

*The Address—Mr. Brewin*

One essential part of the process of evolving a truly Canadian constitution—and I some what reluctantly now employ modern jargon—would be a meaningful dialogue in this house between the representatives of all provinces and of all parties. I regret that in this house there has been very little meaningful dialogue between the representatives of the different parties and different provinces to deal with these vital problems facing the people of Canada.

I, for one, believe that changes are necessary if our constitution is to be a dynamic expression of the basis of our unity. I suggest in all seriousness to the Prime Minister—who is not here, but I see some of his very close advisers are present—that it would be wrong for him to challenge the members of this house to contribute to the unity of Canada and then deny to them an effective opportunity to deal with these basic problems.

Too often in this house we are being presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis with arrangements arrived at in conferences held behind closed doors. A belief in parliamentary democracy requires that parliament be consulted not only after but also before the event. In short, I urge upon the Prime Minister that a committee of parliament be set up to make recommendations to parliament concerning constitutional changes that may be required to strengthen Canadian unity, or that may be otherwise desirable, and to examine how we can arrive at a constitution truly Canadian, amendable in Canada and meeting the requirements of a modern, federal structure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I turn for a few minutes to deal with a problem which is worrying people throughout the world, the question of Viet Nam, and I select this problem because the implications of continuing conflict in Viet Nam permeate and poison the whole realm of international relations.

All over the world men and women are conscious that the continuance of this conflict means a tragic toll of human suffering and, perhaps, a disastrous page of human history. The views I want to express tonight are based upon those expressed by distinguished citizens of the United States. They in no way reflect a feeling of hostility to the United States. They reflect what is being said by spokesmen of the American churches, by United States educators, senators, scientists, by wise and experienced writers such as Walter Lippmann, by knowledgeable diplomats and writers such as George Kennan

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and other distinguished students on international affairs, such as Hans Morganthau. They are also reflected in the editorials of the *New York Times*.

What is the reason for the United States involvement in Viet Nam? Two different views have been advanced, no doubt with great sincerity. The first, repeatedly enunciated by the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, is that the United States forces are in Viet Nam to protect the independence of a sovereign state against external aggression. The other view, more frequently put forward by the Secretary of Defence, Mr. McNamara, is that the purpose of the war is to contain Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. In my view neither of these concepts will withstand critical analysis.

The difficulty in Viet Nam is not so much a case of external aggression but a civil war, and outside intervention in civil wars has always, in history, turned out to be a mistake. But this view at least provides for a way out. It could lead to the belated carrying out of the Geneva agreements of 1954, the intervention of international forces and the withdrawal of all United States military forces.

But the other view, the attempt to contain Chinese influence in Southeast Asia, can only lead in the long run to direct military conflict with China itself. It is for this reason that some of us welcome that part of the statement of the President of the United States in his speech to Congress on the state of the union, which emphasized the willingness of the United States to accept the principles of the Geneva Agreements, the right of the people of Viet Nam to opt for the unity of their country and whatever form of government they saw fit, and the eventual withdrawal of American forces from that country.

At the present moment a crucial stage has been reached. We welcome, as do people of good will all over the world, the cessation of the bombing of North Viet Nam. We regret that this does not appear to have produced any stated willingness on the part of the Viet Cong or North Viet Nam to enter into negotiations.

• (9:40 p.m.)

The failure to elicit an early and satisfactory response has produced strong pressure from certain quarters in the United States to resume the bombing. We urge that all possible Canadian influence, whatever it may be and however it may be and however it may be exercised, be exercised on the side of those who oppose this course.