

Parliament to change the constitution for them. They do not have the courage to do it here. They do not have the courage to submit what they are attempting to the scrutiny of public debate here. They are going to the British parliament to do it for them. That is a strange performance for a government which, though constantly reiterating its desire to remove the vestiges of colonialism, places us in the north, as my colleague, the hon. member for Nunatsiak said today, in a strait-jacket of colonialism where Liberal policy will keep us forever and a day.

The constitution is more than a document. It is more than a scrap of paper. It is the backbone of a nation. Canadians in general have a vision of what this country is and ought to be, and I am convinced that it is not the view put forward by the Prime Minister and the present government. In his discussions with the premiers the Prime Minister spoke of two versions of Canada—his, and that upheld by the premiers. The Prime Minister's version is now embodied in the document placed before the House, and it is a version which enables the federal government to impose its views on all Canadians. We on this side and, indeed, across the country have reiterated the position that no one is opposed to patriation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nielsen:** We think the constitution should come back, but we think it should be brought back unaltered and unchanged, and it should be brought back, the British North America Act, exactly as it has been since 1867.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nielsen:** We think that whatever changes are made should be made in Canada by Canadians and certainly through a process of consensus involving the premiers rather than by arbitrary imposition, which is the direction this government is taking.

We are told now that it was only because of a last minute cooling off among the Prime Minister's advisers that there is not included in this document before us a device for the assumption by the federal government of equally arbitrary economic powers. Anyone who witnessed the Prime Minister's performance at the federal-provincial first ministers' conference will not feel any surprise at this information. Nothing could be more disruptive of the state of unity of this nation than the attitude of the Prime Minister, and attitude which has done more to sow the seeds of disunity in this country since he took office in 1968 than any other single force in our history. His idea is to bulldoze—and that is the word for it, bulldoze—his version of confederation into place regardless of those elected to represent the people and the views of the people of the provinces. Mark my words, sir, I fully expect hon. members opposite, led by the present Prime Minister, to impose closure on us in this very important debate.

**Mr. Harquail:** It won't be necessary.

### *The Constitution*

**Mr. Nielsen:** The hon. member for whatever says it will not be necessary. I have travelled a few times with him. I have a hard enough time remembering the ridings of my own area.

**Mr. Harquail:** Tell us what Joe told you to say.

**Mr. Nielsen:** The member for nowhere. I am speaking about the democratic process in this country, which is something the hon. member should study. If he does so, he might understand it.

What the Prime Minister is doing now in bulldozing his version of his confederation into place is nothing short of an invitation to anarchy. Those are my views and the views which are being expressed by Canadians in the north who, up until this afternoon, have been denied any voice in this debate. The hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) likens us to municipalities, but he and others like him, including the hon. member who is interjecting now, have their own premiers to speak for them. We do not.

**Mr. Harquail:** Our premier is with us.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Regardless of where a premier is at, yea or nay, he at least speaks for the people of his province. Canadians above the 60th parallel were denied that basic fundamental right. Hon. members talk about entrenchment of a charter of human rights to speak, feel and think as we please. We, as Canadians above the 60th, cannot even be heard, and that is what we object to. To be heard is fundamental to any democratic process. We have been denied even that right.

**An hon. Member:** You are being heard right now.

**Mr. Nielsen:** I hear an interjection from my left, probably from someone from Saskatchewan. I do not know. It came from over there.

**Mr. Riis:** Behind you.

**Mr. Nielsen:** All right. I will let you go this time.

**Mr. Althouse:** We were listening.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Nothing could be more disruptive of the state of unity in this country. That goes without saying. The Prime Minister used the constitutional issue to catapult himself to the leadership of his party in the first instance, and he has been flogging the same horse ever since. At the Victoria conference, the Prime Minister would have been delighted to acquire from the premiers present an assurance of constitutional change guaranteeing the right of both languages from coast to coast. He was unable to get their consensus, partly because of resistance in the west but more because of the objections of the Liberal Premier of Quebec who had his own ideas about language rights embodied in Bill 22 of that province. Later it was further elaborated in Bill 101 under the separatist government of Premier Lévesque and had the effect of removing from parents the right to choose the language of education.