

An era has ended

by BRIAN LOCKHART

A crowd outside of Buckingham Palace broke into a rendition of God Save the King when the former Prince Charles, now King Charles, arrived shortly after the death of his mother, Elizabeth II.

Those words have not been used in the anthem for over 70 years.

One visitor described it as a 'rather odd experience' to sing the lyrics that announce a new monarch now sits on the throne of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth realms.

The passing of Queen Elizabeth brings to a close an era. I've already heard it referred to as the 'second Elizabethan Era.' Indeed, she was the Queen longer than most of us have been alive.

Most of us have never seen our money with the image of another monarch.

In her reign of over 70 years, the Queen completed her duties with unwavering devotion and dignity. She was free of scandal, and she spent almost her entire life in service of her country.

Not everyone is a fan of the monarchy, of course. Many people think the entire concept of a Royal Family should be done away with, referring to it as a leftover over from colonial days and a long obsolete method of governing a nation.

It has long been speculated about what kind of king Charles will be, and how he will handle his duties as monarch.

King Charles was the longest serving heir apparent in British history and, at age 73, the oldest person to assume the throne. He has been training for the job his entire life. I'm pretty sure he knows what is expected of him, and he will likely follow in the footsteps of his mother when it comes to Royal protocol.

If the Monarchy is about to change, it will, if anything, modernize the way of doing things.

King Charles will likely be the last of the stuffy type of monarch, who speaks with that kind of jumbly upper class mannerism and wears outdated plaid or tweed sports jackets and suits.

Charles took a lot of heat and lost a lot of popularity due to his divorce from Lady Diana. For some reason, many members of the public blamed him for the divorce.

They should have blamed protocol for that divorce. Charles was pressured into the marriage because she was 'suitable' for the role of future Queen Consort - unlike the woman he really wanted to be with.

Charles wasn't the first royal who had to leave a love interest because of protocol, but now those rules seem to have relaxed over time when the Royal Family realized it is better to be with the one you love and enjoy life, rather than be with a person out of convenience, and be miserable.

I think the reason the monarchy has lasted into modern times, is because they represent stability in an otherwise rather unstable world. They represent the nation and the unity of the Commonwealth on the international stage.

Most of all, the Royal Family has no political power. The Queen, or King now, while officially the Head of State, has no power. They do not determine policy, do not plan the national budget, and have no say in national defence. The Queen, in over 70 years,

never made a public political statement.

The Royals are quite aware that meddling in politics would indeed result in the fall of their dynasty.

Even the Governor General in Ottawa, the reigning Monarch's representative in Canada, is merely a figurehead, who would be removed from office if she tried to intervene in the matters of elected public officials.

When comes to important national decisions, it is the Prime Minister and cabinet who call the shots.

After all, it was Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who said "sink it" when referring to launching a torpedo and sinking the Argentinian cruiser ARA General Belgrano during the Falkland Islands War, not the Queen.

The Queen was a much-loved public person who transitioned from a pretty young princess, to a national grandmother figure and never wavered in her role as Monarch.

I have no doubt that King Charles III, will continue along the same path and provide stability and promote the UK internationally during his reign.

When I was in elementary school, we still sang God Save the Queen at times. That has been all but replaced by O Canada. I can't remember the last time I heard the Royal Anthem played at an event in Canada.

I am not some kind of die-hard monarchist, however the reigning Monarch is still our Head of State, and until that changes, King Charles III deserves our respect and support as a nation.