

Prime Minister's Tribute to Her Majesty The Queen

Mr Speaker, in the hours since last night's shocking news, we have witnessed the most heartfelt outpouring of grief at the loss of Her Late Majesty The Queen.

Crowds have gathered.

Flags have been lowered to half-mast.

Tributes have been sent from every continent around the world.

On the death of her father King George VI, Winston Churchill said the news had:

..."stilled the clatter and traffic of twentieth-century life in many lands."

Now, 70 years later, in the tumult of the 21st century, life has paused again.

Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was one of the greatest leaders the world has ever known.

She was the rock on which modern Britain was built.

She came to the throne – at just 25 – in a country that was emerging from the shadow of war.

She bequeaths a modern, dynamic nation that has grown and flourished under her reign.

The United Kingdom is the great country it is today because of her.

The Commonwealth is the family of nations it is today because of her.

She was devoted to the Union of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

She served 15 countries as Head of State and she loved them all.

Her words of wisdom gave us strength in the most testing times.

During the darkest moments of the pandemic, she gave us hope that we would meet again.

She knew this generation of Britons would be as strong as any.

As we meet today, we remember the pledge she made on her 21st birthday to dedicate her life to service.

The whole House will agree: never has a promise been so completely fulfilled.

Her devotion to duty remains an example to us all.

She carried out thousands of engagements.

She took a red box every day.

She gave Her Assent to countless pieces of legislation,

and was at the heart of our national life for seven decades.

As Supreme Governor of the Church of England, she drew on her deep faith.

She was the nation's greatest diplomat.

Her visits to post-apartheid South Africa and to the Republic of Ireland showed a unique ability to transcend difference and heal division.

In total she visited well over 100 countries.

She met more people than any other Monarch in our history.

She gave counsel to Prime Ministers and Ministers across government.

I have personally greatly valued her wise advice.

Only last October, I witnessed first-hand how she charmed the world's leading investors at Windsor Castle.

She was always so proud of Britain and always embodied the spirit of our great country.

She remained determined to carry out her duties even at the age of 96.

It was just three days ago at Balmoral that she invited me to form a government and become her 15th Prime Minister.

Again she generously shared with me her deep experience of government, even in those last days.

Everyone who met her will remember the moment.

They will speak of it for the rest of their lives.

Even for those who never met her, Her Late Majesty's image is an icon for what Britain stands for as a nation – on our coins, on our stamps and in portraits around the world.

Her legacy will endure through the countless people she met,

the global history she witnessed,

and the lives that she touched.

She was loved and admired by people across the United Kingdom and across the world.

One of the reasons for that affection was her sheer humanity.

She re-invented the monarchy for the modern age.

She was a champion of freedom and democracy around the world.

She was dignified but not distant.

She was willing to have fun, whether on a mission with 007 or having tea with Paddington Bear.

She brought the monarchy into people's lives and into people's homes.

During her first televised Christmas message in 1957, she said:

"Today we need a special kind of courage...so we can show the world that we are not afraid of the future."

We need that courage now.

In an instant, yesterday, our lives changed forever.

Today we show the world we do not fear what lies ahead.

We send our deepest sympathy to all members of the Royal Family.

We pay tribute to our late Queen, and we offer loyal service to our new King.

His Majesty King Charles III bears an awesome responsibility that he now carries for all of us.

I was grateful to speak to His Majesty last night and offer my condolences

Even as he mourns, his sense of duty and service is clear.

He has already made a profound contribution through his work on conservation, education, and his tireless diplomacy.

We owe him our loyalty and devotion.

The British people, the Commonwealth, and all of us in this House..

...will support him as he takes our country forward to a new era of hope and progress...

...our New Carolean age.

The Crown endures.

Our nation endures.

And in that spirit, I say: God save The King.