

Prime Minister King

And His Times

An Article Written for the National Federation of Canada, in Honour of Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, M.P., on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of His Leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada, Monday, August 7, 1944.

During 25 years of political leadership Mackenzie King has guided Canada through a constantly changing world. Experience has sharpened his capacity to meet new problems with new and radical solutions. To maintain Canada in the high place our country has attained in a world in which great change is inevitable, leadership in which vision is combined with experience will be needed more than ever.

ELECTED IN 1919

Mr. King was elected leader of the Liberal Party on 7th August 1919. During twenty-five years he has had



as loyal support from the Canadian people as any political leader has ever had. No one has so much as questioned his leadership of his party during these years. He has become one of the great figures of his time.

Like all great men, Mackenzie King movements of events to which he is will be judged in relation to the larger contributing. It will be years hence, in another generation, before all the facts of Mr. King's career can be placed against the unknown circumstances of his time. But it is already possible to identify movements which Mr. King has vitally affected and often led.

Mr. King's place now and in history is built primarily on his understanding of the nature of Canada. He understands it better than any contemporary—not only its political system, its economy and its position in the world, but the true inwardness of its nature. He understands the Canadian mind.

With this understanding, he early appreciated the basic problem of this country, the maintenance of unity between distant populations of different interests and different races. Especially he understood better than any other leader of his time, that Canada was a nation of two major races and two major cultures, each of which had its own special contribution to make to the enrichment of the national life. Mr. King has recognized that the two races and cultures of Canada, existing side by side and working together, can make an unparalleled contribution to the world of tomorrow.

How far Mr. King has succeeded in maintaining unity between the English speaking and French speaking races of Canada could not be judged before this war. His critics alleged that he had succeeded in name only, that his national unity was a flimsy facade which would collapse under the first shock. The test came in 1939. Contrary to the expectations of his enemies and many friends, Mr. King led Canada into the war united. This was the greatest achievement in the record of Canadian statecraft since the founding of the nation. If he had done nothing else except to bring Canada through the war an unbroken nation his place in our history would be assured.

The second achievement by which Mr. King will be judged by future generations of his countrymen is the development and reform of our Canadian society. About this, there has been, under Mr. King's leadership, nothing spectacular, sudden or disruptive, nor was there intended to be. As a historian himself, Mr. King knew that sudden revolutions often set back the tide of progress. He sought rather to graft reforms into the living tissues of the Canadian system without interruption of its growth.

He has succeeded so well that many of his reforms are now taken for granted and not even remembered in his name. But the record will show that in labor laws, in the prosecution of monopoly, in social security legislation, which is now being co-ordinated into an all-embracing system, and in the establishment of the people's right to control the fiscal policies of the nation, Mr. King has been one of the most progressive and, indeed, radical reformers in office during his time.

Thirdly Mr. King will be judged by his external economic policies, his management of Canada as a part of the world economy. During the first

twenty years and more of his leadership, Mr. King faced a world which was committing economic suicide through the poison of economic nationalism. He faced a nation which had not yet fully grasped the fact that it lived on external trade and that to sell its goods, it must buy from its customers. The fight for lower tariffs in Mr. King's earlier years was always uphill, but he made progress. The progress was not great but it was greater than that of any other statesman in the world.

Mr. King has had to wait long for a vindication of his views. During this war he has received it. The Atlantic Charter, the lend-lease agreements, and statements of all the Allied leaders accept the policies which Mr. King has never ceased to advocate. Under his leadership Canada has become one of the chief trading nations of the world and history will recognize that, in this position and with such leadership, Canada has played a vital part in laying the groundwork for a trading and prosperous world. It is no exaggeration to say that no representative of a nation of Canada's size has ever influenced the world's trade so greatly as Mr. King.

The fourth achievement with which Mr. King's name will be linked so long as Canadian history is written is the development of Canada's nationhood. And history will find that he exercised a far more powerful influence here than his contemporaries yet suspect.

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He came into office at a moment when influences throughout the British Empire were seeking to turn back the tide of events, to halt the tide of Dominion autonomy which had advanced under the leadership of Laurier and Borden. When Mr. King attended his first Imperial Conference, in 1923, he found there a well-developed plan to establish an Empire executive, a complete centralization of the Empire's countries. His rejection of this plan, little noted by the Canadian people at the time, marked Mr. King not only as a courageous Canadian Prime Minister, but as a future leader in the development of the Empire.

It was on the basis of this original decision in 1923 that the Empire continued its evolution into a Commonwealth. The Balfour Declaration and the Statute of Westminster, which finally established in law the equality of the British nations, were not the fruits of any single mind. Not Mr. King or fought more vigorously for the full sovereignty of his nation.

Mr. King saw long ago that the establishment of Canadian sovereignty was not enough. He saw that sovereignty, in fact, when used recklessly, was the cause of war. Something greater was needed, a world organization under which sovereignty would be exercised according to agreed rules and not in anarchy.

This belief has brought our Prime Minister to the pinnacle of his career as a Canadian leader and as one of the foremost statesmen of the United Nations. This year, in the midst of the distractions of war, the issue of Canada's future and the future of the whole British Commonwealth was raised again. Under a new guise but unchanged in essentials, the centralization of the Commonwealth was proposed by men of distinction and authority. Mr. King rejected it at once as destructive of the whole theory of nationhood to which he had devoted his life, but more because it would have destroyed his hope of a world organized for peace.

Better than any statesman of his time, Mr. King saw that the attempt to establish the British nations as an inflexible bloc of power in the world would at once force the creation of other blocs, which in the end would come into fatal conflict. More clearly than any speech in our time, his speech in London a few months ago warned the world of this danger. More powerful than any Commonwealth statesman, he advocated the alternative of a world organization, and saved the Commonwealth to contribute to it by avoiding all exclusive and discriminatory policies towards foreign nations.

The secrets of the London Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers will not be revealed for a long time yet, but it is evident already that its decision to offer support to world organization without reservation, and to reject the theory of an Empire bloc of power, was greatly influenced by Mr. King and it was he who gave it expression before the world. Step by step from his first Imperial Conference he has advanced to the position of interpreter of the British Commonwealth at this critical turning point in its life. It was a position which no Canadian had ever occupied before.

From his earliest days Mr. King saw that if Canada's interests demanded close association with Great Britain her interests also demanded the friendliest relations with the United States. The forces fighting for freedom should be grateful that Canada's Prime Minister succeeded in promoting closer relations between the United States and Canada than had ever existed between the two countries.

For on those relations was built the system of co-operation between Canada and her good neighbour, which became the pattern of co-operation between the United Nations.

These are the large, continuing movements of events in which Mr. King's work must be judged. But living Canadians will remember best, because it is so close and so vital to their lives, his management of the Canadian war effort. By every index, Canada has made great contributions to the war. In doing so she has made permanent additions to her productive capacity in every field. At the same time, through the more equitable distribution of the national income, and the fair sharing of the burdens of war, her people have made immense social gains. Canada is the fourth industrial power among the United Nations, one of the few chief air powers, and one of the few nations able to provide a system of mutual aid for its allies. When all this has been accomplished with employment on a scale never before known, with a gigantic expansion in industry, and yet without inflation or social dislocation, it is evident that an administrator as well as a statesman is at the head of affairs. This capacity to manage so vast and detailed an organization was hardly suspected in Mr. King before the war. He had never faced any such task and there were many who thought that, despite his gifts in other fields, he would be incapable of handling the practical details of a war. The nation's war program is his answer.

Behind all these public achievements is a human being little known to the people. For his whole life, Mr. King has, with single mind, devoted himself to his work of serving his country and has never sought public popularity. It is only his intimates who understand his human qualities, his kindness of heart, his loyalty to friend, his sharp sense of humor, and, above all, his intimacy and friendship with hundreds of humble people quite unknown to the public.

It is only those who know Mr. King personally who understand the single principle on which he has built his career and governed his country. This principle can be simply stated as the importance of the individual man. In an age where liberalism has been engulfed in most of the world, he has remained a liberal not only by considered judgment but because his instinct for individual freedom goes back through his ancestors to the struggle for responsible government in Canada, linked as it was with the struggles for freedom in the old world. It was because he believed in the individual man, in the reform of society through the genius of its people and not through dictatorship of a superior class from the top, that Mr. King has rejected all extreme policies. It is why he has built his reforms only as rapidly as the people themselves were ready for them, and why he has been able to reconcile the fierce conflicts of Canadian life. On this same belief he has built his method of cabinet and parliamentary leadership. He has made himself not the boss, but the interpreter of the public will. He has modified his own desires by the willingness of the people to follow him. He has recognized always that politics is the art of the possible he has steadily increased the area of possibility.

In the twenty-fifth year of his leadership, the war effort having been well organized, he has turned his attention to the post-war needs of the Canadian people. Today, in consequence, we have actually working more comprehensive and generous provisions for former members of our armed forces than any country has yet made for its war veterans. Departments of Reconstruction, Veterans' Affairs and National Health and Welfare are being created. The services of the banks are being widely extended. Family Allowances are being established on a more generous scale than anywhere else in the world. Contributory Old Age Pensions on an increased scale and Health Insurance are to be introduced out with the Provinces. The Government has initiated discussions of post-war trade policy and taken a part only second to that of the greatest powers in international

co-operation. Never at any time has the standing of Canada been higher abroad; never have the prospects looked brighter at home. For this, credit falls on the Canadian people, and on the man who has represented and led them during the best part of the last twenty-five years—a record not to be matched in Canada or elsewhere throughout the world.

M. A. JAMES MEMORIAL TROPHY AWARDED TO PEEL GAZETTE

Gazette Scored Ninety Points Out of a Hundred in Dominion-wide Competition—Sound Judgment of News Values and Good Sense of Balance in Make-up is Stressed.

The Peel Gazette has been awarded the M. A. James Memorial Trophy for best front page in Class II in the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association. Announcement was made today at the annual O.W.N.A. convention opening in Winnipeg, Man.

The Peel Gazette entered in the regular Class II weekly newspaper competition this year for the first time and in winning first award for best front page against a large number of prominent and long established weeklies from Nova Scotia, in the east to British Columbia in the west, its success is more marked. For the last two years the trophy has been held by the Powell River (British Columbia) News-Action Free Press won the trophy in 1940.

The adjudicator was J. Noel Kelly, National Publicity Director for the Canadian Red Cross and a former prominent newspaperman.

In his general comment he writes: "In placing the Peel Gazette first for the best front page I was impressed by the sound judgment of news values; the reproductions; good sense of balance in make-up and most of all its apparent character."

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local illustrations. The Peel Gazette was awarded thirty-seven in the first classification, twenty-two in the second, sixteen in the third and fifteen in the last, a score of ninety out of a possible one hundred.

Watrous Manitou (Manitoba) was second and Lacombe Globe (Alberta) was third in this competition. Marks ranged from twenty-five to ninety, with the majority of the large number of competitors being awarded better than fifty.

The trophy was presented to the Association by George W. James, Bowmanville, editor of the Canadian Statesman, as a memorial to his father, M. A. James.

The Best All-Round paper in Class II for papers having less than 2000 circulation (Charles Clark Cup) is the Comox (B.C.) Argus with 86 points; second, Powell River (B.C.) Town Crier with 83 points, third Cananogue (Ont.) Reporter 82 points.

The winner of the Malcolm Macbeth Memorial Shield for the Best Editorial Page was Powell River (B.C.) Town Crier, 97 points; second, Powell River (B.C.) News, 83 points and third Comox (B.C.) Argus, 81 points.

USED CAR SALES

In every used car sale in Canada, a statement signed by the buyer and seller, giving all details of the sale, must now be filed with the Wartime Prices and Trade Board within four days of the transaction.

Picobac
THE PICK OF TOBACCO
It DOES taste good in a pipe

We did it at VIMY...and CAEN-



WE'LL DO IT AGAIN - but we need YOUR HELP!



Yes, we need your help... and need it badly.

This is the biggest job we have ever tackled! Everything depends upon Victory. Canada's Army needs volunteers NOW. And, that means you and you and you!

Wear Canada's Badge of Honour on your arm. You'll be proud of it, so will your friends.

Every man who is able has got to do his bit!

Maybe you don't think this means you... that it's a job for the other fellow.

If you do, you're wrong. It's your war, too... a war for every man who is a man... for everyone who has a stake in Canada.

Yes, this means you all right and we need you now for the months of intensive training to make you fighting-fit. We did it before and we can do it again... but we need your help.

VOLUNTEER TO-DAY

JOIN THE CANADIAN ARMY

FOR OVERSEAS SERVICE