

STATEMENT MADE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE HONOURABLE ALLAN J.
MACÉACHEN AT THE OPENING OF AN EXHIBITION ON
SCOTTISH ACTIVITIES IN CANADA AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF EDINBURGH LIBRARY, OCTOBER 21, 1975.

This exhibition speaks more eloquently than any words I could muster of the role of the Scots in the development of the Canadian nation as we know it today. It also contains evidence of the influence of the University of Edinburgh on the development of Canada from its earliest times.

Some of the history of the Scots in Canada has a flavour that is bittersweet - an element often to be found in the history of any land.

We are reminded of this particularly by the letters in this exhibition of E. Topham, who claimed that the old clan system left the Highlander with the impression that in his own land - and I quote directly now - "all was a barren solitude, from which he could never change but for the better". That reflects some of the bitterness, as does his further suggestion that the Scots, Highland and Lowland alike, had - and again I quote directly - "become a nation of wanderers by profession".

But that, for the Canada we know today, is where the bitter began to sweeten a little. With the immigration of Scots to Canada, what was Scotland's loss became Canada's gain, and in a variety of ways too lengthy to list here this afternoon. A few more examples drawn from this exhibition are sufficient to substantiate this point.

Sir John A. Macdonald, who was born in Glasgow, is Canada's most famous Scottish expatriate, of course, because he was the most influential among the Fathers of Confederation and our first Prime Minister. Although his politics were not those of my own persuasion, I have no hesitation in giving him the full honour due him for getting the evolution of Canada well started in the early years after 1867.

Our second Prime Minister, Alexander Macenzie, was also a Scot, born near Kunkeld, Perthshire. His politics were more to my personal liking than Sir John A. Macdonald's, although he has still to achieve the recognition of the fellow Scot he defeated. One of the law graduates of this University played an enormous role in an earlier period of Canadian history. As this exhibition also reminds us, the Honourable Thomas Douglas, fifth Earl of Selkirk, who studied law at Edinburgh University from 1786 to 1790, later founded colonies on Prince Edward Island, at Baldoon near Lake St. Clair, and in the Red River Valley where