

I move, seconded by my hon. colleague for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier):

That the motion be amended by deleting the following:

“Friday, September 9, 1988, the House will meet on the days and at the times specified in Standing Order 3, but not on August 1;

That, during such period”

and by substituting the following therefor:

“Thursday, June 30, 1988”.

Therefore, the hours will be extended, but not until September 9. The hours will be extended until the end of the month, like the Standing Orders call for.

[Translation]

That would be the honest way for the Government to proceed, and that is why we are suggesting to go back to Standing Order 10, which allows not only the Party in power to extend the hours of sitting, but also Opposition Members of back-benchers. The Order states that the motion “may be proposed by any Member”. It doesn’t have to be a Minister. This means that any Member could rise and propose that we give the government more time to debate. A Minister can do it. I myself have just done it on the Opposition’s behalf. I have just proposed to extend the hours of sitting, but in a reasonable way, without suspending our Standing Orders but by making use of a Standing Order established for that purpose, namely to allow for an extension of sitting hours so as to have more time to debate questions before the House.

That is the kind of co-operation we are ready to give the Government so that bills which it deems important can be passed. I am not saying that we will vote favourably on all these Bills, since there are some we don’t like, but at least, the Government will have more time for the adoption of its legislative program. And we believe that is what must be done. We are ready to cooperate, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** The Hon. Member for Saint-Jacques (Mr. Guilbault) has just introduced an amendment. With the House’s permission, the Chair should deliberate for a while on this amendment and rule later on its relevancy.

Meanwhile, resuming debate, the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) has the floor.

[English]

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap):** Madam Speaker, today there is a certain sense of *deja vu* in the House of Commons. Despite the sunny skies above there has been a dark cloud hanging over Parliament Hill for the last hour or so.

It reminds me of October 23, 1980, when the Progressive Conservatives in Opposition decided that they had had enough of democracy; they had had enough of the Parliament of Canada as had been practised for decades and decades. They disagreed with the Speaker’s decision, and rather than accept the decision of the Speaker, some of the Members in the House rushed up to the Speaker’s chair screaming and yelling at the tops of their voices: “Stop it!”. They were screaming and

yelling in front of the Speaker. There are some Ministers present today who actually did that on October 23, 1980. They stormed the Chair demanding their rights to be heard despite the fascist totalitarian motion to cut off debate.

In 1980 the Conservatives called the Liberals fascist and totalitarian because the Liberals had decided to limit debate. Had the Government of the day decided to limit debate after a handful of speakers? No. There were 98 Conservatives who spoke in that debate. They stood up and made comments on the constitutional amendment. Then the Government of the day said 98 interventions on behalf of the Opposition was sufficient and it was going to limit debate and bring in closure. The Conservatives of the day went absolutely mad. I was present. It was one of the saddest days that parliamentarians have ever had. The Conservatives screamed and demanded that they be heard.

Now the tables are turned. Now the Conservatives are sitting on the government side and they have decided, because they have this huge majority, that they are now going to take this rule book of Standing Orders and throw it out of the window. That is it, throw it out the window. They are saying: “We know best. Big Brother Government knows what is best for Parliament, the Speaker does not”. The Government is saying that you, Madam Speaker, do not know what is best for this House, that the Speaker of the House of Commons is not in a position to recall Parliament if he or she considers it necessary.

● (1620)

No, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has decided on behalf of Parliament, forget the Liberals, the New Democrats and the Independents. The Conservatives have the majority and therefore can do anything they want. They do not have to play by these rules that have developed over decades. They do not have to accept these rules which were developed after months and months of study between all the Parties and were adopted by unanimous consent of the House. No, they are saying: “We are going to throw them out, we are going to rip out the pages of this rule book and we are going to impose our own rules”. That is like the Edmonton Oilers saying: “We are going to change the rules of hockey. We are going to throw out all the rules and introduce our own.” Do you know when the Government last suspended the rules to meet its own political agenda, Madam Speaker? It was in 1883. Not since 1883 has a Government suspended the rules to facilitate its own political agenda.

We are now seeing a whole new approach to democracy in Canada. We do not like the rules, so we make our own. We do not like the way the Speaker might rule, so we will ignore the Speaker. The Government will use its majority. The sounds of jackboots are banging around Parliament Hill these days as the Conservatives impose the will of their majority against parliamentary tradition.