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1901-08-06

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker

took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

DEMISE OF THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF GERMANY

Special Adjournment

Mr SPEAKER

- It is my painful duty to inform the House that intelligence has been received of the death of the Dowager Empress of Germany, Princess Royal of England, sister of His Majesty the King.

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Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I take it, sir, that the news which you have announced leaves only one course open to us. Loath as I am to make any suspension in public business, recognising as I do the importance and the urgency of the measures which are before the House for its consideration, I cannot, nor can any of us, forget that the death announced to us is the death of the sister of the King of the Empire. The Princess Royal was a woman who endeared herself to every man of British blood by her thoroughly English character. She was a worthy daughter of a noble mother. She was the aunt of the Duke of Cornwall and York, who with his consort has just visited these shores, and who, there is reason to believe, will soon be Prince of Wales, and who is the heir to the throne. If there is a personal reason for us to be added to the urgency disclosed by these facts it is that as an Englishwoman the Princess Royal, who became the Empress of Germany, and was at her death the Dowager Empress, and the mother of the Emperor of Germany, was throughout her life able to reconcile her intense loyalty to the Britain in which she was born with her duties to the great

Empire to which her sphere of life was transferred. Her husband, the Emperor Frederick, was, as we all know, one of the greatest friends on the Continent of the British Empire to which his wife belonged. His death was a signal for universal mourning, not only throughout Germany, but throughout England, and when I say England, I include that Greater Britain of which we form a part. He was a monarch respected and beloved, because through all his life he recognised that he was the trustee of his people. His wife, with no less devotion to the people of Great Britain and to the people of Germany, was a most esteemed and most regarded member of the Royal Family. The King has but recently come to the throne. The affection which prevailed between him and his sister is known to all those who care to read, and he himself must be deeply stricken by this sad event. I need not refer more than very lightly to some recent words of his, which showed how tremendously the affliction which had beset his sister had filled him with sympathy for all who were so stricken. On all these grounds - and I take it that no more grounds are necessary to an assembly like this, which has shown so often, and will show so often in the future, that a broad democracy is compatible with an affectionate loyalty - I propose an adjournment. I should like to add that the father of the House, who moved the Address in Reply, lies stricken near to death in Melbourne. I am not speaking prematurely when I say that honorable members may expect to be parted from him. It is not necessary to add that as a reason for the motion I am about to make; but with that circumstance in existence, I suppose there will be in the minds of all of us the less objection to that course which will not only mark a loyalty which requires no further statement than we have all of us made in our actions, but will also recognise that the highest acts of deliberation must sometimes be postponed to a national grief. I hear that both Houses of the Parliament of the State of Victoria will be adjourned this afternoon. I have the honour to move -

That the House do now adjourn.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- It is only since I arrived here this afternoon that I heard of the very sad event which you, sir, have announced to the House. In a matter of this kind we must be guided by the leader of the House. Great as may be the disturbance to public business at a time like this, I concur with him that it is an occasion on which, by adjourning, we can show our respect for and condolence with the King of this Empire.

Also, this sad event concerns a kindred nation to which we are very closely allied; and certainly the life of

the remarkable woman which has just been closed was one which we can class with that of her beloved mother, whose loss we so lately deplored.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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14:40:00

House adjourned at 2.40 p.m.