

Statue of Monarch

I believe that statues are decorative and that they enliven and embellish any community, particularly a capital. I think that the National Capital Commission should be asked to give more attention perhaps to the municipal authorities here to statuary that would go not just on the parliamentary precinct but elsewhere in the community. I think that some of the people whose names I have mentioned might in fact find statues of themselves elsewhere, such as we have done for example with the Terry Fox statue which is located near the Conference Centre.

Those are a few thoughts on this particular motion. I would ask my hon. friend and his supporters in the Monarchist League to recognize the context in which I give these remarks. It is not by any means at all to diminish the service that Queen Elizabeth has given but to suggest that we as Canadians who are responsible for leaving a parliamentary precinct which is symbolic of Canada should be very careful about how we seek to decorate that, whether it is with statues of Prime Ministers, of monarchs or of anybody else.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): I want to say a few words about the motion before us today to commission a statue on Parliament Hill for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I want to say that as a person who grew up in Victoria County, Ontario, a county that was named after Queen Victoria, I lived in a community that related very closely to royalty and monarchy and all those institutions that preceded a growth of Canadian national spirit in Canada after World War I and particularly more so after World War II.

I wonder how many statues we really can put on Parliament Hill over a period of time. The reason why I think Queen Elizabeth II is a very important part of that growth or development of our historical background on Parliament Hill is that Canada has been a nation that has related broadly to the peoples of the world. We have a tremendous image as a nation in the eyes of other nations of the world. Queen Elizabeth II has, without exception, related to those many national interests and the cultural development and reality not only of the nations of the Commonwealth but, indeed, she was broadly read on many other cultures and nationalities throughout the world.

I can recall very well teaching school in a small community back in 1952 when she became our new Queen. During the course of that year it was requested that schools put on special events to commemorate the new monarch. I can remember as principal of the elementary school at Harlowe, in the northern part of Frontenac County, in that particular year we got together with other communities on the Highway 41 corridor, such as Kaladar, Cloyne, North Brook, Flinton, and I believe we had some discussions as far north as Denbigh, and we had a big field day. That was tremendously well attended in commemoration of the ascension to the Throne of Queen Elizabeth II.

• (1430)

We know that there are areas in Canada today where the monarchy is not as popular as others. We recognize it as part of our background history. Indeed, Queen Victoria was consulted on the location of these very Parliament Buildings. It was through her that Ottawa was chosen. Therefore, rightly so, she has a very prominent place on Parliament Hill.

It is important to note that Queen Elizabeth holds a position that is respected by history. She is respected because of the person that she is. In the future there may well be another individual who does not play the role as courteously and effectively. The reason why the monarchy has declined somewhat over the years is because of monarchs coming to the Throne who did not have those personal qualities to relate to the people whom he or she represented. To illustrate that point we can go back to the reign of James I, Charles I, and Charles II.

On a six day visit to London, England, with the NATO parliamentarians, the Queen had a reception at Buckingham Palace for all the delegates and the staff of the delegations at Buckingham Palace. That day the Queen and Prince Philip came over and stood in the middle of the Canadian delegation and spoke with us at some length in common everyday discussion. That is the type of thing that gives a real insight into the person. The Queen and Prince Phillip are people who have the capacity to relate to all the members of the Commonwealth, and indeed to many other people in the world.

She was here for the signing of the 1982 Constitution Act. She has visited Canada on many occasions. Indeed, she opened this Parliament.

The fact that she has been on the Throne for a long time, as Queen of Canada and the Commonwealth, she has indeed earned her a role in the history of our nation.

I want to say a word to the Hon. Member who has proposed this motion. At this time it must be brought to the attention of the House and to the people of Canada that while we relate very well to Queen Elizabeth II and the tremendous role that she has played as a mediator in disputes in the Commonwealth, and taken very strong stands, as she recently did on Fiji, our thoughts go back to the debate in the House when the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) brought in a Bill to commemorate the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, and have a monument to him on Parliament Hill. I would remind the Conservative Member who has proposed this motion, and others in the House, that when the Bill went to committee, the Conservative Members on that committee referred that Bill to the National Capital Commission for further study for sites of and on the Hill. Imagine that type of partisan politics coming into the commissioning of a statue on Parliament Hill for a former Prime Minister of Canada? Not only was Mr. Pearson a former Prime Minister of Canada, but he was a man who probably had the greatest record as a Secretary of State for External Affairs in the history of this country.