

Prince Edward, Duke of Windsor (King Edward VIII)

Audio Guide transcript of National Sound Archive recording

In his Abdication broadcast in December 1936 he spoke of his years of public service, and of his inability to carry on without Wallis Simpson by his side. To many this represented a pinnacle of romantic devotion and selfless love; to many others, including his appalled family, it was a selfish dereliction of duty that was never entirely forgiven.

'You all know the reasons, which have impelled me to renounce the throne, but I want you to understand that in making up my mind, I did not forget the country or the Empire which as Prince of Wales and lately as King, I have but for 25 years tried to serve.

But you must believe me when I tell you that I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do, without the help and support of the woman I love. And I want you to know that the decision I have made has been mine and mine alone. And now we all have a new King. I wish him and you his people happiness and prosperity with all my heart. God bless you all. God save the King!