

Victoria Day Renewal

It's always a nice feeling at the end of the day to know it has been a full one.

You might not be an early-to-bed early-to-rise kind of person despite promises of health, wealth, and wisdom, but when you can rouse yourself accordingly to seize the day, it's amazing what you can really accomplish.

But what if you cram two days' worth into one? Well, I guess it depends on your stamina.

In my last week from undergrad, for instance, I hit a bottleneck of things that needed to be done. Several assignments were due around the same time, a part-time job was being balanced, and the apparent fun of a department formal was in the offing.

Things were going well until just after the formal, which I remember as being held on a Wednesday evening. When I returned from it in the wee hours of Thursday morning, it dawned on me I misunderstood the assignment of my final essay and, with eight hours to go, had to start from scratch at that very moment ? research and all.

By the time I slipped the finished paper into my professor's box, finished what needed to be done at my paying gig, and helped do a bit of housekeeping related to the formal, I had been up for around 55 hours.

At that age, the only ill-effects seemed to be a feeling of dehydration and, of course, fatigue, but a good 12-hour night's sleep after that was enough for a bounce-back.

More than 15 years on, even when dealing with just half the time, one night's rest wasn't enough for me to bounce back from Coronation Day.

As you may have noticed by my admission in a column a few weeks ago, I was more than just a little bit excited to see how the day would unfold. Images from the previous Coronations in 1953 and 1937, for instance, had been seared in my brain from a very young age, and how the event would be tailored for today's sensibilities was very much front-of-mind.

The result, I think, was a good balance of history and modernity ? in as much as an event involving equipment from the 14th century and garments from the 17th can be.

It was wonderful to see those participating reflective of the Commonwealth's diversity rather than simply determined by rank in the aristocracy, as was the blend of new compositions to complement tried and tested Coronation anthems.

Seeing the Canadian delegation walk into Westminster Abbey, led by astronaut Jeremy Hansen, who next year, if all goes according to plan, will be the first Canadian ? and first non-American ? to fly to the Moon filled me with pride. As did seeing the warm and enthusiastic reception the King and Queen received after the ceremony ? reassuring to say the least.

?As the Coronation weekend draws to a close, my wife and I just wanted to share our most sincere and heartfelt thanks to all those who have helped me this such a special occasion,? said the King in a statement a couple of days after receiving the crown. ?We pay particular tribute to the countless people who have given their time and dedication to ensuring that the celebrations in London, Windsor and further afield were happy, safe and enjoyable as possible.

?To those who joined in the celebrations ? whether at home, at street parties and lunches, or by volunteering in communities ? we thank you, each and every one. To know that we have your support and encouragement, and to witness your kindness expressed in so many different ways, has been the greatest possible Coronation gift as we now rededicate our lives to serving the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and Commonwealth.?

It will be interesting to see how this life of service will take shape in the new reign.

A few days before the Coronation, in an interview with the CBC, Governor General Mary Simon made a few interesting observations.

?If there is any talk of whether there should be a king at the head of our country, then we have to have some very serious discussions in Canada about what we want,? she said. ?What are the solid examples of where we would want to go if we were to get out of the Commonwealth. I haven't heard those discussions take place. I have heard a lot of individuals say they don't support?the polling has said they don't support the king, but at the same time I think we need to give him a chance. I think we need to give him a chance to show he is a good leader and has been an important player in the international community in terms of inclusiveness, in terms of environmental issues, and I think we need to give him that opportunity.?

I'm inclined to agree. Over his lengthy stint as Heir to the Throne, longer than any Heir in our history, the King has consistently been ahead of the curve in the aforementioned areas of inclusivity, environment and sustainability and I think this is recognized in many sectors.

Despite getting up just after 3.30 a.m. on May 6 to see the events unfold live from London, I did my best to put the resulting fatigue aside from what already felt like a full day ? not as easy as it was in my undergrad! ? and headed into Toronto for a second round to take in some of the Coronation festivities at Queen's Park.

Plans for the day included a flag raising and ceremony recognizing volunteers, and free food and drink showcasing some of the best Ontario producers have to offer, and a chance to visit many of our best museums free of charge in celebration of the day.

While the promise free food and drink always brings people out to party, I wasn't prepared for the sheer numbers of individuals who turned out to take part, representing every age bracket and walk of life imaginable. Yes, some were there for the grub, but so many people were overheard talking about the day's events and what it means ? and, in my view, this bodes well for people giving Charles III a chance to show how he will put his own personal stamp on the Canadian crown.

One can only hope the Federal Government will give him the chance to do so sooner rather than later. By convention, the Monarch and the immediate Heir to the Throne, come to Canada by invitation of the Government, rather than other members of the Royal Family who are here comparatively frequently at the invitation of the charities, military units, and so forth, they help represent.

As Victoria Day, the Sovereign's official birthday in Canada, approaches this weekend, it's time to move this along. While Charles is familiar to Canadians after more than half-a-century of visits as Prince of Wales. It's high time to meet him as King of Canada to witness how he will put this re-dedicated life of service into action.