

Anniversary of D-Day

We can best pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of men and women who served in varying degree in the struggle of the second world war by remaining faithful to the purposes underlying the cause for which they fought and worked, and died.

On this occasion, however, I think it is appropriate to single out for special honour two men who provided outstanding service and who are in a very real sense, I believe, symbolic of the great contribution made by our people in the war in civil and military roles. I have accordingly, Mr. Speaker, with the approval of my colleagues in the cabinet, submitted today to His Excellency the Governor General advice that General H. D. G. Crerar and Mr. M. J. Coldwell be chosen and summoned to be members of the Queen's privy council for Canada. The Governor General has approved that advice and General Crerar and Mr. Coldwell will be sworn of the privy council in the course of the next few days.

General Crerar had a brilliant military career and was in command of the Canadian forces that landed on the coasts of France on June 6, 1944. He remained as general officer commanding in chief of the first Canadian army until the end of the war. He made a great contribution, along with the gallant forces he so ably commanded to the ending of the struggle.

Mr. Coldwell was, of course, for 22 years an outstanding member of the Canadian House of Commons. A veteran of the first war, during the second, his wisdom, industry and patriotism were an example of public and parliamentary service in the highest degree. I can think of no one who has better exemplified the standards that we hope to see embodied in the public and parliamentary life of our country.

I trust, Mr. Speaker, that all members of this house will find it appropriate that we honour these two men and, through them, the people of this country whose military and civil efforts of 20 years ago made possible the victory of freedom over totalitarianism and gave us the chance to work for, and the hope to achieve, a better world of peaceful progress for all men.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on this occasion the house will be a cathedral of devotion to those who served, and to so many who died, in the service of their country 20 years ago. In this house there are quite a number of members who were present on that day when Canada took its place once more in the legions of freedom.

[Mr. Pearson.]

In honouring General Crerar, Canada will honour itself. It is well to remember that, according to the press dispatches of the time when General Crerar received the thanks of the Canadian people at the hands of, and from the lips of, the then prime minister of Canada, Mr. King, he reported that as he left the House of Commons and looked up at the red ensign floating over the tower, he heard from Mr. King the words that a national flag had been created—or words to that effect—as a result of the service and sacrifice of those whom we honour today.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I do not know the reason for the interruptions. I am simply reporting the facts.

So far as Mr. Coldwell is concerned, he is a fine parliamentarian who gave generously of his time, energy and ability. I know all of us would join with the government in the action taken in honouring him and honouring the privy council by his inclusion.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, it is most appropriate that the members of the House of Commons should pause in their deliberations to pay tribute to those Canadians who, 20 years ago tomorrow, took part in the landing on the beaches of Normandy. This was the greatest amphibious military operation in world history, and Canada is proud that Canadians participated in that great event. They took part not for military aggrandizement or for any territorial ambitions, but because the people of Canada were convinced that we had to devote all our efforts to destroy nazi tyranny and to prevent the spread of totalitarianism throughout the world.

Many brave men sacrificed their lives on that occasion and in the bitter and bloody battles that followed. Whether or not we are worthy of their sacrifice will depend on the extent to which we are able to build a world in which men can walk the earth with peace and dignity free from racial discrimination and religious intolerance. If we in this House of Commons, in concert with men of good will everywhere, are able to build a world in which there will be peace under the rule of law then these men whom we honour today will not have died in vain.

I want to commend the right hon. Prime Minister for the tribute which is being paid to General Crerar. During the latter months of the war it was my privilege to visit Saskatchewan troops in Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. I had the