

*The late King George VI*

Mother and Queen Mary, to Princess Margaret and to all the other members of the royal family.

Canada mourns the loss of a great king and a good man. And we are not alone in our sorrow. Throughout the commonwealth, and indeed everywhere in the free world, King George VI was held in the highest esteem and affection. It is not hard to discern why this was so.

He had not expected to be called to rule over the British commonwealth of nations, and he succeeded to the throne in circumstances which were without precedent and must have been personally distressing to him as, indeed, they were to many of his subjects. I suppose he had hoped that, while he would have many duties as the brother of the reigning monarch, he would be able to lead, out of the limelight, a relatively quiet but useful family life. This was not to be. But to his everlasting glory King George VI responded to this call of duty in a manner we can all be proud of, and for which, I think I may add, we can all be thankful.

His reign coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in history; a period of depression, war, distress, fear and uneasiness. Yet throughout it all he remained calm and held firm to his faith in freedom and his belief in human progress. One has only to read the speeches he made each Christmas to get a clear conception of the ideals of this good man.

As we remember him today, and we will remember him for many years to come, we think of his sense of duty; of his great courage; of his example as a husband and a father; of his kindness and his concern for the welfare of his subjects everywhere. He was specially interested in the future of his younger subjects. It will be remembered that on May 24, 1939, King George VI spoke from Winnipeg over the radio to the peoples of the commonwealth everywhere. In concluding he addressed a word to those of his listeners who were young. He said:

Life is a great adventure, and every one of you can be a pioneer, blazing by thought and service a trail to better things. Hold fast to all that is just and of good report in the heritage which your fathers have left to you, but strive also to improve and equalize that heritage for all men and women in the years to come. Remember, too, that the key to all true progress lies in faith, hope, and love.

The late king himself did "hold fast to all that is just and of good report", but he also believed in the future.

Canadians have never forgotten the visit of the late king and his queen to our country in 1939. Those who were in this house at that time will remember meeting him and

hearing him speak and give his assent to legislation which had been passed by our two houses of parliament. Across our land, hundreds of thousands of Canadians were able to see and acclaim their monarch for the first time. Canadians will remember, too, the many associations the king established with our armed forces during the war.

These experiences, and many more besides, have greatly strengthened the attachment of the Canadian people to the crown.

The crown is, of course, the constitutional link between the members of the commonwealth. And it is more than that; it is also the symbol of unity in each of the nations of the commonwealth. It is in the name of the king—now of the queen—that we discharge in Canada the responsibilities of government.

We have, in our commonwealth nations, a system of government as free as any on earth; in our parliaments and in public debate we place few limits on differences of party; but happily in this house and, indeed, in this country, all political parties worthy of the description are as one in their devotion to the crown and in their attachment to the commonwealth.

As Mr. Churchill reminded us in his broadcast the day after the king died, it is vital that "the occupant of the throne should be equal to the august and indefinable responsibilities which this supreme office requires."

We remember with gratitude how fittingly the king we mourn today bore those responsibilities. And throughout his reign, indeed through his whole married life, we know how well he was supported and sustained by his dear wife. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the Queen Mother, who shared so fully the life of our late king.

Hon. members will notice that the second of the two motions which the leader of the opposition and I are sponsoring today is in terms identical with the message of condolence to the Queen Mother when the late King George V died a little over sixteen years ago.

I am sure that Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother will be gratified to know that the members of the Canadian House of Commons think of our late king as the worthy son of a worthy father and have for her the same admiration, the same sympathy and the same affection they expressed to her illustrious predecessor, Queen Mary, sixteen years ago.

And we now hail our new monarch, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.