

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'S SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF
FAREWELL PARADE OF THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY.
BUCKINGHAM PALACE.
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21ST. 1950.

I am so very pleased to have this opportunity of speaking to the Women's Land Army, whose Patron I have been for the past nine years.

A Farewell Parade always has something about it that is sad, but when it marks the culmination of a long and honourable history, our feelings are chiefly of pride and gratitude. This is certainly so to-day.

The story of the Land Army has been one of a great response by the women of our country to the call of duty in the nation's hour of danger and need.

They could not have done more for their country than they did. By their efforts they helped to ensure that our country contributed its utmost towards its food supplies and for this the nation owes them an everlasting debt.

The Women's Land Army has always been recruited from volunteers, and I like to think that its greatest strength lay in the free spirit which has always inspired the people of these Islands to their greatest achievements.

The Land Army attracted girls from every kind of different occupation and I have always admired their courage in responding so readily to a call which they knew must bring them not only hardship and sometimes loneliness, but often danger.

By their hard work and patient endurance they earned a noble share in the immense effort which carried our country to victory. Yet their task did not end when the war was over, for they stayed at their posts through the difficult years that followed.

Five thousand of those who served in the Land Army have decided to remain on the land. There can be no greater tribute than this to the happiness with which their work rewarded them.

Now the time has come to say good-bye, because the job has been done, but the sadness which many will feel at the parting, should be outweighed by pride in the achievement. Moreover, the Land Army will not, in any case, be only an affectionate memory, since it will live still in the shape of the thousands of members who have settled down in the countryside as the wives of farmers and farm workers, or who are themselves continuing to work in agriculture when the Organisation itself comes to an end.

I thank you all for the splendid service you have given your country. In field and forest, garden and orchard and dairy, the work of the Women's Land Army has always been worthy of the ageless traditions of those who have toiled for the land they loved.

I know that the whole nation will join with me in wishing you all good fortune for the future.
