

Accession of King George VI

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 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

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

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 the knowledge that I am supported by widespread good will, and sympathy from all my subjects, here, and throughout the world.

It will be my constant endeavour, with God's help and supported by my dear wife, to uphold the honour of the realm, and promote the happiness of my peoples.

This gracious message, which was presented to parliament on December 14, was supplemented by another message which was broadcast, to the empire, at the early dawn of the new year. The king's new year greeting to his peoples in all parts of the empire was in these words:

In this first New Year's day of my reign I send all the peoples of the empire my warmest wishes for their welfare and happiness.

In succeeding to the throne, I follow a father who had won for himself an abiding place in the hearts of his peoples, and a brother whose brilliant qualities gave promise of another historic reign. His reign was cut short in circumstances upon which, from their very sadness, none of us would wish to dwell.

I realize the full responsibilities of my noble heritage. I shoulder them with all the more confidence in the knowledge that the Queen, and my mother, Queen Mary, are at my side.

Throughout my life it will be my constant endeavour to strengthen the foundations of mutual trust and affection, on which relations between the sovereign and people of the British Empire so happily rest. I ask your help toward fulfilment of this purpose, and I know that I do not ask in vain.

In this deeply moving message, and from what we know in other ways of the character of our new king, we are able to discern in him one

Who comprehends his trust and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim.

There could be no surer guarantee of the extent to which King George VI may be expected to meet the great responsibilities of his reign than the reverence which he has for the memory of his father, his determination to follow in his father's footsteps, of whom it