

Oil Substitution Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The period for questions and comments is now over.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When I asked the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to withdraw the words about the untruth of my statements, the Member for Duvernay (Mr. Della Noce) made a comment to the effect that the reason I was allowed to make the statements is that I am a woman. I would like the House to know, first and foremost, that I am a Member of the House. It is a question of privilege when a Member suggests that another Member is allowed to say or do certain things because of their gender. I ask that that particular Member withdraw his comment.

Mr. McDermid: They warned me what she would be like. I cannot say it's a total surprise.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): If the Member for Duvernay said that, I in the Chair did not hear it. If he did say it, it is unparliamentary. I will therefore reserve my decision on this matter. We will now, if you please, resume debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rossi: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) on a point of order.

Mr. Rossi: Mr. Speaker, knowing the Hon. Member for Duvernay (Mr. Della Noce) as I do, if you were to ask him whether he did say that, I think he would withdraw the words like a gentleman.

[*English*]

Mr. Epp (Provencher): That's not the procedure.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): No, no, no. Order please. We will not debate the decision of the Chair. We will now resume debate. The Hon. Member for Edmonton South (Mr. Edwards).

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton South): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak on Bill C-24. It has been remarked that Members on this side of the House may be jittery. Perhaps that is understandable after the last few minutes. We have been exposed, and I use my words carefully, Mr. Speaker, to a dubious cornucopia of half-truths, irrelevancies, and misrepresentations. I would call that speech a kitchen sink speech. I was intrigued with the Hon. Member's use of figures. It is astonishing that she was able to pause long enough to listen to people about their intentions about COSP. I will say nothing to criticize the Hon. Member's voting record which I admire greatly.

I do wish to say something about her use of words, and I think it is unfortunate that she is not here to absorb this. It is rather unfortunate that on the day on which the name of the new President of the Council on the Status of Women was announced the Hon. Member used the phrase "yeomen" when she described the householders of Canada. I think "yeowo-

men" would have been a much more appropriate use of the language.

I would like to offer to the House, Mr. Speaker, some actual figures on units converted under COSP so that the record may be set straight.

• (1630)

The provincial totals for units converted are as follows: Newfoundland, 26,500; Nova Scotia, 27,500; New Brunswick, 33,600; Prince Edward Island, 11,000; Quebec, 398,100; Ontario, 277,100; Manitoba, which the Hon. Member suggested was in the lead, was 24,400; Saskatchewan, 12,800; Alberta, 5,200 and British Columbia, 77,400. In the Territories there were 3,100 units converted.

It was suggested that the hard to reach areas of Saskatchewan and Alberta were and remain unserved by this program. I suggest that these areas have long since converted from liquid petroleum to either propane or natural gas, which is available in abundance even in the hard to reach areas of those two provinces.

Those of us who are long in the tooth, and remember the days of stoking a coal furnace are just delighted that natural gas is available in such abundance in this country as an alternative fuel. The original intention of the gas company of Alberta, Northwestern Utilities, which was the first to pipe natural gas to one of Canada's major cities, was that natural gas would be used only as a home heating fuel. There was no intention that it would be used industrially at that time, since it was long before the natural gas derivatives or the processes known to create the many byproducts from natural gas were developed.

I agree with my hon. friend, the Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Tupper), when he remarked that energy conservation has become a matter that is now in vogue. At one time energy conservation was a technicality or a guilt trip as far as the Canadian consciousness is concerned. It has moved to the forefront of awareness, and I suggest that the major benefit of the two programs that are being terminated was to implant conservation in the consciousness of the Canadian public. Now it is time for Canadians to assume their responsibilities and realize their own economies and contribute to their own energy savings. Surely there is a great will among Canadians to do so.

I will return to the question of whether there is such a will and sufficient follow-through among our commercial and industrial users. Bill C-24 represents a substantial part of the Government's effort to reduce the monstrous deficit. Bill C-24 is an Act to amend the Oil Substitution and Conservation Act and the Canadian Home Insulation Home Act. The thrust of the Bill is twofold: it provides for the termination of COSP on March 31 of this year and for the termination of CHIP on March 31 of next year by amending the two existing Acts.

In 1981-82, gas conversions represented 48 per cent of that year's COSP activity, electricity represented 36 per cent, while wood represented 14 per cent. In 1983 to 1984, gas conversions had decreased to 25 per cent of all activities and electricity had risen to 55 per cent.