



# PRESS RELEASE

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 70

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 3, 1948.

Mr. St. Laurent, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, issued today the following statement on learning of the death of Dr. Benes, former President of Czechoslovakia.

The name of Eduard Benes is written large in the history of Europe and takes honourable place among those who, during our lifetime, have been foremost in the fight for freedom.

A disciple and friend of Thomas Masaryk, whose successor he was in the presidency of his country, Eduard Benes was one of the principal architects of that free, democratic Czechoslovak republic to which he dedicated his whole life of public service.

From the day when, as a young man of 34, he became Minister of Foreign Affairs; through long years of careful and constructive statecraft as President after the retirement and death of his beloved master, Masaryk; in exile after the humiliation of Munich; as President-in-Exile, and as President again of a restored Czechoslovakia - Eduard Benes worked tirelessly and with infinite resource for the best interests of his country.

Twice in his lifetime, in 1918 and again in 1945, he led his countrymen out of the bondage of foreign oppression. Twice in his lifetime he was forced to witness the destruction of their freedom.

Addressing both Houses of Parliament in Ottawa on June 3, 1943, Dr. Benes declared his allegiance, and that of his countrymen, "to the democratic way of life, to the principles of spiritual and religious freedom, and to the ideals of peace and peaceful international collaboration". Those were the noble principles that guided until the very end, the life of the great man whose death all Canadians lament. He was a patriot and a statesman, a fervent believer in national and individual freedom, a great European and a good citizen of the world.

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