

## **No chance a Roman Catholic could become king after monarchy reforms are abandoned**

By Steve Doughty, Social Affairs Correspondent  
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**Reform: The Queen, pictured during her visit to Canada, was said to have reacted coolly to last year's proposals**

David Cameron has dropped plans to reform the monarchy which might have allowed a Roman Catholic to become king.

The proposals, which could also prevent men taking precedence over women in line of succession, had been raised by Gordon Brown last year and talks began with leaders of 15 Commonwealth countries whose approval would be required.

But yesterday, Nick Clegg signalled that the talks have ended and the Coalition has no interest in taking the idea further.

Mark Harper, the Tory minister for political and constitutional reform, who answers to the Deputy Prime Minister, told MPs in a written answer: 'There are no current plans to amend the laws on succession.'

The decision will anger a number of Liberal Democrats who have backed reform on the grounds that the rules of succession discriminate against Roman Catholics and women.

The failure to remove a ban that irritates some Catholics may also lead to further tension in the run-up to the Pope's visit in October.

Roman Catholics were banned from the throne by the Act of Settlement of 1701, which secured the Protestant future of the monarchy.

It laid down that the King or Queen must swear to maintain the Church of England. It also said no one married to a Catholic could succeed.

The Queen is believed to have responded coolly to proposals for reform.