



NFB FILM

STUDY GUIDE

THE SCEPTRE AND THE MACE

Color 30 minutes

Produced by the National Film Board of Canada, 1957.

Suggested Uses: Social Studies classes in junior and senior high schools. Curriculum enrichment for all grades.

SYNOPSIS

Queen Elizabeth was the first reigning sovereign to open the Canadian Parliament. Her 1957 visit to Ottawa was doubly symbolic: it underlined the position of Canada in the Commonwealth; and it provided an opportunity to examine the role of the Crown in parliamentary government.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

As the film opens, the huge airliner bearing Her Majesty is but a speck against the blue of the sky. As it touches down at Uplands Airport, Ottawa, and taxis toward the waiting throng, cheers build to a crescendo and reach a climax as Her Majesty appears. After accepting the royal salute, Her Majesty inspects the Guard of Honour with the Governor General and the Prime Minister, and then steps into a glass-topped limousine for her journey to Rideau Hall.

This moving demonstration of affection and loyalty on the part of Her Majesty's Canadian subjects raises the question of just what the Monarchy really means to Canadians. As the motion picture camera roves over a series of early prints, the thousand-year struggle of the English people to win parliamentary freedom is reviewed.

As the Queen and Prince Philip stroll with the Governor General in the splendid gardens at Rideau Hall, we are led to wonder what is the true role of the Queen in government. She has the traditional right to be consulted, to encourage and to warn her ministers but perhaps, in the end, the Monarchy exists

simply because most of her subjects like to have a queen.

Now we see the twenty-third Parliament of Canada gathering in the House of Commons. The roles of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister and the Speaker are illustrated. The mace, the symbol of the authority of the House, is carried in by the Sergeant at Arms, the Speaker is elected, and the House of Commons becomes a formally constituted body.

Parliament awaits the Queen's arrival as she drives past cheering crowds to the foot of the Peace Tower to be met by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Senate. She is escorted to the Red Chamber and the Members of the House of Commons are summoned by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod. After due deference to their jealously guarded rights, they arrive and stand at the Bar of the Senate to listen to Her Majesty read the Speech from Throne in both of Canada's official languages. Parliament is open and, as the Queen leaves to return to Rideau Hall, in the House of Commons the Members are already about the nation's business.



SUGGESTED CLASS PREPARATION

a) Introduction:

This film could be useful in Social Studies classes in both elementary and secondary schools. Class preparation will vary according to grade level. To the younger children the film provides an attractive visualization of Her Majesty's visit to Ottawa. To the more sophisticated student, it offers not only the pageantry of a formal Opening of Parliament, but even more important, an answer to the question "What are the functions of the Crown?". The senior class should, if possible, review the structure of Federal Government, the struggle of the British peoples to win parliamentary government, and the struggle of Canadians to achieve responsible government.

b) Words Which May Cause Difficulty:

constitution	tradition	burgess	borough	precedent
symbol	sceptre	mace	dais	intangible

c) Directive Questions Answered in the Film:

1. What is the main function of the Senate?
2. What has the House of Commons sought to be?
3. What are the significant landmarks in the struggle of the House of Commons to assert its rights?
4. What are the functions of the mace? What is its significance?
5. What are the roles of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition and the Speaker?
6. How can Elizabeth II be considered Queen of Canada?
7. Why are the doors of the House of Commons locked and barred to the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod?
8. What is the purpose of the Speech from the Throne?

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Take up and discuss the directive questions.
2. Discuss the efforts of Canadians to secure the transfer of parliamentary freedoms from Britain to Canada.
3. Discuss to what extent Canada is indebted to Britain for her present form of government.
4. Examine in detail the work of Senate and make an effort to evaluate its usefulness.
5. Discuss the significance of the title of the film.
6. Discuss what the Monarchy means to Canada.
7. Some classes, after seeing the film and doing further study, might wish to set up a mock parliament.
8. The visuals in the film should provide considerable inspiration to the Art class at all grade levels.
9. The younger pupils may care to tell the story in their Language Arts class.

RELATED VISUAL AIDS

Film:

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT (NFB - 20 mins.)

Filmstrips:

OUR GOVERNMENT - FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (NFB - B & W)
OUR HISTORY - POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT (NFB - B & W)