

was made. What I asked His Excellency to communicate as a direct message to the king from his Canadian ministers by myself as Prime minister was as follows:

My colleagues and I desire to have Your Majesty made aware of the deep sympathy we feel for you in the momentous decision which, at the present time, you are being called upon to make.

There is no doubt in our minds that a recognition by Your Majesty of what as king is owing by you to the throne and to Your Majesty's subjects in all parts of the British commonwealth should, regardless of whatever the personal sacrifice may be, be permitted to outweigh all other considerations.

A formal acknowledgment of that particular communication was not received from His former Majesty, but hon. members will recall that in His Majesty's communication to his several governments advising them of his decision to renounce the throne, he expressed his appreciation of the appeals which had been made to him to take a different decision. He emphasized as well that the decision was entirely his own.

The former king made one further statement, and it is one which I think we should all have in mind. He said he hoped he might have the understanding of his peoples and he asked his peoples to believe that the decision he had taken was that which he believed was best for the stability of the throne and empire and the happiness of his peoples. I believe that His Majesty in those words spoke sincerely, and that in making the decision he did he took it, as he has said, from the standpoint of what, as he knew the situation himself, he believed would be most in the interests of the throne and of his peoples. That, however, is an individual opinion, and each must form his own opinion. May I add that I hope none of us will be too quick to judge any man's actions, and least of all the actions of one who has carried the burden which the former King Edward bore for so many years.

I do not want this matter to pass in this parliament any more than Mr. Baldwin wished it to pass in the British parliament without saying that so far as Canada is concerned the decision taken by His Majesty is one which the people of Canada received with a feeling of the deepest sadness. We shall always remember the impression formed of His former Majesty when he visited this country as Prince of Wales. We shall always remember the way in which he shouldered the duties of kingship during the short period of his reign, and above all we shall never forget the gracious manner in which he accepted the invitation of the war veterans of Canada to

proceed to Europe to unveil the monument at Vimy in memory of those who had lost their lives in the Great war. It is of interest that this should have been the only official occasion in the reign of His former Majesty on which he visited the continent of Europe.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that I have said about all that needs to be said with respect to the circumstances which led up to the king's abdication and this country's part in relation thereto. I have given parliament what I have given to-day in order that this house, the other house, and the country should know of Canada's part in the matter. I cannot think of anything in the correspondence which I have kept back which would be at all pertinent. I have tried to give everything of significance. I believe the statement I have made will clear the minds of the public of this country of any doubt, if there should happen to be any, with respect to the wisdom of the part which this government took in relation to what preceded the actual abdication of the king.

In connection with this whole matter there was necessarily a great deal of correspondence, as correspondence took place, not only with Great Britain but with the governments of the other dominions of the British commonwealth. When it became apparent that there was a possibility, then a probability, and, finally, a certainty of the king's abdication, it became necessary for all governments to consider very carefully what their action would be with respect to the enactment of a measure or measures to give effect to the instrument of abdication and with respect to questions which might arise pertaining to the succession.

May I point out two considerations which it seems to me are necessary to be kept in mind at all times by all the governments of the British commonwealth when dealing with questions which may affect the commonwealth as a whole. On the one hand, there is the importance of laying emphasis upon national autonomy and, on the other, the equal importance of laying emphasis upon imperial unity. These two must be regarded as inseparable if the British commonwealth is to hold together. There are times when it is necessary to emphasize strongly the position of our national autonomy; there are other times when it is equally desirable that the need of unity between all parts of the British Empire should be strongly stressed. If there ever was a time in British history when it was of importance that the unity of the British Empire should be demonstrated to all the other nations of the world, it was when a question affecting the crown itself was under consideration. Our government, in its every