

cant parties, as they are and as they have been:



Sir. John A. Macdonald

*The Progressive Conservative:* The Conservatives were Canada's first dominant party — emerging after the Act of Confederation in 1867 as a coalition of the followers of John A. Macdonald and Georges Etienne Cartier. As those names suggest, the combination enrolled both French and English, Protestant and Catholic.

Macdonald, easy going and imaginative, triumphed over diversity. In Thorburn's phrase, the Conservatives succeeded by "uniting business and government in the pursuit of material and national advantage." The more explicit technique was to construct a transcontinental railroad and to erect a protective tariff. The interests of the Conservatives have been said to run like the railroad, east-west, as opposed to north-south. The Conservatives remained in power from 1867 until 1896, with a five-year hiatus in the seventies. They had within their ranks, then and later, many of extreme opinions but they never adopted an extreme opinion as a national policy. Their most persistent characteristic, from Macdonald to Diefenbaker has been an advocacy of strong ties to Britain. There has been no great lasting differences between the Conservatives and the Liberals in their attitudes toward the welfare state and the role of free enterprise in the Canadian economy — they are not constitutionally attached to either. The Conservative Party's attitudes toward such things are distinctly different from those of the Republican Party of the U.S. They had, like the Republicans, the misfortune of being in office when the Great Depression of the 1930's hit its depth. R. B. Bennett was the Prime Minister and G. Horowitz writes: "Even in his orthodox days R. B. Bennett's view on the States' role in the economy was far from similar to Hoover's; Bennett's attitude was that of Canadian, not American conservatism."

Since the Depression the Conservatives have been more often out than in; John Diefenbaker's administration from 1957 to 1962, an expression of populism with strong emphasis on the common man, was the only exception to Liberal rule. J. R. Mallory has suggested that this phenomenon is actually part of a historical pattern in Canada (as in the United States): "We have been threatened by a system in which only one party in each generation seems capable of winning elections." The most striking fact about the Conservative Party from the point of view of

Americans is that it is not in any particular sense the party of "business." It has many businessmen in its ranks, but the Liberals have an equal number. From the vista of the boards of the big corporations in Canada, party affiliation is not all that important.

At the moment, the Progressive Conservative Party is the official Opposition Party in Ottawa. Robert Stanfield, former premier of Nova Scotia, is the federal party leader and the party holds seventy-two seats in the House. Provincially, there are Progressive Conservative premiers in Alberta, Ontario, and New Brunswick. (As this is written, the outcome in Newfoundland is uncertain with both Conservatives and Liberals holding an equal number of seats in the Provincial legislature.)



Sir. Wilfrid Laurier

*The Liberal Party:* The Liberal Party began as the opposition to the Conservatives at the dawn of the Confederation, and it first gained office in 1873, rather to its own surprise. It lost in 1878 and did not come back in until 1896. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was its first great leader and Mackenzie King its most persistent. It has been almost from its beginning a national party with a broad range of economic, racial, religious and social attitudes among its members. G. V. Ferguson has characterized both the Liberals and the Conservatives as "great nation-wide, easy going omnibus vehicles whose occupants often have difficulty in recognizing their fellow passengers or in understanding why the driver . . . let them in." It is of course no accident — Canada, to become and remain a nation, had to be held together by broad parties. In one sense the Liberal Party has been broader than its principal opposition — it has maintained and enlarged its base among both the French and English speaking Canadians. The Conservatives began with a strong French following, but it faded until Quebec became for the Liberals what the "Solid South" of the United States was once for the Democrats. Since the forties began, the Liberals have placed three Prime Ministers in power: Mackenzie King, who became almost the personification of Canada in the mind of the world during the Second World War; Lester B. Pearson, who succeeded after the Diefenbaker years; and Pierre Elliott Trudeau who succeeded him. The Liberals now hold power in Ottawa with 152 seats and are in office in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Quebec, with the situation, as