

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

SIR JOHN WILLISON

SIR Joseph Pope has devoted three books to the founder of the Conservative party of Canada; the *Memoirs*, the *Correspondence* and the *Day* of Sir John Macdonald. One distinguishes between the Conservative and the Tory party. Toryism died with Sir Allan MacNab, and for its death no one was more responsible than John A. Macdonald. The Conservative party achieved its strength through a Coalition with Liberals, because Macdonald, unlike some of his successors, knew how to harvest the gains of Coalition, and could not be intimidated by a reactionary and refractory minority, nor be lured by extremists away from practical Conservatism into impracticable Radicalism. In the *Correspondence*, edited by Pope with sympathetic insight and laborious accuracy, we have perhaps the final revelation of Sir John Macdonald. The footnotes, although they are models of brevity, give the book historical unity and continuity. It was a happy device, also, to divide the *Correspondence* into periods. There is revealed a man greater than we knew, with a quality that was not fully disclosed while he lived. In all that Pope has written about Sir John Macdonald, as in Dr. Skelton's *Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, there is the sense of sincere personal devotion, with the flavour of a rigid partisanship. In both cases the biographer is more partisan than the statesman. In both cases the Letters express the statesmen more clearly and more finely than the portraits which the authors have painted. This is not to deny that Dr. Skelton has produced a good book, which all of us must read who desire to understand Sir Wilfrid Laurier, or to suggest that anyone else will ever interpret Sir John Macdonald with such knowledge and authority as Sir Joseph Pope possesses.

In the book there are no sensational disclosures. There is nothing in the nature of "revelations." Nor, apparently, is this explained by any desire or purpose to protect Sir John Macdonald's reputation. We are told that Sir John once said to Col. H. R. Smith, late Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons, "Harry, my boy, never write a letter if you can help it, and never destroy one." Although Pope had to go through many thousands of letters, he

declares; "There is very little in anything Sir John Macdonald left behind him which might not eventually be proclaimed from the housetops." The surprising thing in the Correspondence is the breadth of Macdonald's knowledge, his moderation and dignity of statement, and his freedom from malice and uncharitableness. There is very little of the humour and levity which distinguished so many of his speeches alike on the platform and in Parliament. It is difficult to believe from the Correspondence that he was absorbed chiefly in problems of political strategy and calculations of party advantage. Now and again he describes opponents as scamps and blackguards, or jibes at the weaknesses of an ally, but one feels that he regards the sinner with serenity, trusts with sagacity, dislikes without ferocity and punishes with magnanimity. It was said of one of Macdonald's Ministers that he derived his chief joy in life from his animosities, but Sir John was too wise to cherish animosities, and was manifestly very conscious of the enfeebling effects of jealousies and hatreds.

It is apparent that Galt was an uneasy associate, but Macdonald forgave and restrained, made Galt High Commissioner for Canada at London, overcame his petulance when he would have resigned a position for which he had high qualifications, and counselled rather than reproved when a precipitate statement in favour of Imperial federation threatened to involve the Prime Minister in difficulties in Quebec. There is nothing new in the discovery that between George Brown and Macdonald there was mutual distrust and dislike. Even while they sat together in the Coalition Cabinet the relation between the two must have been uncertain and unhappy. In one of the Letters there is the frank and almost casual confession that before Brown entered the Coalition they did not speak to each other, and that after Brown withdrew for no adequate reason that has ever been disclosed they never spoke to each other again. But Brown was necessary to the Coalition and, when all has been said, sacrificed more than Macdonald. Moreover there is no evidence that Brown was disloyal to the Conservative leader during their period of political partnership, or ever sought to deprive Macdonald of due honour for his incomparable patience and wisdom in the actual evolution of the project of union. There is reason to think that between Brown and Cartier there was complete confidence, as there was too between Cartier and Macdonald. But Cartier was necessary to the Conservative leader, while Brown was dangerous. What is not often remembered is that without the alliance between Cartier and Macdonald Confederation could not have been accomplished, and whether or not there was ever any conscious vis-

ion in this relation it was an essential preparation for the union of the Provinces.

It is the fashion to jibe at Cartier because he grieved and fretted when a higher Imperial distinction was bestowed upon Macdonald than upon himself. But under all the circumstances his irritation was not unnatural. It is clear from what Pope has said elsewhere that Sir John was not responsible, and was happy when Cartier received yet higher recognition. Brown got no title, then or later, but there never was any reason why he should be enrolled among the "democrats" who rejected the Queen's honours. I was told by Sir Oliver Mowat, whom George Brown consulted when he was offered knighthood, that he desired and intended to accept, but when the list of honours was published he took exception to the company in which he found himself, and at the last moment withdrew his acceptance in protest against any recognition of certain of those with whom he would be associated.

The Letters show that Sir John was opposed to any free or indiscriminate distribution of Imperial honours in Canada. He did not believe that all Lieutenant-Governors or even all Chief Justices should be knighted. It was his view that only exceptional service or exceptional distinction should be recognized, that social as well as public qualifications should be regarded, and that solicitation and appeal should be sternly discouraged. In a letter to Lord Lansdowne in 1885 he said :—

I would not propose the adoption of the practice which obtains in England of knighting *all* the Judges of the Superior Courts, but I think the rule might be established of knighting the Chief Justices of the Superior Courts of the four larger Provinces—Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick—on appointment to office.

In a private memorandum submitted to the Marquis of Lorne, he states his position more fully :—

"I hope," he said, "the practice of conferring honors will not degenerate into a matter of course, and a number of honors be bestowed upon each change of ministers. In our new country many men enter political life who although good men in themselves, and capable of administering public affairs, are from want of early education and manner—as well as of social position—not qualified for honorary distinction at the hands of the Sovereign. In such cases there is danger of a degree of ridicule attaching to the persons honored, which may extend to the honor itself, and impair its value in public estimation; and this danger will be increased when (as must not infrequently happen) the disadvantages of want of education and manner are shared by the wife with her husband."

But, if he was opposed to the degradation of titles, he was not opposed to titles. Indeed he would give no countenance to any proposal which had the savour of Republicanism, which was incompatible with British traditions and usages, or which could affect the position of the Crown in the British constitutional system. If in his time the Canadian Parliament had been required to consider a resolution to abolish titles, one knows how he would have regarded such an adventure in envious and petulant snobocracy.

The Correspondence leaves no room for doubt that Sir Richard Cartwright withdrew his support from Sir John Macdonald because he was not made Minister of Finance in succession to Sir John Rose when Sir Francis Hincks was appointed, and suggests that he was slow to forgive Donald A. Smith's recalcitrance over the "Pacific scandal." There was, however, a final and apparently a complete reconciliation between the Conservative leader and the great railway capitalist, but never with Cartwright whose tongue never ceased to attack and even to slander, and whose enmity lives in all its freshness in a very remarkable volume of *Reminiscences*. One finds the bitterness of a wounded spirit, and a hint of menace in a letter which Cartwright sent from Kingston in 1869 to the Conservative leader:—

"I notice with great regret," he said, "that Sir F. Hincks has been gazetted. From the tenor of my former note on the subject you will probably not be surprised to learn that I fear I cannot support that gentleman. Of course, as in duty bound, I will await your explanation of the grounds of this appointment, but it is so unlikely that they will be such as to enable me to concur in it, that I think it only fair to notify you at once that however well disposed I was and am towards yourself and the rest of your colleagues, I cannot feel the same confidence as heretofore in an administration in which Sir F. Hincks holds office! So far as you are concerned, I do not suppose one supporter more or less matters much just now, and so far as I myself am concerned, I am thoroughly alive to the gravity of the step I am taking, but that is a matter in which I have no option."

The Letters show conclusively that Lord Dufferin had resolved to dismiss Macdonald from office for his direct acceptance of contributions from Sir Hugh Allan who was President of the pioneer Company organized for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Pope never admits that there was a "Pacific scandal." He will not have any stain upon his hero, nor ever agree that the appeal for still "another ten thousand" affords evidence of any deliberate intention to corrupt the constituencies. Lord Dufferin thought otherwise, and it can hardly be doubted that Macdonald

resigned office in order to escape the humiliation of dismissal by the Governor-General. Dufferin was sympathetic but severe, courteous but resolute. A single sentence expresses his judgment and his purpose. He wrote : "In acting as you have, I am well convinced that you have only followed a traditional practice, and that probably your political opponents have resorted with equal freedom to the same expedients, but as Minister of Justice, and the official guardian and protector of the laws, your responsibilities are exceptional, and your immediate and personal connection with what has occurred cannot but fatally affect your position as a Minister."

There were later electoral contests in Canada in which "another ten thousand" would have been regarded as a paltry contribution to the fund for organization, persuasion and purchase, and when the relation between Ministers and contributors was at least as direct and intimate as any that ever existed between Allan and Macdonald, but no future Minister ever sustained such punishment as fell upon the Conservative leader. Macdonald's first impression of Dufferin was not favourable. Writing to Lord Lisgar in 1872, he said, "He is pleasant in manner and has been both in speech and by letter very complimentary to myself. He is, however, rather too gushing for my taste. I can stand a good deal, but he lays it on rather too thick." But Dufferin grew in Macdonald's affection and esteem, and it is clear that when the Mackenzie Government was defeated in 1878 the Governor-General took peculiar pleasure in the Conservative leader's restoration to office. Dufferin had respect for Mackenzie, but the rugged and economical Scotsman was not easily convinced that the luxurious Governor-General's services to the country were commensurate with his demands upon the Treasury. As early as 1872 Sir John had evidence that Dufferin would magnify his position, and be an ingenuous but importunate applicant for advances. "When I first accepted my present post," he wrote, "I was certainly surprised to learn what a slender household was in future to be assigned to the administrator of so great a dependency." In all the book there is not a more elegant, delicious and revealing letter than that in which Dufferin gives reasons of State for a generous increase of his allowances:—

"I am quite convinced," he said, "that if you desire me to maintain that dignity and reserve upon which the prestige of representation so much depends, you must allow me to choose my company when on my travels. Of course I make this observation on the assumption that it is the desire of the Canadian Government to enhance the repute of monarchical institutions, and to accept the consequences they entail. The cynicism of a republican philosophy might affect to ignore such considerations,

but with deductions from principles of that nature neither you nor I have any concern. At the same time, I am bound to confess from what I have learnt, both from Lord Lisgar and from Lord Monck, that if there is any respect in which the authorities in this country are out of sympathy with our habits of thought at home, it may be in their failure to appreciate the importance of trifles of this description—a due attention to which has so much to do with the maintenance of that intangible, but not less operative essence called prestige, to whose assistance most human institutions are indebted for their stability.”

Micawber said nothing more unctuous or more seductive, and the desire if not the need was as urgent in the one case as in the other.

As perfect in its way is a letter of 1873 from Sir John Macdonald in reply to Dufferin's appeal for “some little closet” in the House of Commons from which “I should be able to hear with my own ears what passes.” Manifestly the Prime Minister was unwilling to provide any “little closet,” or to adopt any other device which might bring the Governor-General into a doubtful relation with Parliament. He knew, too, that every step gained by Dufferin would suggest another, and that there was no department of government into which he would not intrude with an easy and insinuating confidence that he belonged wherever he might desire to go. But Macdonald must have been delighted with the variety of reasons which he discovered against the wisdom of establishing the “little closet,” and one suspects that the recipient of the letter was as delighted as the sender. The Prime Minister wrote :—

If, as I believe, we defeat the Opposition on the address, they will be sulky and savage, and ready to wreak their vengeance on everybody and everything. The burthen of their speeches on the Commission will be that the Crown cannot know, or ought not to know, what passed in the Commons; that such knowledge is a breach of their privileges. Now if this is said in the presence of the representative of the Crown—actually at the moment taking cognizance of the proceedings—the temptation to allude to such presence as a continuation of the breach will be irresistible. One can not foresee what form the allusion may take. It may be a mere notice that there are strangers in the gallery: it may be a direct objection to your presence as unconstitutional, or it may take the form of an insulting remark. The first supposition will clear the galleries and exclude the reporters. If the public are deprived of the debates thereby, the blame will be laid upon you. A direct attack on your presence would be very unfortunate, especially if accompanied by an insult. The Crown would be brought into contempt. This would be discussed in the newspapers here and in England, and I fear that it might be said that you had brought it on yourself. The Grand Remonstrance against the Crown's taking cognizance of the proceedings of the

House would be quoted *ad nauseam*, and Mr. Holton would wax constitutionally indignant. I do not suppose the Opposition leaders would use any unsavoury phrases, but there are several truculent blackguards in the House—annexationists and the like—who would like nothing better than the chance of snubbing the Sovereign. I shall send for Scott this week and see if a plan can be contrived where you can be present without being known. I doubt his being able to manage this, and if not, I would advise you to forego the advantage which a hearing of the debate would certainly be to you.

Apparently Scott was not able to contrive a plan, the "little closet" was not established, and the Crown, the Dominion and the Empire escaped the unfortunate consequences which Sir John professed to think might follow from the rude behaviour of truculent blackguards, annexationists and the like, who would like nothing better than the chance of snubbing the Sovereign. But Lord Dufferin was a loyal, faithful and influential servant of Canada, and doubtless he gave an adequate return for all the distress he made Mackenzie endure and all the dexterity he forced Macdonald to exercise.

It is a tradition that Sir John Macdonald was deeply concerned for the character of the Judiciary. In a letter to Howe in 1869 he said, "I have always laid down with respect to the Judiciary the principle that no amount of political pressure shall induce me to appoint an incompetent or unworthy judge." In 1882 he prepared an editorial for the *Toronto Mail*, then edited by Mr. Martin J. Griffin, and then as now the chief Conservative journal of Ontario, which read :—

Rumours occasionally reach us from Ottawa that the ministry are continually importuned for judgeships and senatorships. Now this ought not so to be. The Government should be left free, as the responsibility is theirs. It has long been known that, with regard to judicial appointments, Sir John Macdonald has been governed by the one consideration of efficiency. We have heard it stated on more than one occasion he has told applicants for seats on the Bench that the fact of their being applicants was a serious bar to their success. This rule still holds. Nothing can be more unseemly than for a member of the bar to apply for a judgeship. Such appointments are not made for the sake of the individual, nor for the sake of the party, and the Government should look with disfavor on any pressure, personal or political, in favor of an individual. We venture to think that the same principle should be applied to senatorships. A seat in the Senate is an office of high dignity, and the responsibility of the Government in selecting men who will be called upon to deal as legislators with the most important matters affecting the well being of the commonwealth, is very great. From our point of view the Govern-

ment should resist all outside pressure both as to judges and senators. We speak of this because we observe in the local press individual claims urged from local considerations.

Sir John Macdonald offered the position of Chief Justice of Upper Canada to Robert Baldwin. He made Oliver Mowat Vice-Chancellor of Ontario. It was understood that he desired to give Edward Blake the first judicial position in his Province, but there is nothing in the Correspondence to justify this report. One suspects that sometimes Macdonald was more anxious to weaken the Liberal party than he was to strengthen the Bench. No other political leader in Canadian history has shown such skill in breaking the solidarity of opponents and finding the considerations which would bring foes of to-day into his household to-morrow. Even Laurier was an amateur in penetration and persuasion as compared with the Conservative leader. According to Pope, Sir John declared that if he were a younger man he would be able to make Laurier his colleague. One does not easily agree, for Laurier was more nearly the equal of his great opponent in attraction, dexterity and resolution than Macdonald could have understood at the stage in Laurier's career when the confident prediction was spoken. But that he saw the quality in Laurier when it was invisible to many of Laurier's political associates is only another evidence of his insight and sagacity.

Sir John throughout maintained a friendly personal relation with Sir Oliver Mowat, but there was an infinite wariness in their personal and political correspondence. Each was on guard against the other, and neither seems ever to have scored an advantage. When Mowat left the Bench to become Premier of Ontario and leader of the Provincial Liberal party, Sir John sent a friendly personal message, but added :—

At the same time, I may venture to say that I regret to see you initiating the American system of judges returning to political life, after having accepted the legal monkhood of the Bench. It is not likely to be extensively followed; the precedent is a bad one, but practically it will not do much mischief. However, you have made the plunge, and there is an end of it.

Later he disregarded his own teaching as political exigencies required or as the public interest demanded. He drew Sir John Thompson from the Bench in Nova Scotia to be Minister of Justice, and made possible a career which constitutes one of the best chapters in the public life of Canada. It is desirable that appointment to the Bench should mark a definite and final divorce from politics, but it is still fortunate that Thompson and Mowat set aside con-

siderations which if loosely and generally disregarded would bring injury to the Commonwealth. It may be that Sir John Macdonald made judicial appointments for which it would be difficult to find any adequate defence, but they were few, explained sometimes by the necessity of the individual and sometimes by the necessity of party, but upon the whole he guarded the integrity of the Bench with unceasing vigilance, and his example has been continuously influential alike with those who have had the power of making judicial appointments and those who have had the privilege of holding judicial office in Canada.

All through the history of Confederation, Quebec has been peculiarly a nursery of political faction. It may be that public men in other Provinces have been subject to like suspicions and jealousies, but they have had greater reticence and greater power of repression. They hung their soiled linen in the backyard rather than in the front garden where all who passed by could see the stains and patches. The Conservative leader was for ever distracted by the guerilla warfare among his colleagues from Quebec. In *The Day of Sir John Macdonald* Pope says that the relations between Langevin, Chapleau and Caron were hard to define:—

I frankly confess that with all my opportunities I could never master the intricacies of Lower Canadian politics in those days. In the beginning it seemed to be a case of Langevin and Caron against Chapleau; later it sometimes looked as though Langevin and Chapleau were making common cause against Caron; perhaps most often it resembled a triangular duel. There was absolutely no difference between those three men in respect of public policy, but the personal jealousy and suspicion with which they regarded one another was amusing.

Nor were Mackenzie and Laurier more fortunate than Sir John Macdonald. Laurier was unwilling to enter the Mackenzie Cabinet until Cauchon was removed. Holton and Huntington were sullen comrades. Tarte struggled against the open distrust of the old Rouge element. When Laurier would have taken Chapleau into the Cabinet, he was forced to bow to the storm of Rouge protest. Bourassa fell away, fed the fires of Nationalism, and assisted materially in bringing Laurier to a disaster from which he never recovered. Under Borden, Casgrain would not be yoked with Monk nor Monk with Casgrain. One wonders what will be the fortune of King with Gouin and Lapointe. Already there are whispers of dissension which may suggest only the hope of opponents. In all this I do not mean to reflect upon the public men of Quebec, nor suggest any unfavourable comparison between Quebec politicians and those of other Provinces, but only to recall relations and

conditions which all Canadian Prime Ministers have found more distressing than amusing.

How Sir John regarded the unhappy dissensions among his colleagues is disclosed in a letter of 1887 to Sir Hector Langevin:—

I think you are making a mistake in not going to Chapleau's banquet at Montreal. As to your private and social relations I haven't a word to say, but these political festivities are public matters. You are senior minister from the Province of Quebec—not from the Quebec district or that of Three Rivers. By holding back from Montreal you do two things; you emphasize and confirm the general belief that the political relations between Chapleau and yourself are the reverse of cordial. . . and you actually hand over the power and influence of the Government in the district of Montreal, and in a great degree of the Townships, to him. Remember that he went to the banquet given you at Montreal, and look back at the relations between George Brown and myself. We hadn't spoken for ten long years, yet when we coalesced we acted together, dined at all public places together, played euchre in crossing the Atlantic, and went into society in England together. And yet on the day after he resigned we resumed our old positions and ceased to speak. In my opinion you are playing Chapleau's game and strengthening his hands, and I will venture to say our colleagues generally will incline to the same conclusion.

It is no secret that for a time Chapleau was carried from his feet by the tempest which swept over Quebec when Riel was hanged, and that he was in alliance with Tarte in the attack upon Langevin and McGreevy. Pope confesses that Chapleau was distrusted by Sir John Macdonald, but he was too brilliant, too magnetic and too dangerous to be set aside. Moreover he was a creature of impulses, with a taste for intrigue, some facility for repentance, and a positive enjoyment of factional infelicities. Laurier, like Sir John Macdonald, was willing to overlook his infirmities for his gallantry in battle and a singular personal attractiveness for which much was forgiven. Pope gives a letter from Chapleau to Sir John when the brilliant Frenchman had decided to brave the anger of Quebec over Riel's execution:—

I prefer," he wrote, "the risk of personal loss to the national danger imminent, with the perspective of a struggle in the field of race and religious prejudices. We will have to fight, perhaps to fall. Well, I prefer, after all, to fight and to fall in the old ship and for the old flag."

And no man ever fought a more gallant battle than he in the fierce electoral struggle which followed.

Sir John Macdonald recognized, as must all sagacious political leaders, that without a vigorous press it is impossible to maintain the spirit and unity of a great political organization. He was anxious during the years when the old Toronto *Leader* was dying. The *Daily Telegraph*, which had a short but full life of six years, was not all that he required nor all that he desired. He seems to have relied greatly upon Thomas White, and apparently in 1869 there was a project to remove *The Spectator*, which the White brothers controlled, from Hamilton to Toronto or to raise capital for a new Conservative journal with Thomas White as editor. On February 16th, 1869, Sir John wrote to Hon. D. L. Macpherson:—

The paper should be of as liberal a tone as is compatible with its support and maintenance by the Conservative party. White's connection with it will be a guarantee of that party, and will be quite satisfactory to myself. I would feel assured that the paper would be written with a sincere desire to create and strengthen a great middle or constitutional party. At the same time White being there would give me a satisfactory assurance that in case we were forced by the violence of the Grit party into a resumption of old party lines, the paper would remain Conservative and not be an additional weapon in the hands of the enemy.

He declared that he had the greatest confidence in White's judgment as well as in his political principles. "He is a Conservative in the best sense of the word and yet truly liberal." *The Mail* was not established until 1872 and it was not White's fortune to be its editor. Through *The Montreal Gazette*, however, he gave a long and steadfast allegiance to Sir John Macdonald, as he also gave that journal the reputation for sobriety and solidity which it has never lost. Down to 1885 *The Mail* was the close ally of Macdonald and a singularly influential advocate of Conservative principles and policies. But finally under the inspiration of Edward Farrer, who had an intimate relation with Goldwin Smith, *The Mail*, exasperated by the revolt in Quebec over Riel's execution and the alliance between the Roman Catholic Bishops and the Mowat Government in Ontario, began an agitation which set the whole country aflame and gravely threatened the long established relation of Sir John Macdonald with the French people of Quebec and the English speaking Catholics of other Provinces. On January 3rd., 1887, Sir John wrote to Mr. C. W. Bunting, Managing Director of *The Mail* :—

There is no use crying over spilt milk—the mischief is done, but I think you will admit now that the course taken by *The Mail* has not only resulted in Meredith's defeat, but prejudiced the Conservative party throughout the Dominion. I don't wish

to reproach you, but think you are bound, in justice to myself and the leaders of the Conservative party, to state that the course taken by you was taken from conscientious motives and notwithstanding our strong and continued remonstrances. This should be done at once and in a leading article in *The Mail*. The announcement is all the more necessary from the fact that *The Mail* is going to pursue the same course—be the consequences what they may! *The Mail* having taken that stand, gives me, I think, a right to ask this avowal at your hands.

There was an avowal, but the relation of confidence between *The Mail* and Macdonald never was restored. Nor was Confederation “smashed into its original fragments,” Macdonald destroyed in Quebec, or the Roman Catholic electors of Ontario alienated from their allegiance. Chiefly in response to his personal appeal and through the exertions of Mr. D’Alton McCarthy, *The Empire* was established in 1887 as the Conservative organ of Ontario, but for reasons common enough in the history of journalism, mysterious in origin and effect and never susceptible of adequate explanation, the new journal never achieved the position even among Conservatives which its solid merit and sincere devotion to the party deserved. Long ago it was entombed in that crowded cemetery where lies the dust of so many unsuccessful journalistic ventures. Ultimately *The Mail* absorbed *The Empire* but not before Mr. D’Alton McCarthy, who was among the most influential of its founders, had separated from Sir John Macdonald and become the chief propagandist of *The Mail’s* religious and political programme. In the Correspondence there is a letter from Mr. McCarthy to Sir John written in 1889 while the country was convulsed by the Equal Rights agitation which grew out of Mercier’s purchase of the Jesuit Estates and the refusal of the federal Parliament to disallow the Provincial measure:-

“Living as you do in Ottawa,” Mr. McCarthy wrote, “you can hardly realize how this feeling has taken complete possession of the minds of many of the staunchest loyalists amongst us, and as a party matter I can only say this; that I am satisfied that the course we took—only eight of us as we were—has opened the means of saving the Conservative party of Ontario from extinction, while if more had joined us, the Conservative party would have gained all the advantage possible under the circumstances—unfortunate as they were. While now, unless I take control and endeavor to pilot the bark, we may yet be wrecked. In fact my view of the duty of the Conservative party is to hold by and lean on the English Provinces—while, so far as I can understand, yours is rather to depend on Quebec.”

As illustrating Sir John Macdonald’s relation with the press

and his genius for political strategy, it may be worth while to add a letter written from Washington in 1871 to Hon. Alex. Morris when he was fearful of the effects of the Treaty of Washington upon public opinion in Canada. He knew that he had fought a stern battle to safeguard Canadian interests, but unfortunately there were vital details of the negotiations which could not be fully disclosed. Probably the most luminous and revealing chapter in all that Pope has written about Sir John Macdonald is that in the *Memoirs* which gives the correspondence from Washington and for ever justifies the Conservative leader against the bitter and damaging attack to which he was subjected. It is true, too, that no other speech that he ever delivered, except perhaps his defence in the debate over the Pacific Railway charges, equals in power of statement, in structure and lucidity, in reserve and dignity, his analysis of the Treaty of Washington and his review of the considerations which governed his own action as the representative of Canada on the Joint High Commission. But, as has been said, he was anxious, and apprehensive of possible—if not certain—misinterpretation, and he sought to organize the press for protection and defence.

“I want you,” he said, “to make arrangements with the friendly newspapers, such as *The Leader*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Ottawa Times* and *Citizen*, and the Maritime Province papers friendly to the Government, to hold back, if possible, any expression of opinion on the treaty when it is promulgated, until *The Globe* commits itself against the treaty. I want to endeavor so to manage it, as to let *The Globe* write under the impression that I have assented to the treaty. Brown will then pitch into the treaty and into me for sacrificing the interests of Canada. He will afterwards find out, when it is too late, that he is on the same side as myself, and will not be able to retract. My chief object in doing this is, that if Brown finds that I am opposed to the treaty, he will try to find reasons for supporting it. He may take up the loyalty cry, and state that it is the bounden duty of Canada to sacrifice something for the sake of insuring peace to the Empire. This course would give him a strong influential position with the Home Government, which might react prejudicially on our party. The French might, if they found that the Grits were strong in England, continue the coquetting which goes on occasionally between them. It is, therefore, of very considerable consequence that Brown and *The Globe* should be committed irretrievably against the treaty. I shall take care of *The Toronto Telegraph* myself. I need not say that this is for yourself alone, except in so far, of course, as it may be necessary to get our colleagues to deal with the newspapers influenced by them, and hold them back for a few days after the promulgation of the treaty. I think you had better not discuss the matter at all with our Quebec colleagues.”

As the Correspondence shows and as all students of his career understand, Sir John Macdonald was bold and assiduous in the use, but not a sinner above other politicians in the abuse of patronage. Possibly as he grew older his dependence upon patronage increased. He loved power and never hesitated when he became apprehensive that it was slipping away to take all available reserves into action. In 1866 he was offered a bribe of \$1,000 a year for four years if he would appoint the son of the tempter to the office of Registrar of a county in Ontario. He described the offer as "a great insult", and refused peremptorily to recommend the son for appointment. In 1879, in answer to a letter from Mr. John M. Robinson of Prince Edward Island he wrote:—

"It is a principle long settled in Canada that the British and not the American system should prevail as to office, and that a man once appointed should not be removed on account of his political proclivities so long as he performs the duties of his office, and does not use his position or influence ostentatiously against the Government of the day. It is but right that each party as they get possession of the Government, should appoint their friends."

It is true, however, that under Sir John Macdonald very many Conservatives in the Civil Service were active and even ostentatious political workers in successive general elections, and one suspects that he was not greatly offended thereby. Whatever principle he may have retained or whatever principle he may have disregarded, he was scrupulously faithful to the doctrine that a party in possession of the Government should appoint its friends to office. Nor can one recall any other political leader of his generation in Canada who did otherwise. Even yet there are those who seem to regard his teaching with a degree of favour which suggests that neither politics nor human nature can have been wholly regenerated. The "spoils system", which disfigured a long era in American politics, we have never had in this country.

Many figures pass through the pages of this Correspondence. Of some we get only glimpses, and often we cannot but think how time diminishes human stature. Pope believes that of all Sir John's political associates in later years he was most attached to Sir John Rose. He has told us elsewhere that Sir John trusted the judgment of John Henry Pope above that of any other of his colleagues. The Letters between Macdonald and Rose, and they are many, have a touch of affectionate intimacy of which one finds only rare instances elsewhere. There is a letter of 1870 to Lord Carnarvon in which Sir John declares that "we greatly distrust the men at the helm in England." He affirms his belief that Bright, Lowe, Gladstone and

Granville "are not true exponents of the opinion of England", and adds that it may be necessary to appeal from the Government to the people of Great Britain. There is in the Correspondence definite and final refutation of the ugly and ungenerous reports, to which Sir Richard Cartwright gives support in his *Reminiscences*, that Sir John was guilty of gross discourtesy to the Princess Louise, and that the Princess was slighted and insulted by Lady Macdonald. In a letter to Sir John, Princess Louise deplors these "preposterous inventions", describes Lady Macdonald as "a worthy example to every wife", from whom she had received nothing but kindness, and declares the story that "I have had a misunderstanding with your wife vexes me beyond measure." In this connection Sir John wrote to the Princess:—"Your high position, while it does not altogether shield you from the base attacks of a degraded press, renders them powerless for harm, and your Royal Highness can afford to treat them with the contempt they deserve."

There are fewer exchanges of really important letters between Sir John and Sir Charles Tupper than one would expect to find, but those that appear illustrate Macdonald's dependence upon Tupper in every crisis, show how Tupper reinforced the courage and restored the confidence of the leader, and afford additional evidence that bold, ambitious and dominant though Tupper was, he was not intractable and never failed to respond to any appeal for party or country. One wonders when history will adjust the balances. There is a glamour about Howe such as never has encompassed Tupper, although Tupper was the greater in force, in vision, in practical constructive genius, and in service to Canada and the Empire. He was inferior only in genius for agitation, in instinct for constitutional reform, and in the pomp and passion of oratory. But Howe was more of a Whig than was Tupper, and it is hard to reduce a Whig to his true place in history. There are letters from Goldwin Smith distinguished by all his felicity of expression and infirmity of disposition. More than once Sir John urged Goldwin Smith to consider the position of Minister of Education in Ontario, but there is no evidence that the Master of the Grange ever gave the proposal serious consideration. Like Laurier, the Conservative leader was a visitor to the Grange when he was out of office; like Laurier, he saw less of its master when he had the weight of government upon his shoulders. Goldwin Smith assisted to destroy the Mackenzie Government and to establish protection, but the National Policy was not to his liking, and Macdonald was too unyielding in his devotion to British connection. For some years, however, the personal relation was maintained even despite Sir John's assent

to Mr. Costigan's resolution in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, and as late as 1882 he could venture to extol the Tilley tariff in a message to the Grange. A few months after the general election of 1882, in which his triumph over Blake was as great as was his victory over Mackenzie, he wrote :—

“The country has approved of our national policy. It was a bold and, as it proved, a wise thing to appeal to the country on that issue. I, of course, had to meet with opposition from the weak kneed among our friends—and especially from those whose re-elections were doubtful. I am vain enough to believe that our general policy deserved, and has received, the approval of the country.”

If, as Goldwin Smith always contended, and as other evidence shows, Sir John Macdonald adopted Protection with reluctance and misgiving, his ultimate conversion to the principle which he distrusted seems to have been complete enough.

In the Correspondence there are many letters from Lord Mount Stephen, and now and again there are poignant manifestations of the immense perplexities and difficulties which well nigh broke the hearts and vitally impaired the credit of the builders of the first Transcontinental Railway. The load seems to have rested chiefly upon the back of Stephen, and apparently he was the chosen medium of appeal, petition and remonstrance to the Government. We know now that once at least the great enterprise was upon the verge of ruin. Even Sir John Macdonald had lost courage to go forward. The Cabinet would sanction no further advances. In the Conservative parliamentary party there was a resolute majority against further assistance for the embarrassed and distracted Company. On April 16th, 1885, Stephen sent on to Hon. J. H. Pope, Minister of Railways, a cypher message from Van Horne to himself: ““Have no means paying wages, pay car can't be sent out, and unless we get immediate relief we must stop. Please inform Premier and Finance Minister. Do not be surprised, or blame me, if an immediate and serious catastrophe happens.” But the catastrophe was averted by the iron determination of J. H. Pope and the sagacious and patriotic counsel of Frank Smith, who saw with unclouded vision the inevitable effects upon the credit of Canada and the fortunes of the Conservative party. During this crisis Sir Charles Tupper, who was filling the office of High Commissioner for Canada in London, wrote to the Prime Minister:—

“I have been greatly concerned by your letter of the 24th ultimo as to the position of the C. P. R. and the attitude of some of your colleagues, and for the first time regret that I left Parlia-

ment If you let the C. P. R. go down, you will sacrifice both the country and the party and throw all back again for ten years. I do not believe that either Parliament or the country will consent to this."

There was, as has been suggested, a reserve of courage in Sir Charles Tupper which even Sir John Macdonald did not possess, and by which a great partnership was made as powerful in action as it was in conception.

There were times when Stephen, under the pressure of his heavy burden, was fretful, and once he seemed to threaten the Government. In the endeavour to establish better communication with Halifax the Company seems to have sought a more favourable agreement for running privileges over the Intercolonial from St. John than the Government desired to give, and Stephen suggested with every appearance of temper that the Government had "resolved on keeping the C. P. R. out of Halifax." He professed to fear that "the friendly relations that have subsisted between the Government and the C. P. R. from the summer of 1880 down to a comparatively late day will in some way collapse." There was almost nothing he would not do to avert such a wretched family quarrel. "But the unfairness and unfriendliness with which the Company has been treated in almost every matter that has come up for settlement have made me, and not only me but everyone connected with the Company, feel that the Government are afraid to do justice to the Company, apparently lest some one should say they were doing it a favour—giving it another 'grab.' I am not conscious of ever having asked the Government to do anything for the Company that was not absolutely right, fair and reasonable, and I am not going to begin now to act on any other principle. The Company, so far as I know, wants nothing but fair dealing and prompt action and that it shall not be treated 'unfriendly.'" In reply Sir John confesses that he was rather "irate" when he first read the letter. "The charge of unjust treatment of the C. P. R. at my hands, and from *you*, seemed to me inexplicable—but an angry discussion won't help matters. I shall do my duty to the country according to the best of my judgment, and suffer even the threatened hostility of the Company, if need be." He advised Stephen to read Charles Reade's novel, *Put Yourself in His Place*, and suggested that if Stephen were one of the Ministry he would act as they were doing. "But you, I fear, look only on matters from one point of view." Stephen promptly explained that what he had said was not "meant as a threat," the "family quarrel" was averted, and

some time no doubt the negotiations in which Stephen was concerned so long ago will be satisfactorily terminated.

The Correspondence clearly establishes Sir John Macdonald's attitude towards the Mother Country, and his conception of the future of the Empire. He was not a federationist, or at least he did not believe that any common Parliament of Empire, with such powers as the British Parliament possesses, could ever be wisely constituted:-

"Any arrangement," he said, "which would bring together more closely the Mother Country and the colonies deserves, and I have no doubt will receive, favorable consideration. I think, however, that anything like a common legislature, with power at all similar to that of the British Parliament, is altogether impracticable."

In another letter he wrote :—

"I am very desirous that the connection between the Mother Country and the colonies shall be drawn closer together, and that the large groups of colonies should assume by degrees a position less of dependence and more of alliance. I think this can be done, however, by treaty or convention, and I am a total disbeliever in the practicability of colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament. There is no necessity, however, for such a representation. The great objects of common defence and preferential trade can be arrived at by treaty or agreement."

He hoped for a time when Great Britain would establish preferential duties in favour of colonial food products, and declared that if this could be done "Canada would be prepared to make a large discrimination of duties in favor of the productions of the Mother Country." But he admitted that with the strength of free trade feeling in Great Britain food duties were unlikely to be imposed until the Dominions could measurably supply all the wheat necessary for British consumption.

Even as late as 1889, Sir John regretted that at Confederation Canada was not made an "auxiliary Kingdom." He states that the change of title from Kingdom to Dominion was made at the instance of Lord Derby, "who feared the first name would wound the susceptibilities of the Yankees." Sir John adds that he mentioned this to Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden in 1879, who said, "I was not aware of the circumstance, but it is so like Derby—a very good fellow, but who lives in a region of perpetual funk." In 1885 Sir John would not entertain a proposal to send Canadian troops to the Soudan. "The time has not arrived, nor the occasion, for our volunteering military aid to the Mother Country." He insisted

that we were not at all in the same position as Australia. England was not at war, but merely helping the Khedive to put down an insurrection. Our men and money would be sacrificed to get Gladstone and his colleagues out of a hole they had plunged themselves into by their own imbecility. "Again, the reciprocal aid to be given by the colonies and England should be a matter of treaty deliberately entered into and settled on a permanent basis. The spasmodic offers of our Militia Colonels, anxious for excitement or notoriety, have roused unreasonable expectations in England and are so far unfortunate." One knows beyond any doubting what Sir John Macdonald would have done in the Great War. Is it so certain that he would have been more ready than was Sir Wilfred Laurier to send Canadian contingents to South Africa? In the Kingdom of Canada of his conception there would have been no colonial subserviency, nor any sacrifice of full and responsible self-government.

But the supreme desire of Sir John Macdonald was that Canada should remain British, and increase in authority within the Empire. He suspected and resisted all movements and tendencies which seemed to lead in any other direction. Writing in 1869 to Hon. R. W. W. Carrall, he said:—

"The Annexationists have changed their note and speak of the Dominion being changed into an independent but friendly kingdom. This is simply nonsense. British America must belong either to the American or British system of government."

The final sentence in the last letter given by Sir Joseph Pope reads,

"Our conference with Blaine will amount to nothing, but we want to drive him into a statement that he won't deal with us unless we adopt the United States tariff and discriminate against England, which we won't do."

The last attempt by a Conservative government to negotiate a reciprocal trade agreement with Washington ended as he predicted it would end. The agreement negotiated by the Taft Administration at Washington and the Laurier Government at Ottawa was rejected by the Canadian people. Blaine and McKinley have gone, but Young and Fordney remain. We still have McKinleyism at Washington, and it is as necessary as ever that Canada should defend her own industries and develop her own resources. But happily between the United States and the British Empire there is continuous increase of good feeling and fuller recognition of their common responsibility for the welfare and security of mankind.

So the Dominions have become less dependent upon the Old Country, but as determined as Sir John Macdonald could desire that "less of dependence" shall mean "more of alliance" in the future of the British Commonwealth.

If Sir John Macdonald was not peculiarly the Father of Confederation, he was its chief architect. He was the master craftsman of the Quebec Conference, when his preference for a legislative union was set aside, and chiefly through his skill, patience, and wisdom the provinces were reconciled to the new constitution. It was a great task to which he set himself. It was a great thing that he accomplished. He had to temper disaffection in the Maritime Provinces, to allay sectarian suspicion in Ontario, to consider racial feeling in Quebec, to overcome rebellion in the remote Red River Territory, and to bring British Columbia into the union. The proof of the man is that he did all this. National feeling grew under his hand. British sentiment was nourished and strengthened. The deeper convictions of his nature were moulded into the spirit and fabric of the commonwealth. However we may regard the measures and methods by which he maintained his personal ascendancy, he had fundamental faiths and convictions. These he never dishonoured nor betrayed. These he imposed upon the Conservative party, upon Parliament and upon the people. If we think clearly, it will appear that these faiths and convictions have become the dominant beliefs of Canada, that his successors in government follow the paths along which he led the young commonwealth, and that all the exertions and sacrifices of the Canadian people for the common Empire are the logical and inevitable result of his teaching and example. Great majorities he had in political contests while he lived, but never such a majority as now follows his standard.

Nearly forty years ago, when I was a young reporter, I first saw Sir John Macdonald. He came to London in the exciting electoral campaign of 1882. Only once since that day have I witnessed such a manifestation of popular enthusiasm. As great perhaps was the demonstration over Sir Wilfrid Laurier when he came to Toronto during the federal campaign of 1896. At London, men who were ordinarily models of discretion and dignity removed the horses from the carriage and drew the Conservative leader through the streets to the cheering of thousands of excited people upon whom a sudden madness seemed to have descended. So far as one could see, it was all spontaneous. There was no organization. It was the instant expression of personal devotion and political fealty to a statesman who held men's affection and quickened their imagination. Sir

John Macdonald had, too, the devotion of women in remarkable degree. In households all over the land they were the passionate guardians of his reputation and the jealous champions of his achievements. It is rarely indeed that a political leader touches the hearts of women, and only those do it who have that strange quality of attraction which we call magnetism and which God gives to so few of his creatures. A French writer has said that "no power is equal to personal charm." There was the secret of Sir John Macdonald's influence and ascendancy. There was no beauty in his face, but often there was a gracious radiance in the eyes that was singularly winning. His head was set finely on his shoulders. He had adequate stature. He walked with easy jauntiness. He had the springy step of youth until he reached three score years and ten. He expressed dissent from the argument of an opponent with a curious jerkiness of head and shoulders. Often by turning the head sidewise he gave emphasis to a gibe or a pleasantry. It was said that his jokes were old, but to even an old joke he could give a flavour of freshness. He could have been a great comedian, but he was a greater politician. If on the platform he could approach buffoonery, he had adequate dignity for any company or any occasion. In the phrase of Kipling, he could "walk with Kings nor lose the common touch." If he was not an orator, he was an effective debater. As has been said, his defence of the Treaty of Washington and his appeal to Parliament against an adverse judgment on the Canadian Pacific Railway charges belong to the great events of Canadian parliamentary history. The letters in Pope's volume disclose a man of sober mind, of humane temper, of wide outlook and of singular genius for government, who in a greater place and perhaps even from the place which he filled might claim admission to that select company of whom Lord Morley has said that "they made great spaces in human destiny very luminous."