

QUEEN OPENS PARLIAMENT

Through the gates of Buckingham Palace, Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, drives in state to open the new session of Parliament. Not for sixty-six years has a reigning Queen presided at this ceremony, and today Londoners turn out in their thousands to greet their young sovereign on this great occasion.

Now into Horse Guards Parade (where earlier in the year Her Majesty took the salute at the "Drapping the Colour") comes the royal coach for an occasion of even greater splendour and pageantry. The Queen, wearing a gold brocade dress and a diamond and pearl tiara, is a picture of grace and charm to delight the cheering crowds.

Outside the House of Lords, troops of the Household Cavalry are joined by Beefeaters, their traditional costumes strangely incongruous against the coaches in which they travelled. Following the Beefeaters come the Gentlemen-at-Arms - and now (to this, their own House) the Lords begin to arrive. Here too are the Yeomen of the Guard.

The Guards present arms as a car bearing Princess Margaret and the Princess Royal arrives. But now the main body of the procession swings into Westminster. The cavalry (a brilliant splash of colour) precede the royal coach as it nears the Houses of Parliament.

Today, within the House of Lords, Her Majesty will make a solemn oath to pledge her service to the duties of the crown and to the maintenance of the Protestant faith. Because she is not yet a crowned queen, Her Majesty must make this vow before she asks God's blessing on the counsels of her ministers during the new session of Parliament. As the ceremony ends, the Queen's escort prepares to join the procession again. Now the Queen's coach leaves Westminster to make the triumphal return journey. Twenty thousand people are gathered outside the Palace as onto the balcony step the royal couple to receive London's loyal acclaim.

And now, to the crowd's delight, Prince Charles and Princess Anne join Her Majesty and the Duke. Even the spectacular procession that has gone before is outshone by the radiance of their family affection.