

we as red-blooded Christian Canadians, proud of our heritage in the British Empire, going to stand aside and say we will not even make reasonable preparations to assist the Mother Country or other parts of the British Commonwealth of Nations if need be? No! We are not going to do any such thing if I know anything about Canadians or the blood that runs through their veins.

There are some people in this Canada of ours who are relying upon the beneficent position in which they find themselves, basking in the radiating protection of the United States, and perhaps some have thought that great country with its immense navy and army would not and could not permit Canada to be assailed by any foreign foe. We are not built, surely, of such timber that we are going to sit back and rely upon any sentiment of that kind. Surely we are going to undertake to do what may be reasonable and practicable in preparing, if necessity arise—as God grant it never may!—to take our place as Canadians and as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations in doing what humanity expects of us.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Hughes, the debate was adjourned.

SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE BILL

FIRST READING

A message was received from the House of Commons with Bill 1, an Act respecting alteration in the law touching the succession to the Throne.

The Bill was read the first time.

SECOND READING

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND moved the second reading of the Bill.

He said: Honourable senators, with the leave of the Senate I desire to move second reading of this Bill now. We are cognizant of the situation which has necessitated this measure. The purpose of the Bill is to secure the assent of the Parliament of Canada to the alteration in the law touching the succession to the Throne set forth in the Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom intituled, "His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act, 1936." The United Kingdom Act is printed as schedule two to the Bill which is now before the House.

To make clear exactly what is intended by the provisions of His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act I will read to the House what was said at Westminster by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on the second reading of the Bill. The Right Honourable Stanley Baldwin said:

The provisions of this Bill require very few words of explanation from me at this stage. It is a matter which of course concerns the Dominions and their constitutions just as it concerns us. As the House will see, four Dominions—Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa—have desired to be associated with this Bill. As regards the Irish Free State, I received a message from Mr. de Valera yesterday telling me that he proposed to call his Parliament together to-day to pass legislation dealing with the situation in the Irish Free State. The legal and constitutional position is somewhat complex, and any points with regard to that which anyone desires to raise would more properly be dealt with at a later stage.

The Bill gives effect to His Majesty's abdication, and provides that His Royal Highness the Duke of York shall succeed to the Throne in the same way and with the same results as if the previous reign had ended in the ordinary course. It is necessary to have an Act of Parliament because the succession to the Throne is governed by the Act of Settlement, which makes no provision for an abdication or for a succession consequent upon an abdication. It is also necessary expressly to amend that Act by eliminating His Majesty and his issue and descendants from the succession. This is effected by subsections 1 and 2 of clause 1.

I desire to draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that the present Bill covers only the second subsection in the Imperial Act, eliminating His Majesty and his issue and descendants from the succession.

The reason why this Bill is brought forward is to be found in the Statute of Westminster. Two parts of the statute are interesting, the preamble and clause 4. The second recital of the preamble reads:

And whereas it is meet and proper to set out by way of preamble to this Act that, inasmuch as the Crown is the symbol of the free association of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and as they are united by a common allegiance to the Crown, it would be in accord with the established constitutional position of all the members of the Commonwealth in relation to one another that any alteration in the law touching the Succession to the Throne or the Royal Style and Titles shall hereafter require the assent as well of the Parliaments of all the Dominions as of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

It is because of this constitutional declaration that the Bill is brought before this Parliament. As honourable senators will see, the Parliaments of all the Dominions were supposed to meet at the same time as the British Parliament to enact similar legislation. The element of time prevented the immediate meeting of the Canadian Parliament. What would have happened in the premises if our Parliament had waited eight or ten days to meet and to adopt the legislation mentioned in the preamble I would not venture to state, but certainly some difficulties would have arisen if Canada had not joined in the Act