

Meeting of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada on the Occasion of the Death of His Majesty King George VI

Word of the death of King George VI was received in Ottawa at about 6.00 a.m. E.S.T. on Wednesday, February 6 from newspaper sources. (The announcement in London had been made at 10.45 a.m. G.M.T., or 5.45 a.m. E.S.T.) A meeting of the Cabinet was called for 12 o'clock noon. The following Ministers were present, all of whom had subscribed to new Oaths of Allegiance before taking part in the meeting:

The Prime Minister (Mr. St-Laurent),
The Minister of Trade and Commerce and Minister of Defence Production (Mr. Howe),
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton),
The Minister of National Revenue (Dr. McCann),
The Leader of the Government in the Senate, (Senator Robertson),
The Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Mayhew),
The Secretary of State for External Affairs, (Mr. Pearson),
The Minister of Resources and Development (Mr. Winters),
The Secretary of State (Mr. Bradley),
The Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Lapointe),
The Postmaster General (Mr. Rinfret),
The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Harris),
The Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys (Mr. Prudham).

The Prime Minister read a letter from the Assistant Secretary to the Governor General giving the text of a message from the Private Secretary to the King conveying the information about the King's death.

The Secretary of State submitted recommendations for two proclamations. One was to proclaim the death of King George VI and the accession of Queen Elizabeth II. The second proclamation was in accordance with the requirements of the Demise of the Crown Act. It would direct public officers to continue in the discharge of their functions but require those acting under commissions to take Oaths of Allegiance as soon as possible.

The meeting resolved into a meeting of the Committee of the Privy Council at which the Orders in Council were approved and signed by the Prime Minister.

At 12.15 p.m. the following members of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada not of the Cabinet were admitted to the Council Chamber:

The Honourable J.H. King
The Honourable C.G. Power
The Honourable J.A. MacKinnon
The Honourable J.T. Thorson
The Honourable L.R. Lafleche
The Honourable A.G.L. McNaughton
The Honourable Thomas Vien

The Honourable C.J. Burchell
The Honourable F.E. Bronson
Field Marshal Lord Alexander

Of the above Privy Councillors, some were normally resident in Ottawa. Others had come to Ottawa for the dinner in honour of the former Governor General, Field Marshal Viscount Alexander, which had been held on the evening of February 5. Invitations to the meeting had been extended by telephone to all members of the Privy Council who were known to be in Ottawa.

The Prime Minister informed the meeting of the information from the Private Secretary to the King of the death of King George VI. He said that, in accordance with precedent and with the requirements of the Demise of the Crown Act, the Committee of the Privy Council had approved recommendations to the Administrator for the issue of two proclamations.

The Prime Minister then read the Minute of Council recommending that a proclamation issue of the death of King George VI and the accession of Queen Elizabeth II and the text of the proclamation. He said that he trusted the words in the proclamation "assisted by Her Majesty's Privy Council for Canada" carried the concurrence of the members of the Privy Council then present.

The Prime Minister then read the Minute of Council recommending that a proclamation issue in accordance with the Demise of the Crown Act and the text of the proclamation. He said that he trusted that the words in the proclamation "by and with the advice of Our Privy Council of Canada" carried the concurrence of the members of the Privy Council then present.

Following the reading of the proclamations, the Prime Minister said that, while there was no legal requirement that members of the Privy Council other than Cabinet Ministers should take a new Oath of Allegiance following the death of a Sovereign, in 1936 a number of Privy Councillors had wished to do so and had taken new Oaths. The Privy Councillors present could subscribe to Oaths of Allegiance before the Clerk of the Privy Council in the Ante-Chamber if they so desired.

Senator James H. King, as the senior Privy Councillor present, expressed to the Prime Minister the appreciation of the members of the Privy Council not of the Cabinet at their being invited to attend the meeting to hear the reading of the recommendations to the Administrator and the proclamations. All the Privy Councillors not of the Cabinet then proceeded to the Ante-Chamber and subscribed to the Oath of Allegiance in order of seniority.

Following the meeting of the Privy Council, a meeting of the Cabinet was held until 1.00 p.m.

R.G.R.
[R.G. ROBERTSON]

Ottawa,
February 8, 1952.