

By **BRUCE WEST**

An Insult to Canada

At the end of the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to Canada I should like to say a warm farewell and wish her god-speed, but I'm not quite sure to whom I should address these comments. I'm fairly certain that some of my remarks would not be welcomed or even accepted by French Canadians. And I have a notion that many so-called English Canadians are almost too befuddled and bewildered to decide whether they agreed with them or not. I shall therefore, attempt to direct them to the New Canadians. I am sorry that this division of

various types of Canadians must be made here, but, believe me, I didn't invent it. I address myself to you, my New-Canadian friend, in the hope that you are still able to see our country as the world sees it and not through the clouded eyes of the peculiar little natterers and bickerers with which this great and noble land seems to be infested. You will have read in the past few days about the behaviour of our police, who have been likened to the Gestapo, the NKVD, the Peoples' Police or similar evil organizations from the might and spite of which you may have fled to our shores. Some of our police did indeed allow their zeal in the protection of our Queen to carry them away.

This is unfortunate and all of us who have been born and raised in an atmosphere of fiercely guarded freedom deeply regret these incidents.

But, as one Canadian who has covered most of Canada's Royal tours from the first visit of a reigning monarch in 1939, I can say that I have never before seen this happen. I hope you will not consider me naive or a thinly disguised member of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire if I suggest that this extremely unusual behaviour of our police may have resulted from an extremely unusual situation. The fact is that the bold threat was made, again and again, that the Queen would be murdered if she stepped on the soil of Quebec. (With a courage and dedication that might provide a valuable example for all of us, she decided to carry out her mission, come what might.)

But, my New-Canadian friend, what I am trying to communicate to you is that it was no jack-booted despot or heavy-handed conqueror who was being protected in Quebec during these past tense days. It was a young woman, a mother, a family woman, a particularly wholesome woman who was us or what we would like to be.

This is probably one of the most simple and at the same time most difficult things to understand about your new land. The Queen of Canada exists for us only in our hearts. The proud Royal story has often been likened to a fairy tale, and it might indeed be one had it not been for the thousand very real and very great moments that have been woven into the warp and woof of its shining fabric.

The Queen is us. When what has made us ceases to be, the Queen, for us, will cease to be. When the radiance of our past and present trials and triumphs dulls upon us, then her radiance will dull.

To insult her in Quebec, or anywhere else in this world, is to insult us and our fathers and our forefathers. It is from us that she obtains her lustre and it is from her that we sometimes gain a fleeting and magic glimpse of what we are and have been.

This is the kind of concept that should work no hardship upon any man, unless this man, with brazen malice, sets out to defile its meaning and humiliate those who believe in its truth and value.



The Queen