

The Address—Mr. Nielsen

in waiting; but that is what the N.D.P. would have us do, by their subamendment.

The basis of the deterioration in the relationship between Quebec and Ottawa was laid by the policies of opting out, of two nations, of treaty making powers for the province of Quebec. There is only one author and originator of these policies, and he is the Prime Minister.

The subamendment suffers from further defects. It suffers from a basic disability to understand or appreciate the constitutional issue, or even the nature of the constitution itself. It sets out "proposals for amendment to the Constitution of Canada as a necessary preliminary for a national constitutional conference." This shows the shattering inability of the N.D.P. to seize the nature of the issue. The whole purpose of the conference which has been proposed by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), first in the last days of the session of 1963, is to work out an agreement whereby specific amendments would be arrived at which would provide the basis of a new unity in the country.

This was the same folly and the same danger as was inherent in the Fulton-Favreau formula adopted by the government so short a time ago. It was a pig in a poke. We were opening the door into a constitution with no indication of where we were going after the door was opened, and the N.D.P. want us to repeat that error.

A confederation conference, as we understand it, would set out in specific terms those matters upon which agreement could be obtained, as being necessary to Canadian unity in the future. No such conference can be in the position where the government or the parliament dictates ahead of time what that course will be, and yet that is precisely what the N.D.P. subamendment would have us do.

Those who vote for the N.D.P. subamendment are voting to bind the conference in advance, and are voting to place Quebec and French speaking Canada in a position of increasing isolation. That way lies, not survival, but a continuation of the erosion begun four years ago.

• (8:40 p.m.)

Subparagraph 3 of the subamendment refers to "a constitutional bill of rights." What is a constitutional bill of rights? A Bill of Rights has been passed by parliament. How many do they want? Section 4 of the subamendment speaks of repatriation of the con-

stitution. That will come following the agreement on amendments arrived at at a constitutional conference and following the adoption of those recommendations by parliament. The recommendations of that conference would be brought before the house, and parliament would enact a new act having as its base the B.N.A. Act with amendments as proposed by such a conference. I believe that across this country there is a demand for the resolution of this question of unity. Since this government assumed office we have had a continuing and worsening constitutional crisis. This was aggravated by the unskilled attempts of the government to produce one of those quick and easy solutions for which the Prime Minister now is becoming notorious.

There has been only one constructive proposal—and one only—for the resolution of the constitutional problem, and that is embodied in the amendment of the opposition. It is the proposal put forward by the then prime minister of Canada in 1963, in the dying days of the session, for a national constitutional conference. That proposal since has been embraced by the premiers of Ontario and Quebec and has been given the tacit approval of the premiers of Manitoba and Nova Scotia. It is a concrete and positive proposal for bringing together those elements in the Canadian political structure whose views must be recorded and whose consent must be obtained in order to resolve the question of unity.

The Prime Minister has a different view. He wants to be the sole architect of the constitution, just as he was the sole architect of unification, and just as he was the sole architect of the new flag. He wants a constitution disinterred from the subterranean recesses or the back room of the Liberal party, a constitution presented as a *fait accompli*, a constitution under the new rules designed and brought about in this house, which will be shoved down the throats of Canadians. Nothing could be more damaging to the unity of this country. The Prime Minister and the government have dealt destructive blows to national unity. Who else is the architect of the two nations theory? The Prime Minister. Who else is the inventor of opting out? No one else but the Prime Minister. No one else is the designer of one pension plan for Canada and another pension plan for Quebec. No one else is the designer of a student loans plan for Canada and another one for Quebec.

The Pearson government has followed the course of separating Quebec from the rest of Canada through the opting out formula, and