

PATHE NEWS: 60/90. OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

The Palace of Westminster awaited the arrival of Her Majesty the Queen. From this historic place, centre of the British Commonwealth of free people, has gone forth a pattern of Parliaments of the Westminster model. In the Chamber of the House of Lords were assembled the Peers of the Realm, their wives and the ladies who are Life Peers. Facing them was the Throne, soon to be occupied by the Queen. For this was the occasion of the State Opening of Parliament. Through the Royal Gallery in stately procession came the Gentlemen at Arms. The Lord Great Chamberlain the Marquis of Cholmondeley received the Imperial Crown and proceeded to place it on the table to await Her Majesty's entrance. That great servant of the country in war and peace Viscount Slim receives the Sword of State. The Cap of Maintenance was to be borne by Lord Mills. Though we were privileged to film the State Opening of Parliament two years ago, this is the first time it has been filmed in colour. Now to the Royal Gallery came the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and the Duchess of Kent, proceeding to their places in the House of Lords. In a few moments Her Majesty would arrive at the Palace of Westminster, awaited by the Earl Marshal the Duke of Norfolk, and the Lord Great Chamberlain.

Escorted by the Household Cavalry the Queen and Duke ride in the Irish Coach from Buckingham Palace. This is the established pattern of the royal arrival on the state occasion. Centuries have passed since the monarch rode to Westminster to give instructions to his legislators, in the constitutional monarchy of today the sovereign takes no part in framing the legislative programme. For the Opening of Parliament retains the grandeur that has invested it for centuries ominously by withdrawing for all controversial affairs of government the monarch has strengthened its hold upon the people.

It was now time for the Lord Great Chamberlain to convey the Imperial Crown to the royal robing room. The whole ceremonial of the State Opening is performed with measured dignity, the setting is long and honoured tradition. The moment was now approaching, at once moving and exciting, when Her Majesty would enter the Royal Gallery. The Lord Great Chamberlain gave the signal for the doors to be opened as the Queen and Duke approach.

To watch this progress to the Royal Gallery is to be aware of how fortunate is Great Britain in her constitutional monarchy, and how fortunate in the mid-twentieth century that the crown is borne by a young and lovely woman, secure in the heart of her many peoples. The distinguished company in the Chamber of the House of Lords rose as the Queen entered, slowly proceeding towards the Throne, from which for the seventh time in her reign she was to deliver the royal speech. As always the legislative programme outlined therein was prepared by the Government and

referred to measures which the ministers proposed to introduce in the forthcoming session. (Nat. sound Queen says: "My Lords be seated").

The Lord Great Chamberlain with the Queen's assent, commanded Black Rod Lieutenant General Sir Brian Horrocks to go to the House of Commons and bid its members to come to the House of Lords. The State Opening of Parliament is the one occasion in the year when the Queen, Lords and Commons meet together in person. Black Rod returned having conveyed the summons to members of the Lower House. The Commons were headed by the Speaker, followed by the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition. Party strife was banished for the time being. All eyes of the now crowded assembly were directed towards the Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilmuir as he placed a copy of the Queen's speech in Her Majesty's hand. In the clear tones of that voice with which the whole Commonwealth is familiar, Her Majesty graciously delivers her speech:

(NATURAL SOUND)

The ceremony was now completed. The distinguished company had now witnessed one more State Opening, the beginning of the second session of the present Parliament. The continuity of democratic government is preserved. It is the privilege of this nation to enjoy the freedom of a constitutional monarch. Effective Parliamentary government began at Westminster, it has survived the numerous changes of history, and is still a model to the world. How splendidly Her Majesty becomes her royal office.