most famous son, and the fact that he was the first prime minister of Canada and did so much both for the city of Kingston and for our country as a whole makes him obviously deserving of commemoration. This government, I am proud to say, took action in this connection, although previous governments such as the Conservative government which immediately preceded it, failed to take action to acquire the property, although such a course was urged upon them by many of the citizens of Kingston riding.

**Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East):** The hon. member who has just spoken has, perhaps indirectly, brought to the attention of the house a question I had in mind, namely the basis upon which the government makes decisions on the subject of historic sites generally—what precisely constitutes a historic site and which of these sites should be bought by the people of Canada.

Everybody honours, or should honour, the name of Sir John A. Macdonald, one of the founders of confederation. Nobody will question the contribution he made to this country, and nobody will question his ability, although I will say that on occasions such as this there can be a little too much sanctimonious talk. I could not help recalling when we were listening to the historical review given by the hon. member who moved this motion that though, undoubtedly, there were times meriting cheers for Sir John A.—and there should be cheers—at the same time there were plenty of times for jeers, too. One has only to remember the history of the C.P.R., and Van Horne, and the politics of that day. However, all that is a long time in the past. We all admit the great contribution made to this country by Sir John A. Macdonald and we all agree that his contribution should be recognized by its commemoration in connection with a historic site. However, I should like to know the basis upon which these historic sites are chosen, whether they affect a man, a city or a province.

The city of Vancouver is the third largest city in Canada. Yet when we want to get the place from which Vancouver started that is New Brighton park, established on the basis of a national historic site, we have to go through a committee. If the committee says no, then the government says no. On what basis are such decisions made? Also, in honouring a great prime minister, on what basis does the government decide that the location should be selected? In recent weeks