

Historic Sites and Monuments

with resolution put forward by the hon. member. The purpose of the resolution is recommendation that the property be acquired as a memorial to Sir John A. Macdonald. Nothing has been indicated in this regard in any announcement made, and therefore I submit that the hon. member should be allowed to proceed with his resolution.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, if I may speak in this regard, the Prime Minister made a statement on December 23 which quite clearly indicated the purpose for which this house was acquired. If I may quote on the announcement, the Prime Minister said:

A program for restoring this house will be undertaken, and it is my hope that this work can be completed within two years. This house will be refurbished not only in the style of Sir John A.'s time but with some of the actual furniture used by him. This house will represent a proud historical trust of the Canadian people. As such, it is my sincere hope that it will contribute in real terms to keeping alive the memory of a very great Canadian.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, could I pose this thought on the point of order. From my own point of view I do not subscribe to this suggestion, but it may well be that some hon. members in the house may want to put forward ideas as to what should happen to the property which differ from those mentioned by the hon. member for Kingston, as announced by the Prime Minister. Those ideas and thoughts which hon. members have by way of debate or amendment may possibly be precluded if this motion is ruled out of order. I think it is better to proceed so that views can be expressed, first about the advisability of acquiring this property—because that is what the motion says—and second, as to what should happen to the property once it is acquired. The views expressed might be quite different from those enunciated by the hon. member for Kingston.

Mr. Speaker: I may say at this stage that I have very grave doubts whether we should proceed with the debate of this matter inasmuch as the motion is asking that something be done which has already been done. However, I think the benefit of the doubt should be given to the hon. member for Prince Edward-Lennox (Mr. Alkenbrack).

Mr. Alkenbrack: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must agree with the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) that although this action has been taken, and timely taken, by the government, a review of the matter might be made, and some good ideas put forward by hon. members might also be incorporated into the fulfilment of this historic undertaking. I too have the same notes which were recently read by my hon. friend from Kingston (Mr.

Benson) in connection with the tentative program of the government to preserve what will be a national memorial. In passing I also wish to commend the minister of northern affairs, who is in charge of the national historic sites board, for the administration of this matter.

For those who have been watching from the sides, the citizens of this country who, of course, pay the bills in this regard, some of the younger generation and the new Canadians might ask: "Who is Macdonald?" That is a good question. To you, to me and to the hon. members of this house Macdonald is a legend. To us Macdonald represents Canada itself and his image crosses party lines in this regard, in the same way Laurier represents Canada to many people. Laurier represents a fine period of accomplishment which was achieved under his civic administration. His patriotic desire to serve his country came from the same springs which were the source of Macdonald's.

The question is: Who was Macdonald? I have done a little research and have found a handy little book in our library. As I walked out of there with the book there came to me a realization of the fact that the library was built by men of Macdonald's ilk, men who have gone before and have left something for us that will last forever. The book dates back to 1880 and I have obtained the following information from it which should be interesting to hon. members. The book is the Canadian Parliamentary Companion and Annual Register of 1880. I believe it corresponds to our Parliamentary Guide of today.

Macdonald, the right hon. Sir John Alexander, K.C.B., D.C.L. (Oxon), L.L.D., Q.C. (Victoria, B.C.)—

I take it that is where that honorary title was conferred on him.

—privy councillor. Eldest son of the late Hugh Macdonald, Esq., of Kingston, Ont., and formerly of Sutherlandshire, Scotland.

Our first prime minister was born in Scotland and came to Canada as a very young child.

Born 11th January, 1815. Educated at Royal Grammar school, Kingston, under Dr. Wilson, a fellow of Oxford university. Married first, Isabella, daughter of the late Alexander Clark, Esq., of Dainavert, Invernessshire, Scotland. She died 1856; second, 1867, Susan Agnes, daughter of the late hon. T. J. Bernard, a member of Her Majesty's privy council of the island of Jamaica.

Studied law with the late Mr. George Mackenzie and was called to the bar, Upper Canada, hiliary term, 1836. Created a Q.C. 1846.

That was in the illustrious reign of our great sovereign, Victoria.

A bencher, ex officio, of the law society of Ontario; and head of the extensive law firm of Macdonald, Macdonald and Marsh, Toronto. Is the grand representative in Canada of the grand lodge