

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

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Mr. King's Speech re Stanley Baldwin - Empire Societies Dinner, May 24/37

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PROLONGED YEARS OF
SERVICE
MR. MACKENZIE KING'S
TRIBUTE

Mr. MACKENZIE KING, in reply, said that as they listened to Mr. Baldwin they knew that they were witnessing one of those moments in a great career when all that had contributed to its greatness—character, courage, vision, wisdom, service, sacrifice—was finding expression in utterances which would become a part of their literature of their history. Considerable as have been the contributions made by more than one of the Prime Ministers, and not a few of the statesmen of this Old Land, towards the development of the British Commonwealth, I believe (Mr. Mackenzie King went on to say) that there is not a man in public life to-day who possesses, in equal measure with Mr. Baldwin, an understanding of the Dominions, and of considerations of which they have to take account, in their relations to each other and to the United Kingdom; and who enjoys their confidence in so complete a measure.

"We should be unhappy, indeed, and conscious of great loss, did his relinquishment of the office of Prime Minister mean Mr. Baldwin's retirement from public life. Fortunately it means nothing of the kind. Rather, it gives reason to hope that his years of public service may be greatly prolonged. Mr. Baldwin can hardly look forward to years freed of anxiety. I doubt if serenity is to be found anywhere in the world to-day, especially by those who have to do with public affairs. Of this I am sure, however, that, freed from the trammels of office, Mr. Baldwin will be able to bring to bear upon the problems of industrial and international relations, to which his life has been so singularly devoted, an outlook as sagacious as it is democratic, and an experience unequalled by any of the great men of our times. 'The last of life, for which the first was made'—such, we believe, is the character of the opportunity which now awaits him. That for many years to come, Mr. Baldwin may be spared further to share in guiding the destinies of the Commonwealth he has already served so well, and in this painful period of its transition to minister to the world's need, will be the wish not of his friends or supporters only, but of members of all parties in this and other lands, and of all who have at heart the well-being of mankind throughout the world." (Cheers.)

SECRET OF UNITY

The thought which was uppermost in their minds at this time, and which, he imagined, found its place in the minds of many in other countries, was (he continued) the unity which the events associated with the Coronation and the Imperial Conference had served so conspicuously to disclose. What was the secret of the unity of the Commonwealth?—the secret of Empire unity? That was the question which was being asked in other parts of the world. Colonization was not sufficient to explain it. It was the common spirit which underlay British institutions—the law of freedom which was the real cohesive force, the real law of attraction, which drew all parts of the Empire to a common centre. The common allegiance to the Crown was another bond. It was natural that this bond should be a strong one, for the Crown itself had come to represent those ideals and aims of personal and national life which they cherished most deeply. Finally, there was the common Faith. They did not all approach God in the same way; but they all sought to see or to find and to serve Him in one way or another.