

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE VI—DEBATE ON
SPECIAL ORDER

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day are called, may I say a word with reference to the appearance on the order paper of the special order in the following terms:

That an humble address be presented to His Majesty King George VI, extending the greetings of the members of this house upon His Majesty's accession to the throne, and conveying to His Majesty and to Her Majesty the Queen the assurance of their loyalty and support.

Hon. members will recall that yesterday when I asked for unanimous consent to proceed with the resolution to-day the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) took exception to my so doing. After what I said in reply to the hon. member I thought he had agreed to allow the motion to be made, but he told me after adjournment last night that you, Mr. Speaker, had misunderstood his intention in the matter, and that in reality he intended to press his objection. I mentioned to the member for Winnipeg North Centre that I thought hon. members generally believed he had consented to the order being proceeded with. Moreover I drew his attention to the fact that if we did not proceed to-day with the resolution we could not deal with it until after the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne has taken place, because of the house having agreed to give it precedence on Monday. I pointed out, further, that if the resolution were not proceeded with until after we had discussed the bill respecting the law touching the succession, it might be some time before it could be adopted. I expressed to him the hope that he would not offer further objection. He has stated to me frankly that he has no desire to delay the motion, but that he feels the point he has raised is one which should be strongly taken; that in bringing forward a resolution expressing loyalty to the new king before disposing of a bill respecting succession the government is not proceeding logically.

My hon. friend has said to me that while agreeable to our proceeding this afternoon, he may nevertheless find it necessary to say something to the government by way of criticism of its action in having consented to the enactment by the parliament of Westminster of the abdication bill. If on this resolution the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

should desire to exercise some latitude in criticizing the government—while he may not wish to refrain from criticizing the government, I believe he does not desire particularly to do so on this resolution—I am sure the house will be tolerant of his attitude in view of an understanding reached between the hon. member and myself last night, subject of course to the approval of all hon. members, which would permit consideration of the resolution this afternoon.

ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE VI

ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY CONVEYING GREETINGS
AND ASSURANCES OF LOYALTY AND SUPPORT

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister) moved:

That an humble address be presented to His Majesty King George VI, extending the greetings of the members of this house upon His Majesty's accession to the throne, and conveying to His Majesty and to Her Majesty the Queen the assurance of their loyalty and support.

He said: Mr. Speaker, my purpose in rising is to ask hon. members to unite in a resolution of confidence and good will to our new king upon his accession to the throne, and to express our loyalty and support to His Majesty King George VI and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

It is not my intention this afternoon to say anything about the circumstances which led to the accession to the throne of King George VI, beyond saying that they are without precedent in British history. May I point out, however, that they serve to reveal clearly the double foundation on which, throughout the British commonwealth of nations, rests the essential relationship of the crown and the people, namely, on the part of the crown, consecration to all that is highest and best in the well being of a people, and on the part of the people, loyalty to the crown, as a symbol of the sum and substance of all that is most cherished in the collective life of a nation or a people. In words of unmistakable sincerity, His Majesty King George VI has given assurance of his desire and of the desire of the queen to consecrate their lives for all time to the service of the people.

I can not do better than to read to this house the message sent by King George VI to the two houses of parliament at Westminster a day or two after His Majesty's accession to the throne. The message, under the signature "George R.I.," is as follows:

I have succeeded to the throne in circumstances which are without precedent and at a moment of great personal distress, but I am resolved to do my duty and I am sustained by