

vast and diverse as Canada, it is the man of the middle course who will prevail. Indeed, it is men like Macdonald, and I am proud to mention Laurier, who was referred to a moment ago in a humorous way, and men like Mackenzie King who have triumphed.

Macdonald refused always to play the race or religious game. He was unwilling to be an extremist, although God knows he was tempted. I am a little concerned when I hear public men today laud the virtues of polarization, and I do not like to hear moderates decried as wishy-washy bleeding hearts. When I hear that I fear a little for the land and for the political institutions which must play a vital role in holding this land together. The greatest danger in Sir John A. Macdonald's day was polarization of different groups, and especially and very simply the group which spoke English and the group which spoke French. That is still a very great and serious danger.

Old tomorrow, the great compromiser, the driver of a six horse team, as Professor Lower called him, saw the essential virtue in reaching consensus but not encouraging confrontation. Heaven knows, he was often tempted to assume the brittle and immediately satisfying role of a sharp protagonist. But like Edmund Burke he knew, and knowing he cherished the value of compromise. It was Burke who said that "all government and indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act is founded on compromise and barter." The word "compromise" is another one of which we have lost the meaning, as we think now in terms of the habits of a loose female.

So today, as I have before, I ask that we look upon this our founding father and set aside one day—not a day that usually comes on the weekend, nor a summer celebration because summer is more pleasant, but a day of historical significance, the birth of the father of this country, the chief architect of confederation. I ask in the words of Ecclesiasticus "let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us." I think we should do this for our political fathers as well. I want my friend across the way to know that as soon as the committee reports on this bill and it becomes law I will join vigorously with him in getting a Laurier day, too. This is not a compromise or a barter, this is a fair declaration of intent.

I am pleased, sir, that something has been done in the country. I had the pleasure of being in Kingston last June on the anniversary of Sir John's death. It was a splendid ceremony arranged by the Progressive Conservative party. I also visited the home where Sir John A. lived. It is a fine, national institution well maintained under the direction of a very able, sensitive and understanding curator. This is one thing for which the present government deserves credit. Not just Kingston should honour Sir John A. Macdonald. He was the hon. member for Kingston, of course, but he was the father of the country.

As an additional inducement, when we set aside this day as a holiday, we shall honour some of our great contemporaries as well; the hon. member for Lafontaine

Public Bills

(Mr. Lachance), whose birthday is January 11, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath), his birthday is on that day, our much-beloved whip, the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster (Mr. Bell) who also has January 11 as his natal day. What a time we would have in this House with so many birthdays. This date is also the birthday of the premier of Ontario, Premier John Robarts, who in these last seven lean years of federalism has through his wisdom, moderation and common sense done more to hold this country together than any man in public life. Therefore, I commend to all my colleagues this suggestion which I have long advanced and which in these trying times I advocate with more feeling and fervour than ever before.

• (5:10 p.m.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is the hon. member for York East rising for the purpose of asking a question?

Mr. Otto: I am rising to ask a question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether the hon. member for Hillsborough would answer my question. He says that January 11 was the birth date of Sir John A. Macdonald or at least the alleged Sir John A. Macdonald. I and others understand that there is no certificate of birth or record and indeed not even a certificate of death of one called Sir John A. Macdonald.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The Chair feels the hon. member should put his question.

Mr. Otto: The question I have just put is whether the hon. gentleman has any record to show that the man called Sir John A. Macdonald did indeed exist or was sort of a figment of mass imagination.

Mr. Macquarrie: If I may be permitted to reply, Mr. Speaker, for a moment I thought when this wavy suggestion was made that the hon. member was speaking of another prime minister who was somewhat spiritualistic. But I am confident of the existence of Sir John A. Macdonald and I am satisfied with the date of his birth. I shall try to get the appropriate documents for the hon. gentleman.

Mr. Otto: They do not exist.

Mr. Macquarrie: We are satisfied he was there.

Mr. R. Keith Penner (Thunder Bay): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) for introducing this private member's bill, C-8 which is designed to give national recognition to Sir John Alexander Macdonald, one of the most decisive figures in North American history, a man whom the Canadian author, Bruce Hutchison, has described as "a magnificent paradox—as widely known for his scandalous public conduct as for his political acumen". As is the fate with almost all private members' bills, this one will not likely become an act of Parliament. However, it