

"THE CROWNED REPUBLIC"

IN the period of a little over 100 years since Queen Victoria came to the Throne a remarkable transformation has taken place in the relationship between the people of Britain and the Commonwealth and their Sovereign. The story of these changes, both constitutional and personal, is told in *Throne and People*, a series of six half-hour BBC features which will start playing from National stations of the NZBS next week. The first part of the series describes some of the outstanding events in the lives of Queen Victoria, Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII and George VI, and recalls the personal and human reactions of the occupants of the Throne to many of these events. These reactions provide some fascinating side-lights on the characters of the monarchs and their personal influence on events and the destinies of the British people. The last two programmes trace the great constitutional changes which have occurred since the days of Queen Victoria's Empire and their development to the present concept of Commonwealth.

The first programme, on Queen Victoria, will be heard from 1YA at 2.35 p.m. on May 10, 2YA at 8.30 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 3YC at 9.30 p.m. on Sunday, May 10, and 4YC at 8.0 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6. It is written by Lord Kinross, who, as Patrick Balfour, is a well-known author and journalist. Summing up his study of the almost fabulous reign that lasted for

more than two generations, Lord Kinross says that to meet a new era of immense social and political change, Queen Victoria had evolved for Britain a new conception of monarchy—a conception, moreover, which was destined to ensure its survival. "Queen Victoria, in a phrase, made Britain what Tennyson once called it: 'A Crown'd Republic.'"

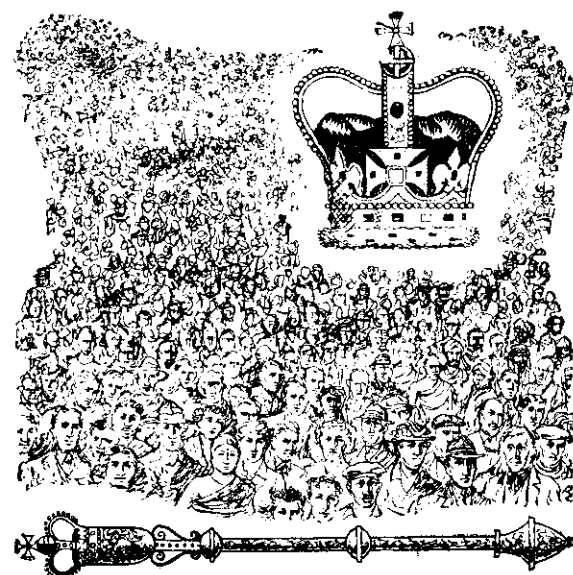
The triumph of personality that marked the reign of King Edward VII is brought out in the second programme of *Throne and People*, which was written and produced by Christopher Sykes. It recalls the visits to France and Ireland that did so much to wipe out ill-feeling towards England, and it shows how the King adapted himself to the new Liberalism that followed the parliamentary revolution of 1906, and how his reassuring influence was largely responsible for the mood of happy optimism among the ordinary people in spite of the first warnings of German bellicosity. Christopher Sykes sums up: "His years were a time of glow whose brightness was only occasionally and only latterly disquieted by the thought of sunset."

The study of King George V, written by Sir Compton Mackenzie, is a record of faith, endurance, devotion, courage and compassion. Beginning with the King's desire to do for the Commonwealth what his father had done for the peace of Europe, it shows how from the beginning of his reign he faced disappointments, tumult and aggression

abroad, culminating in the First World War. The programme ends with the King only a few months after his Silver Jubilee almost too weak to sign the order setting up a Council of State but fighting to carry out his duty to the last hours of his life.

Edward VIII and George VI are discussed in one programme, written by John Connell, leader writer on the London *Evening News*, author, critic and broadcaster. After reviewing Edward's brief reign—during which, by his successful visit to Turkey, he showed he had in him something of his grandfather's flair for personal relations—he describes how the Crown passed from brother to brother and considers the relations between Throne and People at a time when the monarch was one of Britain's best-loved kings. This programme is necessarily largely a record of the British peoples at war under a King who shared, and embodied in himself, the national sense of courage.

Empire and Commonwealth are the subjects of the last two programmes, written by John Pudney in consultation with Professor Vincent Harlow. Beit



Professor of the history of the British Empire at Oxford University. The first opens with the state of Victoria's Empire when the young Queen came to the Throne—a time when none of the great political parties was prepared to concern itself with the principles of imperial solidarity—and discusses the change in outlook of Royalty towards travel and their overseas obligations which contributed so much to the building up of the Commonwealth. The final programme shows how the Throne was the unifying link as the Empire developed into a Commonwealth—which General Smuts described as "the most novel experiment in constitutions ever made."



WARWICK BRAITHWAITE

doubt if Wellington people have heard before." Other items in the first programme are Elgar's "Cockaigne" overture, Smetana's tone poem "Vltava," and Wagner's "Mastersingers" overture.

Asked if there were lunch-hour orchestral concerts in Britain, Mr. Braithwaite said he knew of none. The National Gallery concerts organised by Myra Hess were abandoned after the war. The concerts, however, were a very good idea, and it was to be hoped New Zealand would continue to support them.

The programme for the first concert, outlined above, will also be heard at Christchurch on May 20, and at Auckland on June 8. Admission prices—1/6 for stalls and 2/6 for circle—are fully competitive with the price of the average lunch.

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NEW ELIZABETHANS

ANOTHER Coronation programme, *The New Elizabethans*, adapted from an article by the New Zealand-born historian of royalty, Hector Bolitho, will be heard during May from YA and YZ stations. The story is that of three dedicated Queens—Elizabeth I, Victoria I, Elizabeth II—and of the courage and chivalry their dedication inspired in their peoples.

The first Elizabeth is shown as a woman prepared "to lay down before my God, and for my kingdoms, and for my people, my honour and my blood even in the dust." This declaration of defiance was backed to the full a few months later when Sir Francis Drake and the winds, between them, annihilated the invincible Armada and with it the might of Spain.

Almost 250 years later the youthful Victoria committed to her journal: "I shall do my utmost to fulfil my duty towards my country." At the same time, across the Atlantic, the English colony of New York was celebrating Victoria's 18th birthday. Captain Marryat rose to address the guests: "I could serve a queen with even greater zeal and fidelity than I could a king. Indeed, it would appear that women are more calculated to wield the sceptre than men: for, if we refer to our history, we shall find that England never was so great and glorious as under the dynasty of our queens." His statement was made good. Under Victoria England became the mightiest power on earth.

Again, more than 350 years after England's first Elizabeth pledged her life for her country, the young Princess Elizabeth sat before a microphone and

told what was to be her realm: "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service. God help me to make good my vow." Time will show whether her reign will mark another rise from decline to greatness such as the world witnessed in the times of her predecessors.

The New Elizabethans was adapted for radio by Oliver A. Gillespie and produced at the Wellington Production Studios of the NZBS. The part of Elizabeth I is played by Peggy Walker, Victoria by Bernadette Canty, Elizabeth II by Paddy Turner, Marryat by Roy



HECTOR BOLITHO

Leywood, and Drake by Bernard Beeby. The narrators are William Austin and Allan Morris. The show will be heard from 1YZ at 7.0 p.m. on Monday, May 4, from 4YZ at 8.0 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, and later from other National stations.

A third Coronation programme, entitled *A Sheaf of Royal Letters*, will be broadcast first from 4YA at 2.0 p.m. on Sunday, May 10. Written by Oliver A. Gillespie, the feature consists of selections from the letters of British monarchs over the centuries. In olden times these letters often opened with such sonorous greetings as "My very dread and sovereign lord and father," and "Trusty and well-beloved cousin, we greet you well." Henry VIII was, of course, the first monarch to begin simply with "Darling." The first royal letters were written in what Macaulay calls barbarous Latin. Then followed Norman French, Provencal, Spanish and German before the language of the people finally became the language of the Court.

The sheaf of royal letters includes samples of royal prose—wooing and wheedling, coarse and dignified from the time of Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III, to the 20th Century correspondence of Alexandra, wife of Edward VII. The programme will be heard from all YA and YZ stations.

Bryan O'Brien has written a Coronation story especially for children, which will also be broadcast before Coronation Day from YA and YZ stations. Entitled *Our Gracious Queen*, the programme tells of the life led by Elizabeth II when she was a young princess. It will be broadcast first in the Children's Hour from 4YZ on Monday, May 4.