

Premier's Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother
Legislative Assembly, Victoria, B.C.
April 2, 2002

As members of the House know, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother died this Easter weekend at the remarkable age of 101 years. It was with sadness that we learned of her passing, for hers was a remarkable life. She passed away peacefully at the end of a long life that touched us all.

Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon was born on August 4, 1900. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker: before the advent of the airplane, before automobiles were ubiquitous, before many of the challenges that we face became commonplace.

She was born a commoner, the ninth of 10 children. She witnessed a century of unparalleled change and unheard-of calamity. But when we needed her – when England needed her, when the Commonwealth needed her – she was there.

The Queen Mother will be remembered with great affection for her unflagging sense of duty, her strong and constant support of her family, her wonderful charm and sense of humour. She was indomitable. In fact, the Queen Mother didn't decide that she was going to marry the Duke of York until he asked her three times. She was concerned that perhaps she didn't know enough of the royal protocols that would be required for someone in her position. That's when she was going to marry the Duke of York.

After the abdication she became the Queen. Then came the war. For many it was the Queen Mother's strength, it was her sense of duty, it was her commitment to the common people of England that made her, in the eyes of Hitler: "The most dangerous woman in Europe." Dangerous to Hitler. The foundation upon which victory was built.

It was her spiritual strength and, as I mentioned earlier, her commitment to family that reflected herself in the strength of England through that incredible period. As we reflect today on her life and times, we know that through the tumult of a century of change, her example was a beacon of calm in the turmoil. The Queen Mother's courageous leadership and support of her husband, George VI, during the dark hours of the Second World War should never be forgotten.

Here in Canada we were very fortunate because the Queen Mother loved Canada, and Canadians returned her love, as did British Columbians. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was the embodiment of grace. We shall not see her like again. I have conveyed to the Queen and the Royal Family the deepest sympathy and feeling of loss from the people and government of British Columbia. Members of the legislature and the public are invited to join me in signing our book of condolence, which is on the main floor of the parliament buildings today.