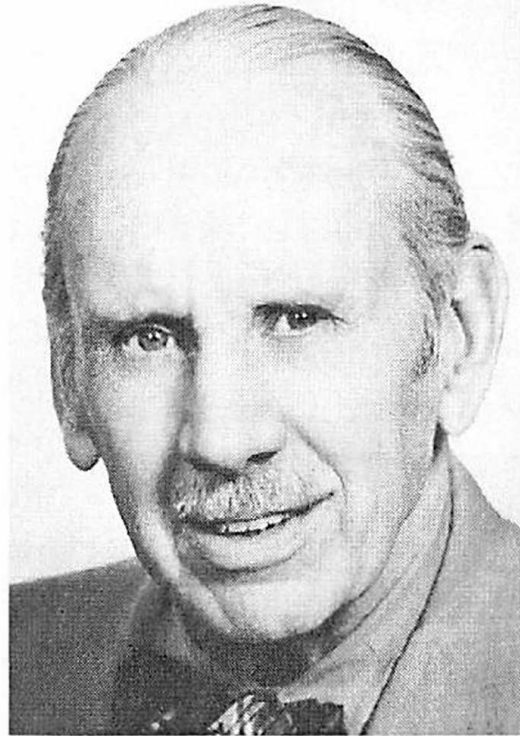


J. King Gordon

1900 - 1988

King Gordon was the son of the Rev. Charles Gordon, known by his pen-name of Ralph Connor to millions of Canadian readers, who as Moderator led many Presbyterians in negotiations to form the United Church. King received an MA from Oxford University and, after graduating from the Union Theological Seminary in New York, taught Christian Ethics at the United Theology College in Montreal, 1931-34. During those years of the Depression he also worked with Frank Scott and others to found the League for Social Reconstruction.

During World War II he was in New York as managing editor



of *The Nation* magazine and covered United Nations affairs for the CBC 1948-50. He then joined the UN Secretariat and worked until 1962 as a front-line Information Officer: first in Korea after the armistice, then in the Middle East during the 1956 Suez invasion and finally in the Congo in the post-independence chaos. For the rest of the 1960s he taught international relations at the University of Alberta.

A strong supporter of NGO activities, King chaired the Board of CUSO (1964-9), and was president of the UN Association in Canada (1974-7). Among many honours he received the Pearson Peace Medal and he was a Member of the Order of Canada.

Shirley Thomson, former director of the Canada Council, remembers:

“King was a Moses-like figure - but a Moses with a wide grin, a deep chuckle and a magnanimous embrace of humanity and world issues. His deep respect for human rights, his belief in a just world community and his concern for peaceful change through world law were compelling for me and many others.”

Eugene Forsey remembers him as “one of the most remarkable men I have ever known”

Clyde Sanger echoed these words in his tribute to King. He remembered, the evening a week before his death, when King and Ruth came together with friends to read favourite poems. “The best moment came”, wrote Clyde, “when our host played a record of Frank Scott, King’s great friend, reading his poem, *Surfaces*, and King’s eyes glistened at those final lines:

“Come, flaunt the brief prerogative of life,

Dip your small civilized foot in this cold water,

And ripple, for a moment, the smooth surfaces of time”.

In Clyde’s words, “The ripples King Gordon made will last with many of us for all our days”.