

Death of King George V

Majesty concluded his address to his privy council in the following words:

I place my reliance upon the loyalty and affection of my people throughout the empire, and upon the wisdom of their parliaments, to support me in this heavy task, and I pray that God will guide me to perform it.

"The wisdom of their parliaments!" This is now the recognized foundation on which rests, not only the security of the crown, but the security of the peoples of the British commonwealth. Who will say that it may not constitute the security of human society and civilization?

As members of one of the parliaments of the empire, well may we join with our new sovereign in praying that God will guide us in the performance of our task.

With these words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by Mr. Bennett, that a humble address be presented to His Majesty the King in the following words:

To The King's Most Excellent Majesty:
Most Gracious Sovereign:

We, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the House of Commons of Canada, in parliament assembled, humbly beg leave to express our deep sympathy with Your Majesty in the affliction and loss you have sustained by the death of the late King, Your Majesty's beloved Father.

Your Majesty's sorrow is shared by the people of this dominion, whose representatives we are. King George V, by His fidelity to duty, His public service, and His constant endeavour to advance the well-being and happiness of all classes, had greatly endeared Himself to His Canadian subjects. We remember with gratitude His unremitting efforts to secure friendship and peace among the nations of the world. In common with all parts of the empire, we shall ever deeply cherish His memory.

We welcome Your Majesty's accession to the throne of your ancestors. We desire, in so doing, to express to you our loyalty and devotion. It is our firm conviction that Your Majesty will ever seek to promote the happiness and to protect the liberties of all your people. As members of the parliament of Canada, we wish to assure Your Majesty that, in the discharge of these great responsibilities, it is our desire and determination to uphold and support Your Majesty, to the utmost of our authority and wisdom.

I would also move, seconded by Mr. Bennett, that the following message of condolence be sent to Her Majesty Queen Mary:

Your Majesty:

We, the House of Commons of Canada, in parliament assembled, respectfully beg leave to tender to Your Majesty our heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow and bereavement. We share Your Majesty's grief and loss in the passing of our late sovereign, King George V, who was greatly beloved by all his subjects.

We pray that, at this time, Your Majesty may be comforted and sustained by the

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

remembrance of what your loving companionship meant to the late King throughout his life and reign; by memories of service shared; and by the sympathy and love that everywhere surrounds Your Majesty in your great sorrow.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the observations made by the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) represent the heartfelt expression of opinion of this house. He speaks not as the chief of a great party, but as the leader of the House of Commons, and lengthy observations on my part should therefore be unnecessary. But tradition necessitates my making at least a few observations on behalf of those who sit with me, and are affiliated with me politically, so that we may be associated with what has been said.

I do not suppose that in the history of our institutions as we have them there has ever been any such manifestation of popular emotion as that which followed the death of His Majesty King George V. In city, town and hamlet, and in remote sections of the prairie, men and women regarded the death of King George as a personal sorrow. So far as I have been able to read, never before has it been given to a sovereign to touch the hearts of the people as did King George V. As one observer has said, it is difficult to express the reasons why, but on the other hand it is not difficult to understand the causes.

The late king might well be said to have been the hereditary president of our empire. He was closely in touch with his people. When he succeeded to the throne, having travelled over every part of his vast empire, having circumnavigated the globe before he was heir apparent to the throne and having served in the navy with great distinction, he was acquainted with every part of his vast dominions. When he ascended the throne, he asked the people to permit him to follow in his father's footsteps, and he referred to the great anxiety of King Edward VII to ameliorate the conditions of his people. At that time, when our late king had ascended the throne, the duties of the sovereign were defined as safeguarding the treasures of the past and preparing the path of the future. All the glories, all the achievements, all the security of law and order, all the developments of ages—these treasures had to be safeguarded. But with changed conditions, with the growth of a new democracy, with the extension of the franchise, with the balance of power changed from what it had been, a new path had to be made; that pathway had to be prepared. Such was the obligation of the new sovereign.