



Speech to the Storting

Taler
Winston Churchill

Dato
13 mai 1948

Sted
Stortinget, Oslo

1 Mr. .President, Honourable members,

I have in recent years spoken in a great many of the parliaments of the free countries of the world, in the American Congress, the Canadian Parliament, In
5 Switzerland, in the States-General, in Belgium; and it gives me the very greatest pleasure to come here this morning for a few moments to be welcomed by you here and be allowed to say a few words. I am, as the President has said, a very old parliamentarian. I have served more than 45 years out of the last 48 in the House of Commons which we pride ourselves is the cradle and also the citadel
10 of parliamentary government throughout the nations. In our parliamentary system we are able to make sure that the will of the people is steadily and continuously expressed, and thus the government and the ministers become the servants and not the masters of the people. Any infraction of this principle encounters widespread protest and opposition.

15 I am a great believer in the parliamentary system. I am very glad to learn, as have I have done in the course of years, the immense importance and respect with which the people of Norway regard their elected representatives, and how convinced they are that the parliamentary system and a constitutional
20 monarchy is one so well suited to their needs.

I was struck in reading about the history of the last few terrible years, and in reading in particular of the horrid outrage which occurred when Oslo was fallen upon in treachery and by surprise. I was struck by the fact that the first thought
25 of your Sovereign, when he knew what had happened was that not only the Crown and the Government, but Parliament also, the Storting, must move into the open country where they could arouse, inspire and maintain the national resistance to tyranny and invasion. We had the same power in our country to carry on, even under the utmost stresses of war and bombardment, our

parliamentary system. The other day they unveiled a tablet recording how we had to move from one place to another. Our chamber was blown to pieces by a bomb after being several times injured beforehand. Luckily the members were not present on that occasion. But we managed to carry on our parliamentary
35 system all through the rigours of that war, and the members were not deterred in any way from this discharging their parliamentary duties regularly. Consequently all the acts of state, all the measures- some of them most severe- which we took, were taken with a continuous assent of the representatives of the people who, rising far above party, placed the national unity and the
40 common cause above all other thoughts in life.

Now I congratulate you upon the vigour of your parliamentary institutions, and as I was saying, with my long experience, I am a believer in parliamentary debate as the only way in which the progress of the country and the process of
45 change can be thrashed out in fair and free debate. I have always been inclined to advocate very great freedom of debate, including a great many controversial forms of public statement and even the use of hard language when it seems to be required. And therefore I thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity here to-day and this additional honour, which I prize among
50 the many with which I have been almost overwhelmed since I arrived in Oslo.

I think that we should have confidence in the institutions which have long borne the stress and strain of peace and war, and that we should improve them and make them move with the times, and thus be able to take our share of what
55 good may come to us all in the future, while at the same time maintaining the traditions of the past and the customs which I dare to the hearts of the inhabitants of every country.

I wish you the greatest possible fortune and success in Norway. I wish you
60 safety, I wish you peace, I wish you freedom. I am sure that for all those purposes the Storting will prove itself the most effective human instrument that could be devised.

Kilde
65 "Churchills visit to Norway" (1949 J.W. Cappelen) s.35-37

Emner
Appell, Parlamentarisme

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<https://www.virksommeord.no/tale/speech-to-the-storting>

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