

An address by the Governor General, His Excellency the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, delivered to the Canadian Club of the Niagara Frontier, March 13, 1953.

We, like the United States, cherish law and liberty. Our manner of cherishing, our constitutional and symbolic expressions are different. We have much to learn, and we have learned much, from the American's sense of freedom and equality, from his idealism and his insistence that all should have the good life, the best life; from his determination and his successful efforts to provide the necessary material foundation for that life. We respect the American consciousness that material things do matter; their continuance of the pioneer distrust of meaningless survivals; their insistence on direct appraisal of individual worth.

But we have something of our own, too, which is different and valuable; we express the common good, the public welfare in parliamentary institutions. With the Parliament we associate the Crown. Forgive me if I dip into history for a moment. It is an historic fact that Parliament is derived from the authority of the Crown, and that on the other hand the Crown has, for many centuries, achieved its greatest dignity and power in and through Parliament. I will not go into detail. I shall remind you only that historians tell us that in England when the Crown was abandoned during a period of strong republican feeling under Cromwell, it was brought back, as much for the sake of Parliament as for its own sake. Since then, the two institutions have grown together, apparently inseparable, in increasing power and prestige. In the eighteenth century, however, our neighbours, finding the current concept of parliamentary imperialism in conflict with their ideas of liberty and national independence, severed the link.

We have retained this link. We are indeed the first people to embody the monarchical principle in a federal system. I believe that we have been singularly happy in so doing. I am not thinking at the moment of our connection with Great Britain. I think of our Canadian Crown and of all that it means to us. May I remind you that almost all -- I think all -- of our greatest Canadian statesmen have not merely accepted, they have been profoundly seized with the significance and the value to us of the Crown and of all that it stands for?

Sir John Macdonald, whose name has been brought most happily to our attention by the recent work of a distinguished Canadian historian, was only one among many "A British subject I was born and a British subject I will die" was the expression of his profound belief in the value of the Crown in Canadian national life. His famous successor, differing from him in many political views, was at one with him in his view of the Crown, as he was at one with him in his steady support of Canadian nationalism. And it is true to say of all our leaders that the more profound their belief in Canada as a nation, the more insistent have they been in supporting the Crown and in developing its Canadian character.

Long before the official adoption of the Queen's new title of Queen of Canada, the Crown was a Canadian Crown playing its own part in Canadian life. And here it may not be irrelevant