

Document 1 - In Canada, King Charles says 'the true north is indeed strong and free'

The king's whirlwind visit to Canada is widely considered by royal watchers to be a symbolic rebuke of President Trump's 51st-state threats.

The Washington Post, May 27, 2025



Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla arrive in the Canadian Senate in Ottawa on Tuesday. (Sean Kilpatrick/Pool/Reuters)

By [Amanda Coletta](#)

TORONTO — King Charles III opened Canada's Parliament on Tuesday, declaring amid President Donald Trump's threats to make Canada the 51st state that "the true north is indeed strong and free." In his first visit to Canada as king, he delivered the speech from the throne that outlines the government's legislative agenda.

The monarch's whirlwind visit to Canada came at the invitation of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. It has been widely viewed by Canadians and royal watchers as a symbolic show of support for Canada and a subtle rebuke of Trump that underscores the country's sovereignty and distinct history and traditions.

The throne speech is written by the government and outlines its priorities for a new session of Parliament. It is typically read by the governor general, the representative in Canada of Charles, who is its head of state. He is the second monarch in Canada's history to read the speech. His mother, Queen Elizabeth II, did so in 1957 and 1977. In a preface to the speech, which was written by Charles, he praised Canada's "unique identity." He noted how Canadians were "coming together in a renewed sense of national pride, unity and hope," a veiled reference to the rally-around-the-flag moment stirred by Trump's annexation threats and tariffs on Canadian goods.

"The Crown has for so long been a symbol of unity for Canada," he said in the preface. "It also represents stability

and continuity from the past to the present. As it should, it stands proudly as a symbol of Canada today, in all her richness and dynamism."

The king delivered the address from a throne in the Senate as part of a pomp-laden ceremony, switching between English and French. He wore his Order of Canada around his neck. Queen Camilla sat on her own throne and sported a brooch of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, the country's longest continuously serving infantry regiment.



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney watches as Charles delivers the speech from the throne. (Chris Young/Pool/Reuters)

The speech did not name or call out Trump directly, but it noted the “unprecedented” challenges Canada is facing that have left many Canadians “feeling anxious and worried.”

“The system of open global trade that, while not perfect, has helped to deliver prosperity for Canadians for decades, is changing,” the 76-year-old monarch said, reading the portion of the speech written by the government.

While Canada and the United States “have begun defining a new economic and security relationship,” the king said, Canada is also “working to strengthen its relationships with reliable trading partners and allies around the world, recognizing that Canada has what the world needs and the values the world respects.”

Trump’s return to the White House and threats against Canada have left the king in a tricky spot.

The royals are supposed to be apolitical, but they play an important role in soft power and public diplomacy. In addition to the United Kingdom, Charles is head of state of 14 Commonwealth realms. He cannot comment on international affairs without the advice or consent of his prime ministers.

Charles is king of Britain and king of Canada, the largest of his realms by territory. The two countries have taken divergent approaches to dealing with Trump and are deploying the royals as part of their strategies in different ways.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has sought to keep a cordial relationship with Trump and called for “cool heads” in the wake of Trump’s tariffs. When he visited Washington in February, he extended Trump, a known royal enthusiast, an invitation for an unprecedented second state visit that was signed by the king.

Canadians “weren’t impressed by that gesture,” Carney told Sky News this month, given Trump’s threats to their sovereignty.

Canada has imposed retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. goods. Carney has declared the “old” relationship between the U.S. and Canada “over.” He invited Charles to Canada to underscore the country’s sovereignty.

Royal watchers have noted several subtle smoke signals from the king meant to indicate support for Canada. He wore a red tie during a meeting with Carney, planted a maple tree at Buckingham Palace and presented a ceremonial sword to a member of Canada’s Senate.

In the span of two weeks in March, Charles met with then-Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at Sandringham Palace and

then hosted his successor, Carney, at Buckingham Palace. Trudeau said they discussed “matters of importance,” including “Canada’s sovereign and independent future.”

“I can’t remember that happening before,” said Robert Hardman, author of “The Making of a King: King Charles III and the Modern Monarchy.” “These aren’t headline things, but it goes back to the point that politics do hard power, and royals do diplomacy.”

The king and queen arrived in Ottawa on Monday. They planted a blue beech tree at Rideau Hall, an official residence, and visited a farmers market. Charles dropped a ceremonial first puck at a kids’ street hockey game and held a formal audience with Carney, the governor general and Indigenous leaders.

While most Canadians support becoming a republic or are indifferent, there has been a small boost in support for the monarchy in recent months, polls show. The bar to become a republic is high: It would require support from both houses of Parliament and all 10 provincial legislatures.

The speech from the throne was mostly a rehash of promises Carney made during the federal election campaign, such as cutting taxes for the middle class, building more affordable homes, and bringing down trade barriers between the provinces and territories.

The throne speech is typically put to a vote that the government must win to stay in power. Carney’s Liberals won a plurality of the seats in the House of Commons in a federal election last month but fell short of a majority. They are expected to get enough support from opposition parties for a vote on the speech.

Ahead of the opening of Parliament, Pete Hoekstra, the U.S. ambassador to Canada, said the “implication” of the king’s visit wasn’t lost on him and that there were “easier ways” to send him or the president a message, including by picking up the telephone.

Trump, Hoekstra told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., had moved on from the 51st-state talk and it was time for Canadians to move on, too.

But just hours after Charles and Camilla had left Canada, the president returned to the subject.

“I told Canada, which very much wants to be part of our fabulous Golden Dome System, that it will cost \$61 Billion Dollars if they remain a separate, but unequal, Nation,” Trump said in a post on Truth Social on Tuesday, “but will cost ZERO DOLLARS if they become our cherished 51st State.”

Charles to open parliament in show of support at a crucial time – but that has not quieted a chorus of critical voices

[Leyland Cecco](#) in Toronto, Mon 26 May 2025

The decision by King Charles to formally open Canada's parliament on Tuesday reflects his role as a "steadfast defender" of the country amid threats to its sovereignty, says the prime minister, Mark Carney.

But Indigenous leaders say the rare visit is also a reminder that Canada's founding relationship between the monarchy and the country's first peoples cannot ever be "forgotten or displaced or broken".

Charles, Canada's head of state, arrives in Ottawa on Monday, and will on Tuesday open Canada's 45th parliament by giving the speech from the throne in the country's Senate.

The visit marks the first time a king of Canada has ever undertaken a ceremonial speech from the throne. The last time a monarch opened a new parliament was in 1957, when Queen Elizabeth gave the throne speech. She subsequently gave a speech in 1977 as part of her silver jubilee tour of Canada.

Carney's invitation to Charles comes against the backdrop of Donald Trump's repeated threats that the US should annex Canada and make it the 51st state.

But when the king gives the throne speech laying out the new government's goals and its plans to achieve them, he will be tightly constrained by what he can say. "Because we have a constitutional monarchy, the king can only operate inside a box that is defined by parliament – because we don't want a king, or any unelected person, affecting policy and laws," said Justin Vovk, a royal historian and author. "Any influence the monarch exerts is done through subtlety."

Vovk points to Elizabeth's "brooch diplomacy" and her decision to use fashion statements to telegraph support – or opposition – for political positions and leaders. When she met Trump in 2019, she wore a brooch gifted by Barack and Michelle Obama and the following day displayed a snowflake brooch given to her by the governor-general of Canada amid tensions between Trump and the then prime minister, Justin Trudeau.

In a similar vein, Charles recently wore a British admiral's uniform with the insignia of the Canadian military and later planted a red maple tree on the grounds of Buckingham Palace, both actions seen as tacit support for Canada.

But a lack of official public statements from the king on threats to Canada's sovereignty is a reminder that the monarchy relies on the softest of soft power to make its point.

"The monarchy is always playing this game of catch-up because they live in a time-delayed bubble. They can't act until they are given the advice and the permission from the prime minister. Everything is filtered through bureaucratic channels and so by the time the sovereign is able to make a gesture, it usually comes somewhat after the fact," said Vovk.

"It takes the monarchy time to catch up with the media and the expectations of a constantly changing world."

The US ambassador to Canada, Pete Hoekstra, told CBC News his country was "thrilled" the king was visiting – but said there were more straightforward ways to make his point.

"If there's a message in there, there's easier ways to send messages. Just give me a call. [Mark] Carney can call the president at any time."

During his visit, Charles and his wife, Camilla, will meet community groups and take part in a game of street hockey, where he is expected to drop the puck. But the visit is also expected to once again revive questions over whether Canadians still want a monarch as their head of state.

"Seeing the royal family in person always stirs up a level of interest in the royal family. And despite the waning interest, it's much harder to be acrimonious to somebody when you see them in person. But every time we have a major royal event, it does raise questions about the system of government we have. Does it work best for Canada?" said Vovk.

A majority of Canadians say they want the system of a constitutional monarchy abolished, but under the 1982 Constitution Act, severing ties with the monarchy would require Canada obtain the approval from the Commons and the Senate, as well as the unanimous consent of all 10 provinces.

The last task is near impossible: provinces would fear that changes to the constitution could mean surrendering powers to the federal government.

That has not quieted a growing chorus of critical voices. Before Charles's coronation, the leader of the separatist Bloc Québécois said it was time for Canada to sever its ties with the "incredibly racist" and "slave-driven" British monarchy.

"It's a thing of the past. It's almost archaeological. It's humiliating," Yves-François Blanchet told lawmakers in 2022 during a speech in parliament, adding his party had been "forced" to swear allegiance to a "conquering"

empire, rendering their oaths to the crown “meaningless”.

Late last year, municipal councillors in the Yukon territory refused to swear or affirm they would “be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III” and his “heirs and successors according to law” as protest over the colonial history of displacement of Indigenous people.

But Perry Bellegarde, the former national chief for the Assembly of First Nations, said such frustrations reflect a failure of the crown to implement the terms of treaties signed between Indigenous peoples and Great Britain centuries ago.

“The crown never passed a treaty implementation act. Instead, they passed the Indian Act to control our people. But just because the crown has done immense harm, it doesn’t mean you forget about the treaty,” he said. “Our elders always said, ‘As long as the sun shines, rivers flow and the grass grows, the treaty will remain in effect for children and generations now and those yet unborn.’ That’s the covenant. It cannot ever be forgotten or displaced or broken.”

In 2001, Bellegarde and the late elder Gordon Oakes gave Charles, then Prince of Wales, the Cree name *kīsikāwipīsīmwa miyo ōhcikanawāpamik*, meaning

“the sun watches over him in a good way”. Bellegarde met Charles last week at Canada House in London ahead of the visit.

Indigenous leaders will meet the king when he arrives and ahead of his speech from the throne, a young Métis musician will perform and an Inuk elder will light the *qulliq*, a ceremonial fire.

“These are powerful symbols. But it’s also recognition of the power Indigenous peoples have to self-determination as defined by the constitution,” said Bellegarde.

“To have the king visit, to have our treaty partner travel here to meet with us, it reflects the foundations of this country. And it’s also a reminder for everyone: the honour of the crown in these agreements must also always be upheld.”

This article was amended on 26 May 2025. The speech that Queen Elizabeth gave in 1977 to lawmakers was part of her silver jubilee tour of Canada, not diamond jubilee as an earlier version said. And the Indian Act was mistakenly referred to as the “Indiana Act”. Also to clarify; her throne speech in 1957 was the last time a monarch opened a new parliament in Canada and her speech in 1977 was to open a new session of parliament.

Document 3 - In Canada, Charles pushed the boundaries of politics as king. So far, he has got away with it

Right now, the monarch’s political leanings appear in sympathy with the mood of Britain. But what if the public moves further to the right?

Martin Kettle *The Guardian*, Thu 29 May 2025

It requires an effort to keep reminding yourself of the sheer historical oddity of monarchy’s healthy survival into the modern democratic age. Yet so rooted is the monarchy in the mental furniture of Britain that most people in our politics barely think about it. This week, however, the modern British monarchy has stood up and demanded to be counted, doing something new and perhaps genuinely consequential.

Judged by any yardstick, Charles III’s visit to Canada was an audaciously disjunctive event. The idea that a vibrant democracy such as Canada, with a highly sophisticated sense of its own complex identity, might summon an elderly hereditary monarch from across the ocean to provide a focal point for its resistance to Donald Trump’s existential threat takes some believing. Yet that was exactly what played out this week, when the king travelled to Ottawa to open the new Canadian parliament.

No monarch had bothered to make this trip for nearly 50 years. During that time, however, Canada has transformed itself into a major global power and has decisively slipped its old colonial bonds. Yet Trump’s threat to Canada is such that the country’s prime minister, Mark Carney, judged a summons to Buckingham Palace would send a useful newsworthy signal about its national sovereignty that would help bind the nation while sending a shot across the US president’s bows.

At least as significantly, when seen from Britain, King Charles was happy to oblige. Just as with the speech he delivers at Westminster at the start of a parliamentary session, Tuesday’s in Ottawa will have been scripted by the elected government. But the Ottawa speech had a far looser and more personal format than the Westminster version. This allowed the king to speak words that clearly mattered to him, and by which he will be judged.

Trump was not mentioned by name. Even so, he permeated the speech. The king endorsed Canadian national pride and said democracy, law, pluralism and global trade were on the line. He said Canada's relationships with Europe would be strengthened and, speaking in French, he said Canada faces challenges unprecedented in the postwar era. He was proud that Canada was "an example to the world in her conduct and values, as a force for good", and he ended, quoting from the Canadian national anthem, by saying "the true north is indeed strong and free".

All this is an unmistakable rebuke to Trump's rudeness, aggression and greed. The words are not neutral but committed. Whether the king sought approval from Keir Starmer for his visit and speech is not clear. His main adviser concerning the visit will have been Carney, who may have liaised with Downing Street. Starmer, committed to engaging with Trump, will have been content to keep his distance. The larger point, however, is that this was a willed act by the king. Charles did not have to travel and did not have to make the speech. But he did both, even while continuing to be treated for cancer.

The contrast with his mother is impossible to miss. Elizabeth II's hallmark throughout her 70-year reign was a studied neutrality on public affairs. She was much praised for it during her lifetime, leading some commentators to assume that neutrality was now a precondition for monarchy's survival, and others into infantile speculations about the symbolic messages that may, or may not, have been implied by what the queen was wearing. Even when Elizabeth did let slip a view – as in her "think very carefully about the future" comment during the 2014 Scottish referendum – the words could be as gnostic as they were rare.

During his long years as heir to the throne, however, Charles became a controversialist. He expressed views about a wide range of issues, from architecture to farming and the climate crisis. He lobbied ministers in handwritten "black spider" memos about them. This habit led some to predict that, when he succeeded to the throne, Charles would continue to be a protagonist on causes that mattered to him. In Mike Bartlett's 2014 play *King Charles III*, the future monarch even abdicates rather than give his assent to a government bill restricting the freedom of the press.

In nearly three years as king, however, Charles has proved many doubters wrong. Monarchy watchers who suspected he would not change his ways now concede he has not overstepped any significant constitutional lines. Yet he has done the job his own way, not his mother's. As the palace itself acknowledges, the king is walking a tightrope.

Charles's visits and speeches push the boundaries. Ottawa is now the most dramatic example, but it is not the only one. At home, Charles has championed the UK union against national separatists. He took Starmer and Angela Rayner to visit a housing project in Cornwall. He has made visits to EU capitals, most recently to Rome, which harmonise with Starmer's attempt to improve relations with Europe. He very publicly hosted President Zelenskyy only days after Trump's savage assault on the Ukraine leader in the Oval Office. His most recent Christmas message focused on praising health workers.

So far, Charles has got away with it. Public concern for his own health, and for that of his family, has probably helped him. So has public sympathy over the behaviour of the Sussexes. To criticise Trump is also popular rather than risky. Amid all this, the public has cut Charles enough slack to be more himself. Those who warned that his more committed approach to public affairs could threaten the monarchy and boost republicanism have, at least at this stage, been proved wrong.

But this benign circle may not continue indefinitely. Monarchy is still an oddity. The tightrope is still there. Charles is still balanced on it. His approach to the job has won him approval, including grudging acknowledgment from some who previously disapproved of him. But these things are not static. Charles's role carries risks which, when faced with a less patient public mood or different circumstances, could cause trouble for him and for the monarchy.

Assuming that Charles remains in good health for years to come, how might he handle a change of government? If the current feeding frenzy about a Nigel Farage prime ministership really came to pass in 2028-29, Charles could be faced with a government that might embrace a Maga president in Washington, abandon European alliances, dismiss the net zero agenda, and go out of its way to antagonise Scotland and Wales.

That would present Charles or the future King William with a very different Britain from the one with which they appear in sympathy. Yet it is a Britain that may be only three or four years distant. According to most evidence and most received wisdom, a generally well-disposed public is content to stick with the monarchy. Yet when so much else about the British state is struggling to adapt, and when monarchy remains historically improbable, why would the monarchy itself not struggle too?

Document 4 - The king “loves” Canada. Many Albertans want out

The push for a referendum on Albertan independence is speeding up



Photograph: Reuters

The Economist, May 28th 2025 | Red Deer, Alberta

“The true north is indeed strong and free.” If King Charles’s remarks on Canada’s sovereignty sounded familiar, that is because officials in Mark Carney’s new government wrote them. On May 27th the king delivered the throne speech in his capacity as head of state, opening Parliament—a task usually performed by Canada’s governor-general. The last monarch to do it was his mother, Queen Elizabeth, in 1977. The king was drafted in to rally Canadians to Mr Carney’s banner (his brother runs the household of Prince William, the king’s son and heir), as Canada’s prime minister settles into his stand-off with the pugnacious president of the United States, Donald Trump.

But for about a third of the 5m residents of the oil-rich province of Alberta, the royal rhetoric will have rung hollow. These Albertans feel neither strong nor free but constrained, in particular by the environmental predilections of their rulers in Ottawa which stop Albertan crude from flowing as freely as it might. Their dormant independence movement has been reinvigorated by fury across Conservative-voting Alberta at the Liberal Party’s recent turnaround election win.

Within hours of Mr Carney’s victory on April 28th, Alberta’s right-wing premier, Danielle Smith, announced that she planned to lower the number of petition signatures needed to trigger referendums, including a vote on Alberta’s secession. Separatist groups like the Republican Party of Alberta and the Alberta Prosperity Project began scrambling for the 177,000 names needed, down from 600,000.

Ms Smith insists she is making an earnest attempt to allay Albertan anger, not to guide her province out of the federation. She admits to thinking a referendum might help her politically by putting the question of independence to rest while fending off the re-energised right-wing of her United Conservative Party. “I can read polls just as well as anybody and see that 37% of people [in Alberta] have given up on Canada,” she says. “I take that very seriously and so should the decision-maker in Ottawa.”

Mr Carney has seen this coming. He is familiar with the results of high-stakes referendums, having guided the Bank of England through Brexit as its governor. He has already offered to approve energy projects in two years rather than five, and said he will use national-interest rules to speed up development even further. Mere words, according to Ms Smith. She wants guarantees that oil and gas pipelines will be built immediately, particularly to the Pacific and the Asian market beyond.



Photograph: AP

The path to independence is technically fraught. Federal laws passed after Quebec came within 60,000 votes of seceding 30 years ago dictate that any bid for provincial separation can proceed only when a “clear question” leads to a “clear majority”. Were such a question asked and answered in the affirmative, complicated negotiations on divisions of assets would follow.

Nancy Southern, the boss of ATCO, a large Canadian energy conglomerate, says the mere possibility of Alberta’s separation is already driving away investment. Potential partners in Japan and South Korea are asking pointed questions, she told shareholders on May 14th: “What are the rules going to be? What’s the currency going to be? Is there security around this? Who’s going to trade with this? How do we get to tidewater? How do we get our product to our country?”

The province’s 45 indigenous groups don’t much like the idea either. Their relationship with the government is based on treaties with the British Crown, and they insist they would remain sovereign nations within an independent Alberta. “You would have a Swiss cheese of a province, at best, if they did pull away,” says Chief Ouray Crowfoot of the Siksika First Nation.

None of that is stopping anti-Ottawa sentiment that has existed for decades from curdling into anti-Canada convictions. “We don’t have anything in common with anybody east of Saskatchewan,” says Alton Wood, referring to the prairie province to Alberta’s immediate east.

Mr Wood was one of about 500 avowed separatists who gathered at a casino banquet hall in Red Deer on May 24th, about 140km (90 miles) north of Calgary, for a town-hall meeting held by the Republican Party of Alberta. Jonathan White, who runs a construction company in the central Albertan town of Springbrook, says taxes—particularly Canada’s industrial carbon tax—are smothering his business and nudging him towards supporting secession. “If the rest of Canada is stomping on us, what else do we have left to do?”

Naheed Nenshi, who leads Alberta’s left-wing New Democratic Party, sees parallels with Brexit. Ms Smith’s attempt to hold her conservative coalition together by gambling that a referendum will go her way looks to him like David Cameron’s doomed attempt to secure his Conservative Party’s future by doing the same in Britain. “She is exactly following the David Cameron script, but I don’t know if she’s read to the end of the play.”

Indeed, there are hints that Ms Smith may be repeating the mistake of thinking she can control a rising populist movement. Data released on May 23rd by Léger, a pollster, found that 47% of Albertans support independence, with 48% saying they would vote against it. Those are Brexitesque margins.

Ms Smith says she aims to avoid a referendum entirely by compelling the Carney government to stick to its word and make it easier to get Alberta’s resources out of the ground and into pipelines. “If I’m successful, then that will mean there may not be a question.” If she’s not, she will have to live with the consequences. King Charles and Mr Carney have seen this all before. ■

Document 5 - King Charles's visit brings frustration for First Nations amid 'backslide in reconciliation'

Spectacle of royal visit evoked a model of national identity at odds with efforts to confront Canada's own violent history of colonization

Olivia Bowden in Toronto - *The Guardian*, Fri 30 May 2025

King Charles's speech to Canada's parliament this week was framed as a subtle rebuke to Donald Trump's threats of annexation and an assertion of the country's sovereignty.

But for many Indigenous people, the elaborate spectacle of the royal visit – with its protocol, regalia, thrones and mounties in pith helmets – evoked a model of national identity at odds with ongoing efforts to confront Canada's own violent history of colonization and dispossession.

The visit came as some Indigenous Chiefs and academics warned that questions of reconciliation with First Nations are being drowned out by the noisy surge of patriotism provoked by the US president.

"There's only so much oxygen in the room and it gets all sucked up with standing up to Trump. It's 'Indigenous people, you're important – but not right now'. That's a strategy of settler colonialism too," said David MacDonald, a political science professor at Guelph University in Ontario from Treaty 4 lands in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Canada was formed to promote unity among British colonial territories and to stop American expansion – and it was created through genocidal violence against Indigenous people, said MacDonald.

"We need to be careful not to fall back into those historical patterns, because it's pretty easy for a lot of settler Canadians to think that's the way it has been and should be, especially if we appeal to older historical figures," he said.

Indigenous leaders also highlighted the irony of such high-profile declarations of Canadian sovereignty when First Nations are themselves forced to make similar assertions to Canada's own federal government.

Canada's federal government admits that colonial efforts to forcefully assimilate Indigenous peoples, and the displacement of First Nations on to inhospitable reserves have all contributed to shorter life expectancy, poverty and illness.



First Nations leaders look on before Britain's King Charles III delivers a speech from the Throne to open the first session of the 45th parliament of Canada, in Ottawa on 27 May. Photograph: Victoria Jones/AFP/Getty Images

Indigenous communities have repeatedly been forced to turn to the courts in order to force the federal government to meet its obligations under centuries-old treaties between First Nations and the Crown.

In one case last year, Canada's highest court ruled that the crown had made a "mockery" of a 1850 agreement by failing to adequately compensate First Nations for the riches extracted from their ancestral territories.

"We were sovereign. We still are sovereign. And you have to respect that we enter these treaties to make sure that we share land and resources – and therefore Canada, the colonial state, must share revenue as well," said Chief David Monias, of Pimicikamak Okimawin in Manitoba, at a press conference following the King's speech.

Grand Chief Kyra Wilson of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs welcomed the King's decision to mention Indigenous rights, meet and acknowledge that Canada's parliament building sits on traditional Algonquin territory.

But she added: "There was talk of truth and reconciliation. But ... we've heard the term 'reconciliation' for years now," she says. "And what we are expecting – and what we've been expecting for years – is tangible action."

National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, who is head of the Assembly of First Nations, said that during her meeting with the king she stressed the need for "less colonialism".

"People don't like this [US] colonialism that's happening at the borders," she said. "But first nations

have been feeling that for a long time: colonialism trying to dictate our lives.”

Over the past 20 years, Canada has engaged in a fitful reckoning with its colonial past, with a 2015 report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) concluding that the country had engaged in a “cultural genocide” in which tens of thousands of First Nations children were forcibly removed from their families and incarcerated in residential schools rife with abuse.

A major shift in public discourse also came four years ago this week, when over 200 potential burial sites of children were confirmed outside a former residential school in southern British Columbia.

But that historical reassessment has been drowned out by a surge of nationalism in response to Trump – often invoking the iconography of British colonialism, said Rowland Keshena Robinson, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, who is a member of the Menominee Nation of Wisconsin.

On the day of Charles’ speech, the Ontario government announced that a statue of John A Macdonald, Canada’s first prime minister, would be put back on public

display, five years after activists threw paint on it to highlight Macdonald’s efforts to eliminate Indigenous people including through starvation.

“There absolutely has been a backsliding in reconciliation in the last five years,” Robinson said.

MacDonald argued that Canadians face a unique opportunity to define themselves as different from the US not through loyalty to Britain but through by enacting true reconciliation with Indigenous people.

“What’s the opposite of a dictatorial, authoritarian presidential system? It’s a decentralized system where Indigenous people have control over their own lands, waters and keep large corporations from digging everything up,” he said.

“That would be the most anti-American thing a Canadian could do,” he said. “If the narrative could change Indigenous self-determination could be a central part of Canadian identity.”

This article was amended on 30 May 2025. An earlier version misspelled the first name of Kyra Wilson. Also, a photo caption of First Nations leaders incorrectly referred to them as being Inuit leaders. A reference to the 2021 discovery of the remains of 215 children has also been changed to reflect that these were potential burial sites, not remains.

Document 6 - King Charles’s visit to Canada was a show of weakness, not strength

Opinion - Andrew Cohen – The Globe and Mail, May 27, 2025

Andrew Cohen is a journalist, a professor at Carleton University and the author of The Unfinished Canadian: The People We Are.

Ever since Donald Trump began issuing threats about absorbing Canada, Canadians have been unusually rattled and resolute. In our hour of peril, we thought leaders from around the world would stand up for our country – and especially, King Charles III.

Why Charles? It’s not only because he is Canada’s sovereign, which has certain obligations. It’s that Mr. Trump admires him. Had Charles uttered something definitive in response to Mr. Trump’s rhetoric, that might have deterred the President. The King did not.

And so, at Mark Carney’s request, Charles came to Ottawa to deliver the Speech from the Throne as a statement of our distinctiveness. Mr. Carney knew what he was doing when he invited the King. It was to mobilize the monarchy to make a point. Or as The New York Times put it more sharply: “a subtle rebuke to [Mr.] Trump.”

The anxiety of Canadians is largely why Mr. Carney is Prime Minister, and he wants to turn that anxiety into ambition. But there is much more to do than score symbolic points to make Canada truly sovereign: diversifying our trade, creating a real internal economic union, fielding a serious military and a creative diplomatic service, building housing and high-speed rail. Here is something else: detaching Canada from the monarchy. As we declare our economic independence from the United States, let’s declare our constitutional independence from Great Britain, too.

This process, which will be hard, should have begun after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. We could have opened a long-overdue conversation about the monarchy that other members of the Commonwealth – India, Australia, New Zealand, Barbados, Jamaica – have had. We might have decided, as an expression of our maturity, that we would replace

the monarch with eminent Canadians on our currency and postage stamps, that we would remove “royal” from our navy and air force and other institutions, that we would alter oaths of office.

We did none of that. As we spared Elizabeth an uncomfortable conversation, we continued to spare ourselves, largely out of indifference or a failure of imagination.

As always, there’s nothing personal here; the King is a devoted public servant. But he’s hardly a champion of Canada. He really hasn’t had much to say about us. He lives in London, not Ottawa. And when it might have mattered, the King was silent. True, with the skills of an Egyptologist, you might decode the royal hieroglyphics. Oh, he’s wearing a red tie! He’s wearing his Order of Canada pin! He’s wearing our naval uniform! He visited Canada House in London on Victoria Day! He planted a maple tree! Really, though, as Robert Kennedy once said of Canada in another context, the King has offered “all aid short of help.”

Rather than nods, winks, official nuances and imperial telepathy, the King might have declared: “President Trump, I am King of Canada. I tell you, with fondness and respect, that it will never be yours. I take it personally when you insist it will. And if you feel that way, I am cancelling your state visit to Britain this year. You threaten Canada, you threaten me.”

Yes, that would break protocol and traumatize the royalists; monarchs simply don’t speak that way. But Mr. Trump breaks protocol all the time. And if the King can break precedent by inviting the President to Britain for a second state visit, surely he can do it here.

Ultimately, whatever Charles may do or say should not matter to Canada. Becoming a republic would be the last step in our political evolution as we detach ourselves from Britain. It has been our story for decades: The Canada Corps in the Great War, the Statute of Westminster, the Citizenship Act, making the Supreme Court of Canada supreme, the Maple Leaf flag, the national anthem, the Order of Canada – and, most important, the patriation of the British North America Act, which freed us from British trusteeship while entrenching a Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

All were declarations of independence. All were about shedding our neocolonialism. All were about seeing ourselves not as a young, small democracy, but as an old and big one in both size and stature, a true example to the world. It’s about *confidence*.

Mark Carney, dusted by destiny, asks us to think big about our unfinished country. And we can – beginning by making this royal visit the last, and saying adieu to the monarchy with a sigh, a shrug and a wave.

Document 7 - Brooch warfare: when the Queen’s fashion got political

Vogue, Divya Venkataraman 10 Sept 2022



Queen Elizabeth II officially welcomes US President Donald Trump on June 03, 2019. Image credit: Getty

As a constant in a world that changed around her, Queen Elizabeth II’s sartorial choices spoke louder than words

Her wardrobe was her armoury. Restrained from making overt political statements, [Queen Elizabeth II](#) followed in the footsteps of women through millennia and instead wore her sentiments on her sleeve—or lapel, as it were.

She was groomed from a young age to represent the monarchy in all the choices: speech, conduct, and, of course, dress. Married at 21 and queen at 25, a set of diktats governed her clothing: the Queen wore soft cotton gloves of exactly 15 centimetres, never wore skirts whose hems hit above the knee, and was photographed in trousers only once. But she knew how to operate in a world of rules: and used the resources she had—one of them being fashion—to tell a story beyond the one recorded on official transcripts.

It began early. In June 1953, the Queen ascendant had her coronation gown amended to feature the motifs of all the Commonwealth: South African protea, Canadian maple leaves, New Zealand silver ferns, Pakistani wheat

and Australian wattle flowers joined the roses, shamrocks and thistles of the UK. It was an exemplar of her sartorial script: eloquent, subliminal and decisive. This kind of semiology would be a fixture through her 70-year royal tenure.

Queen Elizabeth II during her coronation in 1953.
Image credit: Universal History Archive/Universal Images Group via Getty Images



Brooches were a tool wielded with intent as sharp as their pins. Meeting Donald Trump in 2019, she delivered a statement in the form of an accessorial triptych. On the first day of his visit, she wore a brooch sent by the Obamas, Trump's political nemeses and followed it up with a snowflake brooch given to her by the Governor-General of Canada, a country with which the then-president had strained relations. For the third day, she pinned a diamond teardrop brooch gifted to her by her mother on her coat—unassuming at first, but pregnant with meaning once royal-watchers realised it was the same brooch her mother wore to the funeral of King George VI (Queen Elizabeth II's father); a brooch that was tied inextricably to mourning. One brooch with negative connotations could have been a coincidence. But three? A point was being made.

Not that her choices were used just as a reflection of her personal feelings: the Queen was far too duty-bound for that. When she arrived in Ireland in 2011—a country with a well-founded suspicion of the monarchy—she wore a specific shade of green in a move of quiet diplomacy. It couldn't be too bold, so as to imply an intent to assert British dominance in her host country, nor too emerald as to be sycophantic: it was grassy and fresh, an homage to Ireland in the wake of the landmark moment (she was the first British monarch to visit the country in 100 years).

While the Queen was well-known for her penchant for bright colours (journalist Sali Hughes wrote a book

titled *Our Rainbow Queen* in 2019), some looks were more significant than others: in June 2017, almost exactly a year after Britain's vote to leave the European Union, she addressed parliament dressed in a blue and yellow ensemble, unmistakably the colours of the EU flag. The flowers bedecking her hat, too, curiously mimicked the flag's stars. Was it a stand against the vote her country had taken, made in the room where some of its biggest supporters sat?

Perhaps she was inspired by her queenly namesake. Queen Elizabeth I, during her forty-five year reign from 1558 to 1603, would often use fashion to express her politics: she would wear the styles of Italy or France, to signify her stance as a liberal queen, open to other cultures, or don another country's style when she was etching out particular political alliances.

Image credit: Getty



The Queen was also known to dispense with tradition when the occasion called for it, and use her clothes to express other silent statements: in 2021, for the memorial of Prince Philip, she wore a deep forest green instead of traditional black, in tribute to her late husband's livery colour. It was a show of sentiment in a thoroughly duty-led life.

It is true that the marriage of politics and fashion is a strained one at times, but never is the interdependence of the two so obvious as in the wardrobe of a monarch. In her quietly feminine style, in the sorbet suits that acted as a bastion against the trends of the day, and the brooches that waged a silently glittering war, Queen Elizabeth II showed that style could often speak louder than words

Like other colonies, the Caribbean nation retained the British monarch as head of state after independence in 1962

Natricia Duncan and Anthony Lugg in Kingston *The Guardian* Fri 13 Dec 2024

The Jamaican government has taken its first step toward removing King Charles as head of state, presenting a bill in parliament to abolish the constitutional monarchy and transition the country to a republic.

Like many former British colonies, Jamaica retained the British monarch as its head of state after achieving independence in 1962. The monarch is represented in the country by a governor general.

Though the arrangement is mostly ceremonial and does not give Britain any say in Jamaica's governance, it is often seen as a vestige of colonial rule. If the new legislation is passed, a Jamaican president will become the ceremonial head of state.

Jamaica's minister of legal and constitutional affairs, Marlene Malahoo Forte, who presented the bill on Wednesday, said it was a response to an ongoing call from Jamaicans to change the constitution.

"Every year when we celebrate independence on August 6, the nation is invited to reflect on its achievements since independence and what remains to be done, and every year the question is asked when are we going to abolish the monarchy and have a Jamaican head of state," she told the *Guardian*.

The bill will also have implications for the definition of Jamaican citizenship and the country's political architecture, with the senate expanded "to include senators appointed independently of the political parties".

The bill still has to go through several stages – including scrutiny by joint committees, a vote in parliament and a national referendum. It is expected to encounter hurdles as opposition parties have already raised concerns, including about its timing just ahead of a national elections next year and the absence of provisions to replace the UK-based privy council with the Caribbean court of justice as Jamaica's highest court of appeal.

"We do not believe you can say that you're fully decolonised if you still retain the privy council as your apex court. So you cannot leave the king but still have to petition him when you want justice to be delivered to your people – and the privy council as the apex court is an anachronism in this context," said the senator Donna Scott-Mottley, spokesperson on justice for the main opposition, the People's National party.

However, she added the opposition was looking forward to working "across the aisle" on the bill. "At the end of the day, this is not about political parties, it's about our nation. It's about our people and it's about closing the full circle of independence for the people of our country," she said.

Malahoo Forte said prime minister Andrew Holness' administration had adopted a "phased reform approach" with "matters relating to the court set for the next phase". She added: "For many years, a lot of work was done, but we have never progressed to getting the bill in parliament, and in order for the amendments to be made, a bill has to be tabled to alter the provisions of the constitution relating to the monarchy and those provisions have the deepest level of protection."

On the streets of Kingston, people had mixed reactions to news about the bill.

"The [British are] really not doing anything substantial for our country, so it makes no sense to have them as head of state. Plus, we have it hard to go to England more than any country ... so, by all means, do away with the monarchy," said Maureen Brammer.

"I think it's a good move ... but I'm still hoping that we can still be in the Commonwealth," said Marlene Daley.

But others were sceptical. "We have a lot of house cleaning matters to deal with before we can be a republic. The country is too corrupt," D Simms said.

Another passerby, who wished to remain anonymous, said that the government is not ready for republicanism. "We got independence in 1962, and the only change is our money. Whether we remove the monarchy or not, the country won't be better off."

In the Caribbean, four of the 12 former colonies have transitioned to republicanism: Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica and most recently Barbados. In recent times, the region has seen a shift in public reaction to British monarchs, with royals facing protests and demands for an apology for the horrors of transatlantic slavery when they visit Caribbean countries.

This follows the rise of a reparations movement, which became a hot-button issue during the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Samoa in October, with African and Caribbean countries demanding that the 56-country grouping put the Caribbean Community's 10-point plan for reparatory justice for enslavement on its agenda.

The director of the Centre for Reparation Research, Dr Sonjah Stanley Niaah, said the Jamaican bill was a step in the right direction.

"The tabling of this bill is an important signal that Jamaica is now committed to this process ... We want to be able to support the advancement of true sovereignty, and I think this is what this move is about. That Jamaica is taking sovereignty seriously and sovereignty at the level of determining its own form of government," she said.