

*Oil Substitution Act*

free-market economy, as far as energy is concerned, is crazy. Even Texaco and Gulf know that it is not a free-market economy.

Does the Hon. Member feel that his constituents need help to participate in energy conservation programs?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I am sorry, but the time for questions and comments has expired. I would like to recognize the next speaker on debate for ten minutes. As per Standing Order 35(2), the next speaker will be allowed ten minutes.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) on a point of order.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Chair has already made certain comments with respect to the application of Standing Order 35(2)(b), which will now limit the speeches to ten minutes. The Table will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there have been 21 speakers and that the eight hours provided for debate have expired. Therefore, according to the rules, the House is now within the ten-minute speech period.

However, I would like to point out to the Chair that there is a difference in interpretation about which I would like to speak. Indeed, the French text and the English text of the Standing Order are not exactly the same. In English, Standing Order 35(2)(b) reads:

—twenty minutes following the first three speakers, if that Member begins to speak within the next eight hours of consideration;—

In other words, eight hours of consideration. The word is “consideration”.

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

In French it reads, and I quote:

—les huit heures de débat—

[*English*]

“Consideration”, Mr. Speaker, I take it could mean to encompass the speeches of 20 minutes plus the ten minutes for comments and questions. It could even include points of order, points of privilege and all of the things which traditionally, since we changed our rules, have been included in the global eight hours. I submit to you that by doing that, Mr. Speaker, you are restricting certain privileges of Hon. Members to speak for 20 minutes.

The point can be made that we have had 21 speakers debate Bill C-24 to date, but we should have had 24 speakers, that is, three speakers per hour for eight hours. So we are short three speakers for 20 minutes plus the usual ten-minute period for questions and comments.

I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, of the reason we changed the rules. I would like to go back to the days when debate was 30 minutes plus—with unanimous consent—questions being put to the speaker. We had a series of monologues at that

time. We tried to improve things by bringing some dialogue into the House. We said that after a Member's remarks one could ask questions of the Member debating, as to the relevancy and effectiveness of his speech or the arguments he was putting forth.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that we in this House will have to consider whether we should continue with this procedure or go back to the monologue form of debate where Hon. Members on all sides of this House are called upon to debate issues. If the ten minutes is restricted to comments and questions, without being considered as debate, then in my view we should say so openly and not call it debate, as our rules so imply—

[*Translation*]

—in French. Although this might be a wrong translation, Mr. Speaker, I submit there is a substantial difference between “consideration” in English and “débat” in French. I should appreciate it very much if you could enlighten me on these provisions and on these remarks.

[*English*]

**Mr. McDermid:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I cannot disagree with my hon. friend about the new rules, but I think in questioning the time he will find that the Table has kept an accurate record. I was surprised when I saw for the first time ever how accurately the Table keeps the time. With respect to the question of the time we have now arrived at, I think the Table is probably very accurate in saying that the eight hours have passed. If we are getting into a debate on the new rules under this point of order, I don't think this is the time. If we are making recommendations on debate, let me say that I happen to like the new rules because I think we have now to a great extent gotten away from the monologues. We do have this exchange of ten minutes which gives a little life to the debate.

I cannot comment on the French and English aspect of “débat” or “consideration”, but I would hope that if we are making recommendations—and I gather that is what the hon. gentleman is doing—we would maintain the system we have now, because it has added some life to the House and some enjoyment in the debate. I prefer that to sitting here listening to the monologues about which the Hon. Member talks.

**Mr. MacLellan:** Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the Parliamentary Secretary that with the new rules we have seen an improvement; we are getting away from the monologue and into debate. I would like to reiterate what the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) has said. What I see is an inconsistency. It is an inconsistency between the French and the English when we deal with “débat” and “consideration”. What has been included in the eight hours is not only the debate but the question and comment period. It was a thought perceived by a lot of people initially, I think, that questions and comments were considered as part of the debate. However, that is not what the Speaker ruled yesterday.

**Mr. McDermid:** Yes.