

Supply

Conservative Party for months, while it was not certain whether or not it would listen to what the Provinces were saying, and now an Hon. Member who is one of the major critics of this Party is rising in the House to say that the rights of Canadians were circumscribed by the Government. Either the Hon. Member is showing his complete ignorance of the situation in Canada or he is being extremely sloppy in his criticism.

Mr. Speaker, while the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) says in his motion that the policies of the Government are a definite and present threat to the freedom of Canadians, and the Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe is trying to say that the rights of Canadians are being circumscribed by the Government, I take great pride in saying that they are wrong and will continue to be wrong, that this is utter nonsense, and that Canadian political history will show that the period from 1965, even before the present Prime Minister came to power, until now, will be known as a period when the development of social, human, civil, political and fundamental rights, and that includes language rights, was unique in this country's history, and I would even go so far as to say that no other democracy in history can compare with the political development of Canada in this particular area.

I do not mean that the Liberals should take all the credit, but the fact remains that the Liberal Government introduced these measures, and I know that the official positions of the Progressive Conservative Party depending on who and when of the New Democratic Party and of other parties that sat in the House in previous Parliaments, were probably basically very similar.

Mr. Speaker, to say that the rights of Canadians were circumscribed during the last 15 years is superficial in the extreme or grossly partisan.

In fact, I strongly suspect, Mr. Speaker, that this morning, the intentions of the Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe were partly partisan. If he wants the floor, it is to speak to the rights of Canadians. I have the floor now, but I do not want to take up too much of the time of the House today. I could talk about how the Progressive Conservative Government in New Brunswick shows its concern for the rights of Canadians, the rights of the New Brunswick electorate. I will not do that now, Mr. Speaker, but if Progressive Conservative Members are anxious to talk about patronage, about circumscribing the rights of individuals, I could give a few examples of the concern of a Progressive Conservative Government for the rights of Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to the Hon. Member for Gloucester (Mr. Breau) and I appreciate the enthusiasm with which he engages in debate. He has implored all Hon. Members to exercise tolerance and understanding in the admission of mistakes. I would point out to him that, in the spirit of the environment within which the Hon. Member has made his pitch, perhaps he might want to consider the fact that the National Energy Program has been condemned by the industry. It has been condemned by Hon. Members in this House. It has been condemned by the workers

who have lost their jobs. Just recently, it has been condemned by the C.D. Howe Institute, which very categorically stated that the costs clearly outweigh the benefits of the National Energy Program and that there are less costly and disruptive means which could be expected to achieve the same or even superior benefits to the economy. What is really being said, Mr. Speaker, is that the goals and objectives of the National Energy Program, the three basic goals of fairness, equitable distribution and pricing, and self-sufficiency, have not been achieved.

Would the Hon. Member not consider now, even at this late date, to urge his Cabinet colleagues to take a second look and reassess the situation before the industry is destroyed completely? *The Financial Post* today headlines, "Oil rigs and services are barely hanging in". I am not sure whether the Hon. Member understands this, but most of our young western Canadians, or many of them, work in that kind of service and supply industry. They are now either out of a job or working south of the border. It is very serious.

Mr. Breau: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raises a very important question, and it is one which concerns me. I realize that the National Energy Program, being a fundamental change in the way policy was being designed in the energy area, is very controversial. I realize that. When you do something which is controversial, you are going to provoke a lot of reaction and a lot of opposition. It is true that a lot of people in the industry have criticized it. A lot of spokesmen from western Canada who are related to the energy interests have opposed it. But the Hon. Member cannot ignore the fact that with or without a National Energy Program, there was not going to be less searching for new oil and gas in Alberta and Saskatchewan in any event. We are at the stage of searching for secondary and tertiary recovery, as it is called in the industry. Whatever happened, there was to be shift away from the traditional search, which has gone on since 1945 for oil and gas in Alberta, to the so-called Canada lands. Therefore, the Hon. Member cannot ignore the fact that change was to come in any event. The Hon. Member cannot ignore, either, the fact that prices have gone down. He cannot ignore the fact that drilling has been reduced in the United States. It has been reduced all over the world. Therefore, to suggest that all of that is because of the National Energy Program is not to be totally fair.

● (1650)

I would ask the Hon. Member also to recognize once in a while that when the federal Government does something to help, as it did, for example, the gas industry in Alberta which has so many oil wells which are capped, and he knows why they are capped—they are capped because there are fewer markets—takes quite a risk. It took a risk when it approved the southern portion of the Alaska pipeline. He does not recognize the fact. He does not say that that was a risk we took