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The Royal Commonwealth Society

Toronto Branch



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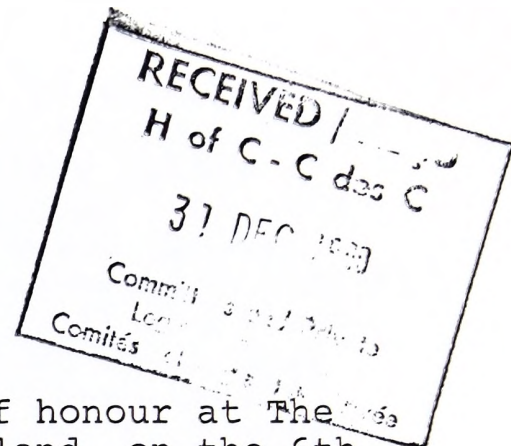
December 30, 1980

Joint Clerks
Special Joint Committee on
the Constitution of Canada
Postal Box 1044
South Block, Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A7

Dear Sirs:

The Hon. Don Jamieson was the guest of honour at The Royal Commonwealth Society Lunch in London, England, on the 6th of December, 1978 and gave a famous Commonwealth speech. He said:

"One of the things, I think that we have in common in the heritage that we have inherited, in a sense, from that British tradition is genuine healthy respect for what I might describe as 'respectable compromise'. One of the things that always disturbs me in these terribly complex days around the world is the disuse into which the word 'compromise' has fallen if one uses it appropriately, because somehow or other, when one is described these days as being a 'compromiser', there are overtones of 'sell-out' or there are [a] sort of facets to the use of the word that are most unfair and quite inappropriate, because, if one looks at every one of the challenges that face us in international affairs today, if there isn't an element of what I will call 'respectable compromise' introduced into them, then, of course, one gets a rigidity of positions on both sides and the end result is not very pleasant to contemplate. And so, therefore, I think that one of the things that we have learnt from our British background and from the Commonwealth experience is compromise, and also a kind of pragmatism that has enabled us to adjust to new and changing circumstances in a way which has kept the Commonwealth functioning and without which, I suggest, we simply would not be here today talking about this particular institution, because it would not have survived the kinds of trials and tribulations



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to which the chairman has referred. These, of course, were only a few among a very large number that have occurred since the decision was made somewhere back around 1949 to restructure and to give new vitality and a new sense of direction to the Commonwealth.

In that context, therefore, I think we ought to start asking ourselves: 'Where do we go from here?'

VOLUNTEERS

The Royal Commonwealth Society is comprised of volunteer members throughout the Commonwealth who stand for the best traditions of freedom of the individual, the parliamentary system of responsible government, independent and incorruptible judiciary of experts, and the right of the governed to be heard through free elections of the governments. The Royal Commonwealth Society is not the governments of the Commonwealth, nor is it the international Commonwealth Secretariat in London, all of which deal officially with Commonwealth matters. The Royal Commonwealth Society is a fee-paying membership of volunteers who keep alive these concepts and traditions in their communities. It is the Toronto Branch which, at its annual meeting on 15 December 1980, instructed me to write this submission to your honourable Joint Committee.

To allude to the Honourable Don Jamieson's speech, he mentioned the art of negotiation.

"We in Canada have a very strong commitment to the Commonwealth. We believe in it. We believe in it as a working instrument. I think it was Sonny Ramphal who said that the Commonwealth cannot negotiate for the world but it can help the world to negotiate, and that is a principle to which we subscribe fully. We also believe that we have a special relationship with the United Kingdom."

THE MONARCHY

He went on to say what can be ascribed to in non-negotiable terms by members of the Society.

"I also want to say a word to this distinguished audience about Canada's attitude towards the monarch. In the recent past, there has been a good deal of talk (some of it, I fear, mischievous, a good deal of it ill-informed) about some of the steps which we in our country are taking to establish with clarity the role of Canada and its relationship to the monarchy. I want to emphasize with all of the vigour that I can here this afternoon that Canada has every intention of remaining what it has been for all of these years, a constitutional monarchy with Her Majesty the Queen

fully recognized and in every respect what that definition implies. There is a great love for Her Majesty in Canada. Not only is there a respect for the institution of the monarchy but I must tell you in all sincerity that Her Majesty has brought to that traditional respect a widespread affection within our country, an awareness that our country, Canada, and the Commonwealth are exceedingly well led at the present time in the sense of Her Majesty's personal presence, that she has a comprehension and awareness that are serving all of us well in the troubled times in which we are living. I have no hesitation in saying to you that I cannot conceive of any development in my country, either constitutional or political, that would be likely to change, in any way that is important, the role of the monarchy and the great respect, affection and indeed love that we hold for Her Majesty. And so this, too, is something which brings us all together, which is a common kind of heritage and background that we possess."

CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

Following the concepts of negotiation which Mr. Jamieson ascribed to the Commonwealth, we in The Royal Commonwealth Society join in supporting the submission of The Empire Club of Canada to the Task Force on Canadian Unity.

"Further, our feeling is that it would be beneficial to transfer the Canadian constitution from Westminster and enshrine it in Ottawa so that it can finally be a fully Canadian document."

Peter Hermant
President
The Empire Club of Canada
20 April 1978

Published at p. 456 in The Empire Club Addresses, 1977-1978

That transferal can, in our opinion, not be achieved without long and thorough negotiations.

THE QUEEN OF CANADA - LA REINE DU CANADA

Mr. Peter Hermant (ibid) succinctly and successfully described the role of Her Majesty in Canada with which this submission of The Royal Commonwealth Society is 'ad idem'.

"We would stress, however, that it is essential for our way and quality of life that the system of parliamentary democracy recognizing the Queen of Canada and the apolitical structure of Governor General and Lieutenant Governors be maintained, both from a traditional and practical point of view."

This Society opposes any changes to the Constitution of Canada which would in any way demean the role of Her Majesty as the Queen of Canada, even if that were done indirectly by enhancing the functions of a politically appointed Governor General. Such enlargement of the role of a politically appointed Governor General would inevitably and inexorably be at the expense of the prerogatives of the Queen of Canada and would, therefore, not be in the national interest of Canadians. Above all, the visits of the Queen of Canada to this country were so pleasurably received by Canadians that members of The Royal Commonwealth Society believe that the Queen's place in our Constitution is perfect as it now is and should in no way be tampered with.

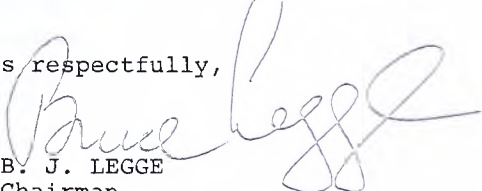
NATIONAL ANTHEM

The Royal Commonwealth Society supports 'O Canada' as the national anthem and 'God Save the Queen' as the royal anthem. These are important symbols of the Constitution. The Royal Commonwealth Society believes that within the limitations of language, that the French and English versions ought to express the same meaning. We concede that the intricacies of language make for great difficulty in rendering precisely the same concepts in two languages, but I am instructed to point out that "We stand on guard for thee" (Canada) is not the same as "Protegera nos foyers et nos droits." Similarly, the French lines "Car ton bras sait porter l'epee, Il sait porter la croix" are not reproduced in the English concept. We know that Sir Adolphe Basile Routhier and Robert Stanley Weir wrote different versions but in order to have a strong national government based on a viable and workable Constitution, there must be a strong national constituency and that constituency will not evolve if the poetry of our national heritage and the focus of our national enthusiasm in the national anthem proclaims two different sets of facts and differing hopes and emotions.

In our Society we reflect the wishes of patriotic Canadians and we present these loyalties to remind a powerful government of our great affection for the Queen of Canada - who is both a great institution and a gracious lady.

We trust that you will accord us an opportunity of sustaining our position about the Canadian Crown and the imperative of one Canadian anthem as part of the constitutional framework which your Joint Committee is studying.

Yours respectfully,



B. J. LEGGE
Chairman

Annex I - National Anthem in English, French

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National anthem in English, French

Last week, Parliament adopted official words to O Canada as the national anthem. The music to the song, which was written 100 years ago, was adopted as the anthem in 1967.

Last week's bill made official the lyrics of the first stanza in French and English, although they are subject to amendment.

Here are the official words in English, the unofficial second and third stanzas, the official French lyrics and a literal English translation of them:

O Canada! Our home and native land!

True patriot love in all thy sons command.

With glowing hearts we see thee rise,

The True North, strong and free!

From far and wide, O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

God keep our land glorious and free!

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

O Canada! Where pines and maples grow,

Great prairies spread and lordly rivers flow,

How dear to us thy broad domain,

From East to Western Sea,

Thou land of hope for all who toil!

Thou True North, strong and free!

(Chorus)

O Canada! Beneath thy shining skies

May stalwart sons and gentle maidens rise,

To keep thee steadfast through the years

From East to Western Sea,

Our own beloved native land!

Our True North, strong and free!

(Chorus)

O Canada, terre de nos aieux,
Ton front est ceint de fleurons
glorieux.

Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix;

Ton histoire est une épopée
des plus brillants exploits;

Et ta valeur, de foi trempée,
Protégera nos foyers et nos
droits.

Protégera nos foyers et nos
droits.

O Canada, land of our fore-
fathers,

Your brow is bedecked with
glorious flowers.

Because your arm knows how
to carry the sword,

It knows how to carry the
cross;

Your history is an epic
Of most brilliant exploits;

And your valor, tempered by
faith,

Will protect our homes and our
rights.

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