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In the latter part of the year 1900 it was announced that the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, later to become King George V. and Queen Mary, would leave for Australia to take part in the inauguration of the new Commonwealth. The feeling was general in Canada that the occasion was opportune for an extension of the Royal Tour to include the Dominion of Canada and Sir Wilfrid Laurier expressed the hope to Queen Victoria that this might be done. Her Majesty was reluctant to prolong the separation of her grandson but in recognition of the loyalty and devotion of her Canadian subjects and of the conspicuous bravery of Canadian soldiers in South Africa she consented to Their Royal Highnesses extending their journey to allow of a short visit to Canada.

A few weeks after receipt of this message, the nation was plunged into mourning by the death of the Queen - and for a while there were doubts if the tour should be carried out. However, King Edward VII felt that his mother's promise should be fulfilled and the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, now the Heir Apparent, set out on what Sir Joseph Pope, in his account entitled The Royal Tour of Canada, 1901, described as a "tour which afforded to the world at large a stately pageant, a unique spectacle, a royal progress, of the like of which Caesar had never dreamed." Although since the period of mourning for the late Queen had not expired, balls and banquets were avoided, and entertainments were limited to official dinners, concerts, receptions and reviews; the Governor General, Lord Minto, Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier, premiers and lieutenant-governors and mayors contrived to provide hospitality which was overwhelming. (1)

(1) Ottawa Journal, October 11, 1957.