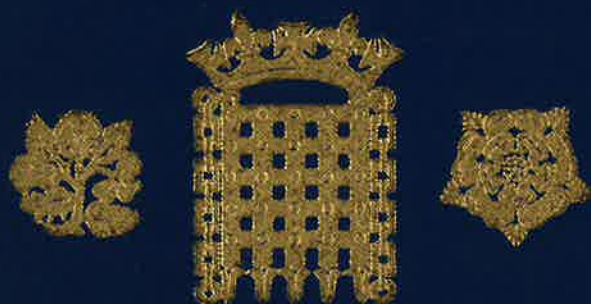


CORONATION LUNCHEON



WESTMINSTER HALL

27 MAY 1953

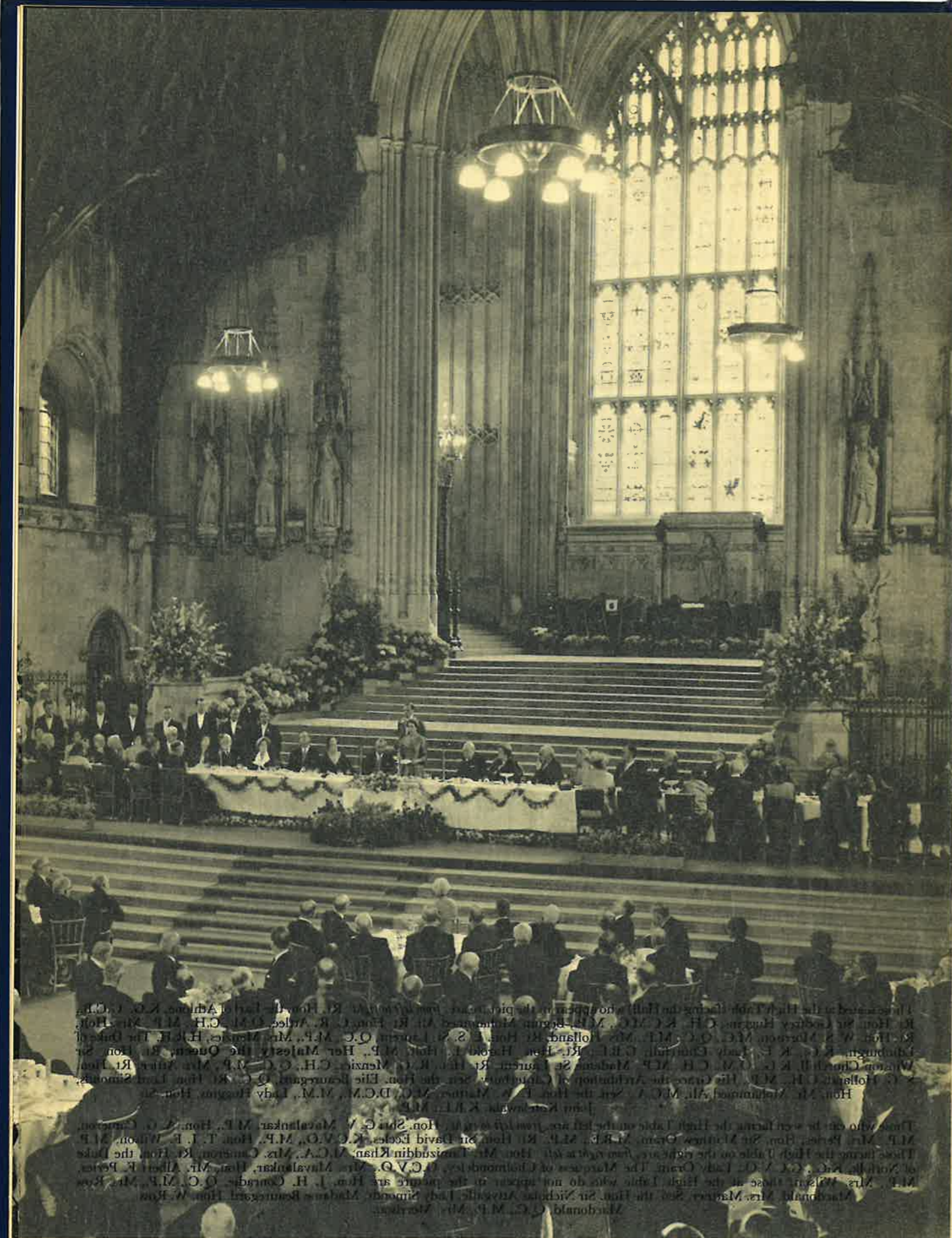
COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON TO H.M. THE QUEEN
WESTMINSTER HALL, 27th MAY, 1953

Those seated at the High Table (facing the Hall) who appear in the picture are, *from left to right*: Rt. Hon. the Earl of Athlone, K.G., G.C.B., Rt. Hon. Sir Godfrey Huggins, C.H., K.C.M.G., M.P., Begum Mohammed Ali, Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, O.M., C.H., M.P., Mrs. Holt, Rt. Hon. W. S. Morrison, M.C., Q.C., M.P., Mrs. Holland, Rt. Hon. L. S. St. Laurent, Q.C., M.P., Mrs. Menzies, H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., K.T., Lady Churchill, G.B.E., Rt. Hon. Harold E. Holt, M.P., **Her Majesty the Queen**, Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Churchill, K.G., O.M., C.H., M.P., Madame St. Laurent, Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, C.H., Q.C., M.P., Mrs. Attlee, Rt. Hon. S. G. Holland, C.H., M.P., His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sen. the Hon. Elie Beauregard, Q.C., Rt. Hon. Lord Simonds, Hon. Mr. Mohammed Ali, M.C.A., Sen. the Hon. E. W. Mattner, M.C., D.C.M., M.M., Lady Huggins, Hon. Sir John Kotelawala, K.B.E., M.P.

Those who can be seen facing the High Table on the left are, *from left to right*: Hon. Shri G. V. Mavalankar, M.P., Hon. A. G. Cameron, M.P., Mrs. Peries, Hon. Sir Matthew Oram, M.B.E., M.P., Rt. Hon. Sir David Eccles, K.C.V.O., M.P., Hon. T. I. F. Wilson, M.P. Those facing the High Table on the right are, *from right to left*: Hon. Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, M.C.A., Mrs. Cameron, Rt. Hon. the Duke of Norfolk, K.G., G.C.V.O., Lady Oram, The Marquess of Cholmondeley, G.C.V.O., Mrs. Mavalankar, Hon. Mr. Albert F. Peries, M.P., Mrs. Wilson; those at the High Table who do not appear in the picture are Hon. J. H. Conradie, Q.C., M.P., Mrs. Ross Macdonald, Mrs. Mattner, Sen. the Hon. Sir Nicholas Attygalle, Lady Simonds, Madame Beauregard, Hon. W. Ross Macdonald, Q.C., M.P., Mrs. Morrison.



AN ACCOUNT OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
 IN WESTMINSTER HALL
 ON WEDNESDAY, 27th MAY, 1953
 ON THE OCCASION OF THE
CORONATION LUNCHEON
 GIVEN BY ALL BRANCHES
 OF THE
 COMMONWEALTH
 PARLIAMENTARY
 ASSOCIATION
 TO
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II,
 WITH AN HISTORICAL NOTE
 ON CORONATION FEASTS
 IN WESTMINSTER HALL

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON TO H.M. THE QUEEN
 WESTMINSTER HALL, 27th MAY, 1953

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

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Mr. S. C. CHATTOPADHYAYA, M.C.A. (Leader of the Opposition in Assembly).

* As the Hon. T. Clifton Webb, M.P. (Minister of External Affairs and Attorney-General), was unable to attend the Meetings of the General Council in London, Mr. A. S. Sutherland, M.P., was appointed as his deputy.

*Printed in Great Britain
by Harrison & Sons Limited,
Printers to the late King George VI.
London, Hayes (Middlx.), and High Wycombe.*

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* As Senator the Hon. Sir Lalita Rajapakse, Q.C. (then Minister of Justice), was unable to attend the Meetings of the General Council in London, the Hon. Mr. Peries was appointed as his deputy.

ARRANGEMENTS AND ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

WHEN it became known that the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second was to take place in June, 1953, there were many Members of the Association who remembered that on the occasion of the Coronation of His late Majesty King George VI a Luncheon was held in Westminster Hall, organised by the United Kingdom Branch of what was then the Empire Parliamentary Association, to enable His Majesty to meet and to welcome the Ministers and Members of Parliament of the Commonwealth attending the Coronation; and they hoped that the precedent set in 1937 would be followed in 1953.

The United Kingdom Branch took early action towards the fulfilment of this hope, and arrangements were already in train when the Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association met at Ottawa in September, 1952. At the first meeting of the General Council there the Chairman expressed the hope that the Coronation Luncheon would take place, but he thought that as the occasion was one of such symbolic significance all Branches of the Association should combine through the Council as joint hosts in entertaining H.M. The Queen to the Luncheon. This suggestion received the Council's warm support, and the United Kingdom delegates agreed to take the matter back to their Executive Committee on their return to London. The Executive Committee subsequently fell in with the Council's wishes, on the understanding that the central fund of the Association should bear the cost, and that the United Kingdom Branch should be responsible for the arrangements.

Permission to use Westminster Hall and the approaches thereto having been obtained from the Minister of Works and Lord Great Chamberlain, an invitation was sent to Her Majesty to be the Association's guest at a Luncheon on Wednesday, 27th May, six days before her Coronation, and graciously accepted.

The arrangements for the Luncheon largely followed those made on the previous occasion. The High Table was placed on the large platform between the two flights of steps at the southern end of the Hall, below the great memorial south window, and 90 tables accommodating 8 guests each were set in the body of the Hall, down the centre of which a blue carpet was stretched along which Her Majesty was to walk on leaving the Hall at the end of the ceremony. About 750 guests in all were present, and with very few exceptions they were Members of the Association, 300 of them from Branches outside the United Kingdom. Behind the High Table was a stand on which the Band of the Royal Artillery played selections of music while the Luncheon was going on. The High Table itself, the steps beneath it and the bandstand were decorated with masses of hydrangeas, gladioli and roses, and the whole scheme of floral decoration gave warmth and colour to the austere lines of the ancient building. State Trumpeters of the Life Guards were stationed ready to salute the royal guests with fanfares.

The company began to assemble in the Hall about noon, and the many renewals of old friendships and the making of new ones seemed to engender a Commonwealth spirit of good fellowship which was the keynote of the whole function.

At ten minutes to one Her Majesty, accompanied by H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, arrived at the St. Stephen's entrance to the Hall. Here they were received according to custom by the Lord Great Chamberlain (the Marquess of Cholmondeley, G.C.V.O.) and the Minister of Works (the Rt. Hon. Sir David Eccles, K.C.V.O., M.P.), and their arrival was signalled by a fanfare of trumpets. On entering the Hall they were met by the Chairman of the General Council of the Association, the Rt. Hon. Harold Holt, M.P., Minister for Labour and National Service and for Immigration, Commonwealth of Australia, who was then presented, and the whole company stood to attention while the National Anthem was

played. The Chairman presented to Her Majesty those who were to occupy seats at the High Table, together with the Secretary-General.* The names of the guests seated at the High Table are given in the caption covering the frontispiece.

The Queen took the centre chair at the High Table, for the Hall is a part of her Palace of Westminster. Before she took her seat, the Archbishop of Canterbury said grace, and as she sat down a second fanfare was sounded.

A feature of the Luncheon arrangements was the Commonwealth character of the bill of fare. The lamb was sent by the New Zealand Branch, the pineapples, served with maple syrup from Canada, by that of Ceylon; the wines and liqueurs were provided by the Australian and South African Branches, and the coffee by the Kenya Branch, while the cigars and cigarettes came from the Jamaican and Southern Rhodesian Branches respectively. The thanks of the Association were extended to these Branches for their ready and generous help.

When the Luncheon was ended, the Chairman of the General Council rose to propose Her Majesty's health, and before doing so presented to her a beautifully bound volume entitled "Parliamentary Buildings of the Commonwealth", containing photographs of the fifty-two buildings in which are housed the Legislatures of those Commonwealth countries in which there are Branches of the Association. Next to speak in support was the Association's Vice-Chairman, Sir John Kotelawala, K.B.E., then Minister of Transport and Works and Leader of the House of Representatives, and now Prime Minister of Ceylon. Mr. Holt then called on the assembled company to drink Her Majesty's health, which they did after a verse of the National Anthem had been played. The toast was received with acclamation, and accompanied by a fanfare of trumpets.

After Her Majesty had graciously replied, the thanks of the Association were tendered by the representatives of its two senior Branches, the Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Churchill, K.G., O.M., C.H., M.P., Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and the Rt. Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent, Q.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada. The latter called for three cheers for Her Majesty. When this request had been responded to with enthusiasm, Her Majesty rose, made her way round the High Table to the centre of the platform, and walked down the Hall, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh and the Chairman of the Association, while the band played Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory". Just before she reached the North Door a roll of drums was sounded; she turned to face the gathering and all the company joined in singing one verse of the National Anthem. Her Majesty then left the Hall.

* Members of the General Council who were not seated at the High Table were subsequently presented to Her Majesty, with their wives, at the Royal Garden Party on 28th May by the Secretary-General, Sir Howard d'Egville.

THE SPEECH OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HAROLD E. HOLT,
M.P., MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE AND
FOR IMMIGRATION, COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA, CHAIR-
MAN OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE COMMONWEALTH
PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION, PROPOSING HER MAJESTY'S
HEALTH.

OUR toast is the Head of our great family of Nations—Her Majesty the Queen. In proposing it, I have also another privilege—to hand to Your Majesty, on behalf of the General Council representing all Branches of our Parliamentary Association, a book we have compiled to be a souvenir of this happy occasion. It is indeed an historic occasion, and in one important sense, unique. Other Sovereigns have met their Parliaments in this ancient Hall of Westminster—this hall where 'we celebrate the present under the spell of the past'. But never before have all the Parliaments of the Commonwealth combined as joint hosts to do honour to the Sovereign in this way. This book we give you is a book without words, but it speaks more eloquently than any written text. It is a series of pictures of those Houses of Parliament whose Members comprise our Association. The pictures show the spread throughout the world of parliamentary democracy patterned on the model of Westminster as established now in more than fifty Commonwealth Parliaments. These Parliaments—the creation of free peoples—stand today as guardians of freedom, the citadels of representative government.

We are, as you can see, a varied company with most of the differences that climate, creed and national tradition can produce. But these differences only emphasise our essential oneness. For freedom binds us—freedom under laws of our own making. To preserve that freedom, we have joined together in this Commonwealth. The links holding us united are all the more enduring because, being freely joined, they can be no less freely loosened.

The Crown draws these links of Commonwealth together, the brilliant symbol of our unity; but far more compellingly than any material symbol, it is the indefinable blending of the person with the institution which makes its binding strength immeasurably great. To many millions of people today our Queen has become a radiant embodiment of hope. They feel an exaltation of spirit with your crowning. The world has had a weary surfeit of bitterness and strife. As Your Majesty stands on the threshold of a reign so rich in promise, you embody the hopes of mankind for a great era of peaceful development.

A young Queen for a young Commonwealth, both with the bright expectancy, the forward-looking quality of youth. Despite the centuries which have gone into its making, ours is a young Commonwealth, a Commonwealth which is still growing up. The constitutional changes of recent years are marks of this process of growth.

The new and most significant phase of this Association of Parliaments began only four short years ago with the establishment then of our General Council. Some countries represented here have come to nationhood as of yesterday. Others, still sparsely settled, are busily promoting the growth of industries and population. Your Commonwealth is responding, as you have counselled us, to the spirit of adventure. We feel the urge to develop our great resources, and as the young countries of our Commonwealth grow in strength, so we strengthen the whole.

What a Commonwealth we have it in our power to build! We can muster the resources of one-fifth of the world's land mass, we can harness the skill of some six hundred million self-governing people. The greatest days of this Commonwealth are still ahead of us. May it be in the reign of our Queen Elizabeth that we attain them.

We rejoice in our Queen. We rejoice in the happiness of your family life—that happiness which press and radio bring so close to us, however remote in point of distance we may be from you. We have shared your sorrow as members of one family. Today we all feel we share your happiness. We rejoice in the hope and inspiration you give to us. May your reign be long. May it be made glorious by great constructive victories of peace. May it be such a reign that men and women everywhere will feel moved to say—as I do now—'God Save and Bless Queen Elizabeth'."

THE SPEECH OF THE HONOURABLE SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA,
K.B.E., M.P., THEN MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS AND
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, CEYLON.
VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE COMMON-
WEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION, SUPPORTING THE
SPEECH OF THE CHAIRMAN.

WE have just heard an eloquent speech from a representative of the Parliament of one of Your Majesty's Territories peopled by members of the British race. Perhaps it is fitting that he is followed by a representative of the Parliaments of the many Territories peopled by members of other races; and as such I have the honour to address this distinguished gathering.

On the eve of the historic event of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, I take leave to recall to mind an illustrious Sovereign who bore the same name. It is a matter of history that the foundations of the British Empire were laid during the reign of the first Elizabeth, not without great support and encouragement from the Sovereign herself. That Empire grew and flourished until it came to be one of the most powerful the world had ever known; but in this case the fate that befell other great Empires of the past was avoided. For this Empire did not fall, but evolved into an association of peoples perhaps unique in history and full of promise for the future peace of the world. The second Elizabeth commences her reign as the Queen, not of an Empire, but of free nations, each of whom has by individual choice accepted her as Sovereign; and it is our hope that during her reign the number of those nations will increase.

In this month of May of the year 1937, in this very Hall, members of what was then the Empire Parliamentary Association met here to greet their Sovereign George the Sixth on the eve of his Coronation. Little could they on that occasion have anticipated the events which were soon to follow—the grim test which the nations they represented were to undergo in a world war, the agony and the destruction involved; nor again the ultimate flowering of the concept of Empire into that of the Commonwealth to-day.

The Nations of the Commonwealth are many, their races and religions diverse, each having to contend with different conditions and different problems. But the aspirations and purposes of those nations are the same; and the unity of the Commonwealth is characterized, firstly by the free and unanimous acceptance of Your Majesty as its Head, and secondly by the fact that each of those nations has established for itself a system of Parliamentary Government, based on the system so successfully evolved in the country which was the original Realm of Your Majesty's predecessors.

The Legislature of my own country holds session in an unpretentious building, far removed from these noble and historic precincts. From my place in our Parliament not long ago, before me a Mace of crystal and precious metal, the gift of that Parliament whose traditions we endeavour to follow, I, of free choice and as representative of my people, cast my vote for a Bill by authority of which Your Majesty has graciously assumed the Title of Queen of Ceylon. It is in that Title then that I greet Your Majesty, Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Ceylon, and wish success, prosperity and peace for yourself and the Commonwealth. In the words of our sages:—

“Royal splendour, noble deeds, victory over evil, all good fortune. May these be yours for ever and ever. Long live the Queen!”

THE GRACIOUS REPLY OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

I THANK you most sincerely for the kind way in which you have drunk my health. I thank you also, Mr. Holt, for this most interesting book, which you have just given me on behalf of your fellow members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

I was delighted to accept the invitation of the Association to be their guest to-day, for it gives me this opportunity of welcoming my Prime Ministers and Ministers and the many other parliamentary representatives from our great Commonwealth of Nations.

On the eve of his own Coronation, sixteen years ago, my dear father also met in Westminster Hall those who represent the Legislatures of the Commonwealth. I am indeed glad to follow his example.

It is a stirring thought that all these Legislatures are descended from the assembly which first met under this roof nearly seven centuries ago. We stand here in the Palace of Westminster, which is the home of the Mother of Parliaments. Of the many ties linking this family of nations not the least is that system of Parliamentary government which is common to us all.

I have vivid memories of my visits during my father's lifetime to Commonwealth Parliaments overseas, and I am looking forward with pleasure to seeing others during my forthcoming tour.

To this great Association I offer my best wishes for the success of their coming deliberations. I hope that all of you whose homes are overseas will have a very happy and enjoyable stay in this country.

THE SPEECH OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL, K.G., O.M., C.H., M.P., PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH OF THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION, EXPRESSING THANKS TO HER MAJESTY FOR HER GRACIOUS SPEECH.

IN this hall of fame and antiquity a long story has been unfolded of the conflicts of the Crown versus Parliament, and I suppose we are most of us, at this moment, within one hundred yards of the statue of Oliver Cromwell.

But those days are done. The vehement, passionate moral and intellectual forces that clashed in tragic violence together three hundred years ago are now united. It is no longer a case of Crown *versus* Parliament, but of Crown *and* Parliament.

In our island, by trial and error, and by perseverance across the centuries, we have found out a very good plan. Here it is. The Queen can do no wrong. Bad advisers can be changed as often as the people like to use their rights for that purpose. A great battle is lost; Parliament turns out the Government. A great battle is won: crowds cheer the Queen. We have found this a very commanding and durable doctrine. What goes wrong passes away with the politicians responsible. What goes right is laid on the altar of our united Commonwealth and Empire.

Here to-day in this hall, we salute fifty or sixty Parliaments—and one Queen. It is natural for Parliament to talk and for the Crown to shine. The oldest here will confirm me that we are never likely to run short of Members and of Ministers who can talk. And the youngest here are sure that they will never see the Crown sparkle more gloriously than in these joyous days.

It is always dangerous to make comparisons about the form of government. We accept the principle that every one should have what they like, and there can be no harm in my saying we like very much the system we have got in this country. Still, we recognize that others may prefer alternative solutions. We must be very careful nowadays—I perhaps all the more, because of my American forbears—in what we say about the American Constitution. I will, therefore, content myself with the observation that no Constitution was written in better English.

We have much more than that in common with the great Republic. The key thought, alike of the British constitutional monarchy and the Republic of the United States of America, is the hatred of dictatorship. Both here and across the ocean, over the generations and the centuries, the idea of the division of powers has lain deep at the root of our development. We do not want to live in a system dominated either by one man or one theme. Like nature, we follow in theme the paths of variety and change and our faith that in the mercy of God things will get better and better if we all try our best.

I suppose it is because I have served your Majesty's great-grandfather, grandfather, and father, and now yourself, that I have been accorded the honour of expressing our thanks this afternoon to you for your royal presence here and for the gracious speech which you have made.

Well do we realize the burdens imposed by sacred duty upon the Sovereign and her family. All round we see proofs of the unifying sentiments which make the Crown the central link in all our modern changing life, the one which above all others claims our allegiance to the death.

We feel that Her Gracious Majesty here with us to-day has consecrated her life to all her peoples in all her realms and we are resolved to prove on the pages of history that these sacrifices shall not be in vain.

THE SPEECH OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LOUIS S. ST. LAURENT, Q.C., M.P., PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN BRANCH OF THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION, EXPRESSING THANKS TO HER MAJESTY FOR HER GRACIOUS SPEECH.

I APPRECIATE the honour of having been asked by the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to second the vote of thanks to Her Majesty which has been so eloquently moved by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

My experience in Ottawa has been that the Canadian members of our Association are not always unanimous in their support for what I have to say there; but here, on this occasion, I am sure they all want me to associate them with their colleagues from the other parts of the Commonwealth in undivided approval and sincere thanks for the message which Her Majesty has just given us.

To outsiders it is frequently a great source of wonderment how an association like the Commonwealth, whose members are so widely scattered over the globe, who have such diverse interests, who comprise so many ethnic elements, can possibly survive as a harmonious international entity. If they who are thus perplexed could have been with us this afternoon they would be better able to understand why this achievement of the Commonwealth has been possible.

We never have had to overlook our differences, but we do endeavour, in our relations one with another, to emphasize those things which tend to unite rather than to divide. Of course, the unifying forces of the Commonwealth include our common Parliamentary institutions, out of which this Association has grown. But of the forces which bind us together, nothing is stronger than our common loyalty to the Crown and our devotion to our Sovereign, even where the most formal expression of that devotion has to be found in the recognition of Her Majesty as the Head of a Commonwealth broad enough to include a State whose people prefer it to be called a Republic.

That the Crown has today such high prestige and such unifying power is due to the selflessness and the conscientious devotion to essential human values of our Sovereigns of the last one hundred years and more.

Fifty-six years ago, peoples from all parts of the British Empire assembled here to pay homage to a great Queen, who had reigned for sixty glorious and fruitful years. It was a tribute to the human values of British institutions that the man who came as leader of the Canadian delegation to honour the Queen Empress was of a race which did not come into the Empire by choice, but indeed had fought gallantly for another monarch against the arms of a British King.

The presence on that occasion of delegations from those great peoples of Asia with their broad and ancient cultures was equally significant. Well now there have been tremendous changes in the Empire since Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his contemporaries were here to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. Over 90 per cent. of those peoples who formed part of the British World in 1897 have assumed and they exercise full responsibility for the management of all their internal and external affairs. For them, even the name "Empire" has been changed to "Commonwealth". But at the same time, the allegiance to and the recognition by all of our Sovereign as Head of the Commonwealth still proclaims that

there has continued to be a sharing of common ideals and common institutions, a sharing at times of common perils and on occasions such as this of common national prides and rejoicings. And I do not think it would be presumptuous to add a sharing of the common desire to benefit not only our own peoples but also free mankind throughout the world.

To Her Majesty, who binds together in this common loyalty the rich diversity of our local loyalties, I wish to second the vote of gratitude for the gracious words she has addressed to us.

CORONATION FEASTS IN WESTMINSTER HALL

THE Luncheon held in 1953, and its predecessor sixteen years earlier, mark the revival—with differences—of a very ancient ceremony indeed, older perhaps than the Coronation itself. For the holding of a feast or banquet at the time of a Sovereign's coming to the throne is a ceremony that stretches back in England a thousand years and more to the times of the Saxon Kings. It was after the Norman Conquest that the first Coronation feast was held in Westminster Hall, by the first Henry, brother of William Rufus who built the Hall more than eight and a half centuries ago and whose walls stand there to-day.

These ancient feasts were given by the Monarchs to their great men, and so continued in an unbroken tradition down to 1821. In medieval times the guests were the "magnati", the foremost of the King's tenants-in-chief, ecclesiastical and lay. We do not know any details till a date nearly 300 years after the Coronation feast of Henry I in 1100. But from the accession of the young Richard II, that Monarch who was to erect the Hall's magnificent roof on the walls of Rufus and bring it to substantially its present appearance, we have the records of the Court of Claims, a legal body whose duty it was to determine who should take part in the Coronation and its attendant ceremonies. One of the free tenures by which land was held in medieval times was by "Serjeanty" "grand" and "petty"; land held by this tenure was on condition of some service, great or small, other than military, being rendered by the tenant to the King, and some of these took place on the occasion of his crowning. It is clear from the records that many of these services and therefore much of the ceremonial which took place at the Banquet were already of great antiquity and hallowed by time, and keen was the desire of all such tenants to perform their services on this great occasion in their own persons.

Though the year 1377 is the first occasion of which detailed records are available, from at least the twelfth century and right down to 1821 the Banquet was an integral part of the ceremonies on the day the Sovereign was crowned; two of these took place in Westminster Hall just before and just after the religious ceremonies in the Abbey. First came the Enthronement, which dates back to Saxon times, and is as old as the English monarchy; afterwards the crowned Monarch returned to the Hall to end the day with a great feast. It must have been a very exhausting day; and in 1377 it was more than the boy King Richard had the strength to endure.

The Banquet was carried out according to tradition, and many formal services were rendered on these occasions throughout the centuries. The King and the Queen sat on canopied thrones at the south end of the Hall, and the guests were arranged at long tables down its length on each side. On the two last occasions on which the feast was held it was recorded that they were uncomfortably crowded, though there were present only about half the number of those who attended the Coronation Luncheon in 1953; this is due to the fact that a broad way from the north entrance of the Hall to the foot of the steps had to be kept clear for several processions of mounted magnates. Each course was brought in procession with immense ceremony, and with each course serjeanty tenants and others performed their traditional services, and, in certain cases, received their traditional rewards, some of which remain as heirlooms in the old families of Britain to this day. A course did not consist of a single dish, for instance, at the Coronation Banquet of James II—that depicted in the illustration—each of the three courses consisted of thirty-two dishes; their composition varied down the ages as tastes in food and methods of its preparation altered. Boar's head "enarmed in a castell royall", at Henry VI's feast, neats udders roasted, at that of James II, and daubed geese at George IV's may be instanced. Some of them sound most fearsome to modern tastes. The classic example perhaps is the dish called

“Maupygernon”, whose ingredients are something of a mystery—one writer has likened them to those of the witches’ cauldron in Shakespeare’s “Macbeth”—but whose historical origin is both clear and interesting. To supply maupygernon was the duty of the Lords of the Manor of Addington, which manor had originally been granted by William the Conqueror to one Tezelin, his chief cook, for his services; Tezelin’s successors had this duty imposed on them, and they supplied it at Banquet after Banquet down the centuries.

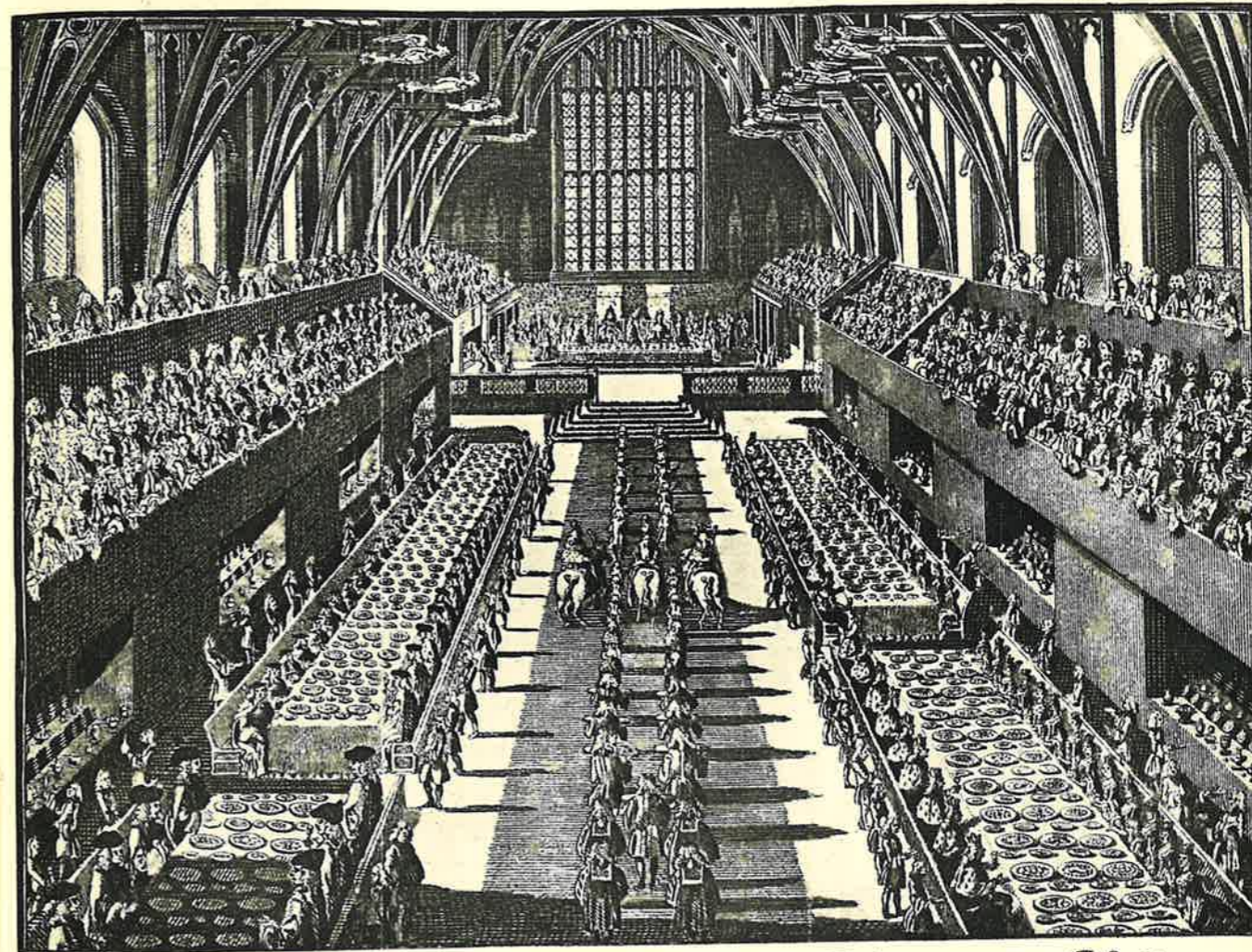
The procession of the King’s Champion is the most picturesque and famous. It was his duty to ride into the Hall, clad in full armour with plumes of red, white and blue nodding at his helmet, and, throwing down his gauntlet, to issue a challenge in set terms to anyone who would “deny or gainsay” the Sovereign’s right to the Throne. For this service the Champion held the Manor of Scrivelsby, which from the 14th century has been hereditary in the house of Dymoke; he was usually rewarded, too, with the King’s second best suit of armour and the second best horse from the royal stables.

By the eighteenth century the Banquet had tended to become more hilarious than ceremonial, and very costly. The amount of food and drink supplied at the last one, that of George IV in 1821, can only be described as colossal, and must have taken a large share in the total cost of the Coronation which amounted to £240,000. The costly ostentation of the whole affair aroused much adverse comment, and in any case George IV’s Coronation was far from being a popular event. His brother and successor decided to drop the ceremonies in Westminster Hall, the Banquet included, so that the cost of the whole ceremony went down to £43,000—it was amusingly dubbed “The Half-Crownation”.

In 1937, the present Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, then Secretary of the United Kingdom Branch, suggested the revival of the idea of a Coronation Feast, though of a much simpler character. This took the form of a Luncheon, arranged by the United Kingdom Branch of the Association, a few days before the ceremony of the Coronation, when His Majesty King George VI came to Westminster Hall to welcome the Prime Ministers and Ministers attending the Imperial Conference and the Delegates from various countries of the Commonwealth attending the Parliamentary Conference. In his speech proposing His Majesty’s Health at this Luncheon the Lord Chancellor (then Lord Hailsham) said:—

“Ever since its erection, Westminster Hall has been the scene of the Coronation Banquet from the reign of Henry I down to that of George IV. In the early days the King, who wielded arbitrary power, was wont to summon the chief men of the Kingdom through whom he ruled over some four millions of people. To-day this Coronation Luncheon is attended by the representatives not of four millions, but of some four hundred millions, who are not summoned by the King to do his bidding, but who are freely chosen by the elected representatives of his self-governing peoples.”

The Luncheon in Westminster Hall arranged just before the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 was of even greater significance than the Luncheon of 1937, as for the first time a Sovereign came to the function as the guest of the representatives of more than fifty Legislatures, including Members of some of the youngest with Parliamentary forms of government as well as their colleagues in the Mother of Parliaments, who gathered together in the ancient Hall to do honour to the young Queen whom they all regarded as “Head of the Commonwealth”.



The Coronation Banquet of James II in Westminster Hall showing how the King and Queen with the Nobility and others sat at Dinner on the Day of the Coronation, 27 April 1685, and the manner of the Champion's performing the Ceremony of the Challenge—

Emery Walker Ltd. 1911.

