

Westminster Abbey honours Canada's first Prime Minister

The memory of Canada's first Prime Minister, Scottish-born Sir John A. Macdonald, was honoured in London's Westminster Abbey on July 1, when a bronze plaque marking his position as a Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath was unveiled in the Chapel of Henry the Seventh.

Among those who attended the ceremony was a delegation from Ottawa headed by Mrs. Muriel Fergusson, first woman Speaker of the Canadian Senate, and Lucien Lamoureux, who has just retired as Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons and is now Canadian Ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg.

During the ceremony, Mrs. Fergusson read the lesson, Mr. Lamoureux gave the eulogy, and the plaque, a stall plate seven-and-a-half by five inches, was unveiled by Canadian High Commissioner to Britain J.H. Warren.

It was on July 1, 1867 — 107 years ago — that Canada became an independent dominion under the British North America Act of the Parliament at Westminster, and Sir John the first Prime Minister of the new dominion. The basis for the Abbey ceremony goes back to the same year. Sir John was appointed a Knight Commander of the Bath in 1867 and promoted to Grand Cross in 1884.

One of the persons responsible for this recognition of Sir John is another Canadian, Dr. Conrad Swan, York Herald of Arms, from Duncan on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. He is the only non-Briton in the 450-year-history of the College of Arms and also the geneologist of the Order of the Bath.

Traditions of Order

A tradition of the Order was that a Knight Grand Cross was allotted a stall in the Order's Westminster Abbey Chapel for life. This went on from 1725, when the Order was formally established by George I until 1812. Then so many Knights were created during the Napoleonic wars that there were not enough stalls and the installation ceremony was dropped until 1913, when King George V restored it.

As part of the installation tradition, when a Knight died, his banner was removed and his stall given to another, but his plate of arms was left affixed to the back of the stall for posterity. Since Knights were not being given stalls during the lifetime of Sir John, who died in Ottawa in 1891, this explains why he has also had no plaque in the Abbey until now.

The absence of Sir John's plate was first noticed through activities of the Commission on Canadian Studies, set

up with Canada Council support in 1972 by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. The point was taken up with Dr. Swan.

"Quite properly the question was raised that such a distinguished Canadian, and the only one ever to be so highly honoured within the Order, should be commemorated in some way in the Chapel of the Order," Dr. Swan told an interviewer recently.

T-Bird "jets" into history

After 23 years as a jet trainer with the Canadian Forces Training Command, the T-33 *Silver Star* has been put out to pasture. It will continue in service with the Canadian Forces, however, in the electronic warfare role and in some other functions.

The two-seater, single-engine jet trainer, which was first acquired in 1953 from Canadair Ltd, was said to have been as smooth to ride in as a Cadillac, and was as easy to drive. It was the world's first two-seater training jet, and with dual controls it could be flown from either cockpit position.

A total of 656 "T-Birds" were manufactured for the Canadian Forces from 1953 to 1959. Some 5,000 are in use in 30 countries.

The CF-5 went into service as the replacement for the T-33 on July 26.



Posing in national costume is the 'Aidas' Canadian Lithuanian Girls' Choir from Hamilton, Ontario. The group will arrive in Britain on August 16, for a European tour and will give

concerts in London, Manchester, and at cities in Germany and Switzerland. The choir, under its conductor — soloist Vaclovas Verikaitis, will sing traditional Lithuanian folk songs.

There are about 60 girls — mostly students, their ages ranging from 15 to 23. Last summer the choir sang before Queen Elizabeth during her visit to Ontario.