

Public Bills

confederation. He had the courage to pursue a principle that was unpopular in its day but is tremendously relevant to our history. That is all I wish to say, Mr. Speaker. I have enjoyed participating in this debate. Since there are others who wish to speak, I shall take my seat. I end by saying that in the areas of nationalism and language rights, Sir John A. Macdonald is as relevant today as he was more than 100 years ago.

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must advise the House that the Parliamentary Secretary's time has expired and he would need unanimous consent in order to answer the question. Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary mentioned in a very serious and proper way what Sir John A. Macdonald had done for us with respect to unity and language. Does he not also agree that if we had followed his advice in other respects there would be no Grits or teetotallers in this country today?

An hon. Member: I will drink to that.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, I think Sir John A. Macdonald would have appreciated thoroughly the flavour of this debate. He would have said, "Oh, well, it is almost six o'clock and this measure has not passed. Perhaps it will pass some other time—hopefully, tomorrow."

I am pleased to second the continuing effort of the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) to pay tribute to Sir John and his attempt to allow all Canadians to pay tribute to the man who put Canada together. I, too, had the pleasure of going to Kingston and taking part in the ceremony performed each year by the Kingston Progressive Conservative Association to do honour to Sir John A. Macdonald. I think even hard-shelled Grits could gain something from making a pilgrimage to that city. They have there a fantastic graveyard, and if we must go to one, and we all shall one day, we might as well go to one as fine as that. The ceremony is sincerely staged by the Conservative Association with the help of cadets wearing uniforms of former times.

Then, of course, there are the speeches—one was made this year by my hon. friend from Hillsborough and one was made last year by myself—that go back a considerable time. I suggest that the Grits could very usefully see our ceremony and hear us pay tribute to Sir John and, in return, we would be glad to attend their ceremony when they pay their annual respects to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. We would be glad to accompany them at that time.

I think one of the most moving experiences I had during the 1967 centennial celebrations was seeing costumed actors of Canada visit Halifax and play the roles of the Fathers of Confederation. The man who played Sir

[Mr. Faulkner.]

John A. Macdonald was Robert Christie. It so happens, I think, that Mr. Christie is a teetotaller or as near a teetotaller as one can imagine, if one can imagine such a state.

Mr. McGrath: I can't imagine it.

Mr. McCleave: The man who played George Brown, another great figure of that time, I will not name. George Brown, as everyone knows, was the founder of the *Globe and Mail* and, as one can imagine, he had no use for booze whatsoever. The actor who played him had a great deal of use for booze. Therefore, the teetotaller was playing Sir John A. Macdonald and the tippler was playing the part of George Brown. It added a certain merriment to the evening when these "Fathers of Confederation" sat down with the citizens of our day. I recall it because Christie did a very good job of playing the part of Sir John A. Macdonald. That Halifax audience responded in a way in which I have rarely seen an audience respond to an actor. Their attention was riveted on Robert Christie. If he did epitomize Sir John A. Macdonald, one could imagine the magic hold that Sir John A. had on people. I understand that Mr. Christie spent a considerable amount of time learning Sir John A.'s mannerisms. Therefore, he may be the nearest that any of us will ever see approaching the mannerisms of Sir John A. I was tremendously impressed.

• (5:50 p.m.)

I support the efforts of my hon. friend. Anyone who has visited the office of the hon. member for Hillsborough, one of the original settlers in the West Block, will have noticed a plaque on his wall from one of the early election campaigns. It is a picture of Sir John A. Macdonald leading the successful Conservative party with the words, "The old flag; the old policy; the old leader". In 100 years people have gone from the belief in established things to the point where in the last election the successful party brought someone in from virtually under the rug, one who probably was not known to most Canadians. It is an interesting reflection on how political techniques have changed. In past years people voted for something in which they believed; now they will accept almost anything born in the age of advertising, any charismatic promise. I will not get into a discussion on advertising. I will do that when the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) introduces his bill in that regard.

I vigorously support the bill of the hon. member for Hillsborough. It may be all very well for each party to espouse its own heroes but with this bill we are doing more than just paying tribute to Sir John A. Macdonald, the greatest Conservative of all. We are asking Parliament to recognize the fact that confederation, the union of provinces from the Atlantic to the Pacific, is really his handiwork. Oddly enough, at one stage of his career Sir John A. had no use for the concept of confederation. He then saw it as the means of solving the great instability between the quarrelsome Canadians in Quebec and Ontario. Once he set his foot on the path toward confederation, he used his skills and ability to bring it about.