

The Address—Mr. Caouette

no assurance of success, especially as displayed so selflessly and patriotically by the fathers of confederation.

Mr. Speaker, I met members of the Conservative party two days ago in order to ask them this: why do you not bring in an amendment for the revision of the agricultural policy of the government, because that is more important than repatriating the constitution. The Conservatives were afraid to move an amendment dealing with Canadian agriculture in general which is the basis of this country's whole economic structure. To prevent us, in the Ralliement Cr ditiste, from moving an amendment dealing with the dairy industry, for instance, we are served a terrible constitutional mess which the Conservatives themselves do not understand.

Mr. Barnett: Hear, hear.

Mr. Caouette: With regard to the sub-amendment, Mr. Speaker, it must of course relate to the amendment; so, it is virtually as bland as the amendment itself.

And in addition to that, the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett) fully realizes that I am right, for he says: "Hear, hear". They are obliged to move an amendment which is meaningless.

What does the subamendment say? I have to read it in English, Mr. Speaker, since we have not yet received the French copy. I quote:

[English]

By striking out all the words after the words "centennial year" in the fourth line thereof, and adding the following thereto:

"and has failed to prepare and present to this parliament proposals for amendment to the constitution of Canada as a necessary preliminary for a national constitutional conference, and has failed to make the proposals necessary

(1) To set out the legislative powers of parliament necessary for the maintenance of an effective confederation;"

[Translation]

The first point, Mr. Speaker, is that the powers are actually defined or established in the present constitution: provincial and federal legislative powers. But they are not observed. There is talk of repatriating the constitution to amend it. Let us first follow it. Let us avoid trespassing on provincial fields; let us deal with the federal areas, yes, let us deal with them.

[Mr. Caouette.]

Second:

[English]

(2) To provide an appropriate special status for the province of Quebec;

[Translation]

Undoubtedly, that is the reason why we do not have French copies of the amendment. I understand the explanation of the leader of the N.D.P. but translating seven or eight lines does not take that much time. There are competent people here in parliament who can easily translate that subamendment.

If this were the first time it happened, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) should be excused. We would say: It is not for lack of goodwill he did not have the time. But the same thing happened last year and, the year before. In fact, this is the third time I have to tell the hon. member of Burnaby-Coquitlam that under the special status the province of Quebec should have, according to him, he forgets to introduce his subamendment to the House of Commons in French also.

Mr. Speaker, we must nevertheless be logical. It is simply to win votes in the province of Quebec that some speak of a "special status". No doubt it is for that reason that Mr. Cliche calls for a special status especially for the Montreal area. I think it is for Montreal only, a special status for Montreal, in the province of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, what do they mean by "special status"? Isolate Quebec from the rest of Canada? What do they mean? They give no explanation. Is it mere window-dressing for Quebecers—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Caouette: —that they are told: You are entitled to a special status.

I am a genuine Quebecer. My forebears arrived in what is now Quebec city on the St. Lawrence in 1668. My family has therefore been in Quebec for quite a long time. I never asked for a "special status". I do not need one. I want to be a French-speaking Canadian I want to preserve my French culture; I want to be respected by all other Canadians who have a different language and culture. That is all I ask for.

When I hear what some nincompoops have been asking for in the province of Quebec: a "special status"—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.