

The Address—Mr. Nielsen

wind has changed, as it has in Quebec; his determination to deal with problems in the back room, the responsibility relegated to experts, rather than face the light of day and reasoned discussion, and his penchant and the penchant of his government for producing a *fait accompli* such as the flag and unification bills, assuming a take it or leave it attitude. They adopt the position that they are infallible because they are Liberals.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nielsen: That applause is another example of the myopic view those on the other side take. These are the same people who were here in 1956. The Prime Minister is now at the height of his power, basking in the sunlight of approbation, riding along on the publicity of a centennial for which the groundwork was laid before he came to office. But, his method of procedure, the reluctance to stick to his convictions and to take the people into his confidence, and his refusal to take the clear and direct course, have led increasingly to an accumulation of vexations for Canada. These are matters that are increasingly under question.

● (9:00 p.m.)

The Prime Minister has been able to overcome his difficulties. He has been able to turn political gerrymandering into an appearance of statesmanship, something to which his backbenchers would dearly love to aspire, especially those who do not have the courage to say on their feet what they say from their seats. The Prime Minister has been able to survive the debacles which should have destroyed his government, one reason being the unflinching and unswerving support of his allies in the press. Every word, every gesture—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Nielsen: Hon. members opposite laugh, Mr. Speaker, but their leader himself makes the same criticism. As I was saying, every word, every gesture of the Prime Minister is magnified out of all proportion by those journals committed to his cause. They have forgiven his gaffes—and they have been many, God knows—placed his career above Canada's needs, and stuck to him through thick and thin. Even a milk and water production like the so-called throne speech, which gave no indication of any plan or program and was simply a turgid collection of gleanings on the style of Whitaker's Almanack, was hailed by one paper as the second Sermon on the Mount. As soon as that publication printed

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those words they retracted them in this morning's issue. This government has come to represent mediocrity enthroned. It represents willingness to sacrifice at every turn the very basis of our democracy in order to secure seats. That cannot go on indefinitely. Already the wheel is beginning to turn and Canadians want and expect something more.

All the distinguished state visitors, all the Expo puffs, all the banquets, dinners and speeches cannot conceal the fact that national unity is in trouble and that this government is doing absolutely nothing about it. This was the enunciation of the two nations theory. It was the genesis of opting out, the two pension plans, the two flags and all the other divisive theories moving Quebec away from Canada, including the signing of treaties with foreign states. This was dangerous and divisive, not only because it was destructive of Canada but because it was untrue.

Quebec is not more than a province, any more than Ontario is more than a province. To erect one province above the other provinces is not only to destroy that province through isolation but it is to destroy confederation. What this government should have said was that each and every province is equal and will get equal treatment under the constitution, rather than treatment proper to a foreign state. This is what the Leader of the Opposition has been saying for so many years when pleading for one Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order. I regret to advise the hon. member that his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): The hon. member for Laval (Mr. Rochon).

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-L. Rochon (Laval): Mr. Speaker, we have just concluded the longest session in the history of our country.

The Liberal government, re-elected in 1965, in an endeavour to prove itself worthy of the trust of the Canadian people, has introduced and asked parliament to pass, despite what the previous speaker may think about it, a whole series of measures the benefits of which will be felt in every sector of our national activity and economy, from which every class of our society will benefit, rich and poor, powerful and humble alike. Those legislative measures will prove that on this