

*Supply*

**Mr. Breau:** The Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker) says it is because I prove it sometimes. Hon. Members opposite prove a lot of things sometimes too. I have never said to a Member from another region of the country that he should not have a point of view on the fishery in the Atlantic Provinces or on the forestry policy because it is an industry that is important in my constituency. I do not tell them that they should not have anything to do with the 200-mile limit or the law of the sea because they are from a land-locked Province. I do not expect that they will have spent as much time on the dossier as I have, but I do not say that they should not be able to contest what I say. The day we start saying that, we have no tolerance for the other point of view.

Conservatives must become more responsible regarding these matters. As a Liberal from eastern Canada who has been here for the 15 years that are supposed to have been so terrible for the country, I admit that there is a regional dimension to the National Energy Program. Part of the concern in this Party, leading up to the years 1979-80, was for the national interest as we perceived it. I wish that in this country and in this Parliament particularly, one could speak one's mind about the national interest without being accused of being against another region. That burns me up, Mr. Speaker. Just because I give my perspective as a New Brunswicker—and that is not a powerful Province, economically or politically—then am I not supposed to give my view of the national interest because it may turn out to be a different view from that of Members from the West? That does not lead to mature debate. We should be able to have tolerance for those who disagree with us even if we express regional frustration, or it will become impossible to govern this country. It is a very complex country to govern in any event. In a certain sense we are governing the country against every natural and geographic factor. The Conservatives should understand that.

Why are the Conservatives having a leadership convention this weekend if this country is not a complex one to govern? Their own orientation as a Party is complex. They have their own problems in trying to determine where they should go. They know very well they are not involved in a leadership convention only because of the seasonal values of the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark), but because this country is confronted with very tough problems and choices. They have not been able to come out with a cohesive position on some matters. It is not a sin to admit that in your Party there is difficulty in coming to an orientation. If the country is simply to govern, why did the Conservative Party have a leadership problem? It is because some factions in that Party attempted to simplify the solution to those complex problems.

I have said that I admit there is a regional dimension to the National Energy Program. Should we have policy instruments that encourage more private sector involvement or instruments that encourage more federal or provincial Government involvement? Apart from that, there is the question of how a federal Government policy instrument affects the West. I can understand that westerners are going to be concerned about that. It is a legitimate question. If that is what they want to express,

they should express it clearly. They cannot try to bluff their way into this issue. They play with words and say that the centralizing and interventionist policies of the Government are an ideological thrust aimed at introducing socialization of the Canadian economy by the back door. What they want to exploit is the fear, perhaps the legitimate fear, in the West—I am not the best judge of that—that perhaps all of these efforts of the federal Government are efforts at socialization or socialism. If that is what the Members opposite want to say, then they should say it clearly. However, they are trying to mix the two, the regional and the policy aspects. I say that they are dishonest when they do that, Mr. Speaker, because their own Party, when they are in power provincially in the West, in the energy sector, has been very interventionist. Members opposite do not say that that is socialism. They do not say that that is interventionism. It will be interesting to see if the new Tory Government in Saskatchewan is going to do away with all those Crown corporations. I do not believe it will, Mr. Speaker. It will make a judgment on what is best for the electors and the people of Saskatchewan.

• (1640)

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, when we are dealing in the House with issues that have a regional dimension and concern the interests of one particular region in relation to the central authority, it is very important to discuss such questions in an atmosphere that encourages, mature and adult debate, in the course of which any comments that are made reflect tolerance for and patience with the views of those who come from other parts of the country.

In my speech, I would like to refer briefly to a speech made this morning, before the lunch recess, by the Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty), when he said that in the last 15 years, or rather, to quote exactly what he said, when the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) retires, we shall find that in Canada, the rights of Canadians . . . and in my question, I asked him whether I had understood correctly, and he said yes, that the rights of Canadians had become more restricted compared to what they were in 1968. I then asked him how he could say that, when this was the party that had introduced language rights, first in federal Government institutions, and then as one of the mainstays of our plan to patriate the Constitution. Anyone who rises in the House and says the rights of Canadians have been circumscribed in the past 15 years is showing his ignorance of the fact that language rights are a social, human and public right. Technically, I would not say these are fundamental rights, but I do say that it is essential that the country should have language rights of this nature.

This Government, led by the Right Hon. Prime Minister, is the one that introduced the concept of enshrining rights and freedoms and language rights in the Canadian Constitution. This proposal was opposed in the House by the Progressive