

Supply

PIP grants and subsidies that are given to oil and gas companies. Canada is the only country in the world in which the Government pays money for dry holes. With the savings made by not paying for dry holes, we would introduce a system of incentives to replace the PIP grant that will prompt exploration. Third, we would abandon the well head tax called the owners petroleum gas and revenue tax, a tax that is stripping all the incentive away from Canadian and foreign companies. We would take away that owners' tax that represents such a crushing burden on the industry. That tax is why there are 80 rigs working today and no new oil and gas is being found. Those are the three policy proposals that we have put forward.

Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to the speech made by the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mr. Thomson). He speaks passionately about what he believes in and that is what Parliament is all about. I always appreciate listening to him because he brings to Parliament a knowledge of his region and the industry with which he was involved. That knowledge is of great benefit to the debate. I always enjoy hearing politicians who have had a background in business speak because I am from a family that has always been in business. I studied business administration at university and I was briefly in business full time before I entered politics. I do enjoy hearing people with initiative who have been successful.

Where I depart from the Hon. Member's views, is where he suggests policies, because he displays his Party's impatience and sometimes almost intolerance for the other point of view. He speaks as though only the business point of view counted in matters of national interest. In his Party's view, when it comes time to implement public policy on behalf of the people, unless we follow to the letter whatever the industry wants to do or whatever business wants to do, either we do not know anything about it or we are supposed to listen to the view of business.

I suspect that my hon. friend will be in the House for a few years and I hope that with the years he will temper the opinion that he expresses so eloquently on that point of view with a little more realism and a little more appreciation for complex problems. Canada is a very complex country to govern. Particularly in the last two or three years, I feel that the approach of the Conservative Party to these very important national problems—the question of the National Energy Program, the question of the Constitution and a few other questions that have been of crucial importance to the country and have been debated in the House in the last few years—has demonstrated its incapacity to grasp the complexity of the problem. It continuously comes forward with simple solutions. Mr. Speaker, simple solutions to complex problems just do not work.

Somehow I think that the Conservative Party really does appreciate this. When I look at the motion of the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), I see that it is very skillfully drafted. In that motion, there is a dimension in terms of Canadian politics that goes beyond the issue of intervention in the economy and beyond ideology and the question of more or less Government ownership or, as his motion reads, socialization. It also goes beyond the question of centralization in one level of Government or another. I do not understand why they

do not come out and say what they are expressing, only in part, and that is, some regional frustration. Some people in the Conservative Party who are spokesmen for their regional interest—and I do not fault them for that as it is their role to express that frustration—say through the Government, "What you are doing to my region is wrong."

• (1630)

I do not understand why they want to mix the National Energy Program and the Constitution. I do not understand why it is not possible for them to say, in terms of industry and public policy, that we should have either more or less Government intervention in the energy sector. That is debatable, Mr. Speaker. What is the proper balance in a country like Canada on the question of how much Government intervention there should be? That is one issue.

Another issue is the regions versus the centre, one region versus another region or the centre versus one region. On the National Energy Program the Conservatives expressed a fear of socialization. But if they want to be honest, particularly those from Alberta, how can they be against Government intervention when their provincial Government, with which they do not dissociate themselves, is the most interventionist Government on energy matters in Canada? I do not want to make a judgment on that as it does not concern me that much, but the Alberta Conservative Government understands that on some of the issues it has Alberta's interests at heart and it does not deal with these problems simplistically.

When the Government of Alberta decides to buy an airline, I see that as a policy instrument, as a politicization of the economy in terms of saying it wants to have a transportation policy that will ensure the development of the economy of Alberta in the future. I do not see how Hon. Members opposite can be against having state intervention.

Hon. Members opposite talk about the disaster of the National Energy Program and the negative effects of the PGRT. They say it skims cash from the cash flow of companies. They do not say anything about the Alberta royalties that are the highest in the land, the highest of most western industrialized countries, royalties which skim the cash flow off the companies. If the Conservatives want to be honest with themselves they will realize that they have a responsibility to tell us where they stand on that issue. I can understand Members from Alberta and from the West generally expressing a regional frustration with the National Energy Program.

As a Liberal from eastern Canada I am very concerned. Even if I am not from the West and even if I do not have a background in the energy industry, I can understand that. The Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mr. Thomson) and a few other Members interjected a little while ago and demonstrated the intolerance they sometimes have for the other point of view. Apparently you are not supposed to know anything about the energy industry if you are from the East or if you are a Liberal or if you are not from the energy industry.

Mr. Thacker: It is just that you prove it sometimes.