

AUG 1

~~Mr. King~~ W. I. Mackenzie

**"LE CHANT NATIONAL"
NOT CANADA'S ANTHEM**

Mr. King has come out for "O Canada" as "a Canadian anthem," to be recognized as such. He said in the Commons: "I think we should sing 'God Save the King' first as the anthem for the British Commonwealth and the British Empire wherever the King is recognized, but I also feel that as a Canadian I would like to be able to rise and sing 'O Canada.'"

The pronouncement is one of a number by the Premier on this subject, the others having been the result of questions in the House. This one seems to be an improvement upon the statement of two years ago that Canada might well continue the "custom of recent years of regarding 'God Save the King' and 'O Canada' each as national anthems and entitled to similar recognition." It is definitely not a betterment of his reply to T. L. Church in 1939 that "as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, Canada is using, as a national anthem, and will continue to use 'God Save the King.'"

Mr. King added upon the latter occasion that "another anthem with particular reference to the country itself had also been sanctioned by custom." It is also the case that more than one patriotic hymn or song has been sanctioned by custom, notably "The Maple Leaf." The objection to "O Canada"—originally "Le Chant National"—is not to the beautiful music nor to the words found in the innumerable English versions, but to the fact that it is substituted in Quebec, and too often elsewhere, for the National Anthem. In Montreal a few years ago, an audience assembled to hear the Philadelphia Orchestra demonstrated against "God Save the King" and shouted: "We want 'O Canada'; this is not England."

As Mr. King says, "God Save the King" is the national anthem for all member nations of the British Commonwealth. There can be no reasonable objection to Mr. King, if he knows the words, singing "O Canada"—or for that matter "Sweet Adeline" or "Heading for the Last Roundup," all of which are sanctioned by custom. As for rising, this is obligatory during playing or singing of the National Anthem and no other, whatever may have become customary. King's regulations for Canada direct only that persons in military uniform will stand at attention when the National Anthem—not "a national anthem"—is played. A Quebec M.P. found that out by way of a question on the Commons order paper two years ago.

The ritual as to rising or standing at attention relates to the melody. People stand when the National Anthem is played, whether or not the hymn is sung, but there is only one set of words. The extraordinary thing about "O Canada" is that there is not only an English translation of the original words by Judge Routhier, but several songs called "O Canada" which resemble the original only in metre. No doubt in discussions of the status of the song the original is meant. But one alternative version, composed by Lawrence

Buchan and found in the Anglican hymnal, is in part as follows:

"From sea to sea, throughout thy length,
From pole to borderland,
At Britain's side whate'er betide
Unflinchingly we'll stand.
With heart we sing 'God Save the King.'
'Guide thou the Empire wide' do we implore
'And prosper Canada from shore to shore.'"

That would have no currency in Quebec, while on the other hand the original words are inappropriate in the English-speaking provinces. How a tune to which a half dozen songs conflicting in sentiment are sung could rank as a national anthem is not clear, but the notion fits in admirably with Mr. King's idea of national unity.

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Parliament-King.

95-338-012