

No. 53/11 ROYAL STYLE AND TITLES

On February 3, the Prime Minister, Mr. St. Laurent moved the second reading of Bill No. 102 respecting the Royal style and titles. The motion having been agreed to and the Bill read, Mr. St. Laurent made the following statement:

...This is a bill that I consider to be of great importance and I think that it should receive attentive and serious consideration by every hon. member. Section 1 of the bill is to provide that the assent of this Parliament is given to the issue by Her Majesty of a proclamation establishing for use for Canada the Royal style and title set out:

"Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith."

That is the text that was agreed to at the Prime Ministers' Conference held in London last December. There was a general desire to have the Royal style and title accord with the constitutional position of the various members of the Commonwealth and to have it, in so far as might meet the conditions of the various members of the Commonwealth, as uniform as possible.

With respect to some members of the Commonwealth there was some difficulty. For instance, with respect to Pakistan it was found that the form that would be acceptable to the people of the United Kingdom would be apt to create difficulties with the population of Pakistan. It was also found that such was the case with respect to the population of the Union of South Africa. With respect to Australia, New Zealand and Canada an effort was made to agree upon the acceptance of a form that would be uniform--with the exception of the use of the name of the country--in each one. That was finally agreed upon and there was agreement--I will not say at whose suggestion; I think it was almost simultaneously suggested by the representatives of the three countries, Canada, Australia and New Zealand--that it would be desirable to retain in the style and title as used in our countries something that would indicate that it was the Sovereign of the United Kingdom who was recognized as the Sovereign of our countries, and that it would be preferable to have that indication appear in the Royal style and title rather than to have it merely name each one of our respective countries and to have all the rest of the Commonwealth described as the Queen's other realms and territories.

It seems to me that that is in accord with the historical development of our constitutional relations. Her Majesty is now the Queen of Canada but she is the Queen of Canada because she is the Queen of the United Kingdom and because the people of Canada are happy to recognize as their Sovereign the person who is the Sovereign of the United Kingdom. It is not a separate office. It is the recognition of the traditional development of our institutions; that our parliament is headed by the Sovereign; and that it is the Sovereign who is recognized as the Sovereign of the