

*Private Bills—Divorce*

to parliamentary agents. I wish to draw particular attention to rules 20 and 21 on page 878 of this edition. Altogether, there are 24 rules governing the rights, responsibilities and privileges of parliamentary agents, and some three pages of this book are taken up with these rules and regulations. I find that rule 20 reads as follows:

Every parliamentary agent and solicitor conducting proceedings in parliament before the House of Commons shall be personally responsible to the house, and to the Speaker, for the observance of the rules, orders, and practice of parliament, as well as of any rules which may from time to time be prescribed by the Speaker, and also for the payment of the fees and charges due and payable under the standing orders.

Rule 21 reads:

Any person registered as a parliamentary agent who shall act in violation of the orders and practice of the House of Commons or who shall be guilty of professional misconduct of any kind as a parliamentary agent shall be liable to an absolute or temporary prohibition to practice as a parliamentary agent at the discretion of the Speaker.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there is no question about it, this lawyer has committed a breach of his privileges. The matter has been brought to the attention of the Speaker. He has the right to deal with the matter according to our rules.

Apparently, we in this house in general have followed the British practice in the writing of rules 117 and 118 that deal with parliamentary agents and to which the hon. member for Kingston referred when he was making his report. It is fortunate in this, as in a good many other parliamentary matters, that members of this house in days past in their wisdom saw fit to be guided by the experience and traditions of the mother of parliaments. It is not very frequent that an incident of this kind happens in this House of Commons. We have based our practice on the established practice of the mother of parliaments in Great Britain, where I understand this matter has been given a great deal of consideration throughout the years since 1837, because over there the right to act as a parliamentary agent is guarded jealously and I presume by adopting similar language in rules 117 and 118 we have followed the British practice and we expect the same traditions to be maintained.

When we are dealing with questions like the one at present under discussion we must all realize, I am sure, it is fortunate there exists an inseparable umbilical cord of tradition, of procedure, of parliamentary practice and precedent with the mother of parliaments from which we can draw the procedural nourishment on occasions like these necessary to cure the parliamentary anemia that threatens our times.

[Mr. Herridge.]

In conclusion, again I wish to say, Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman of the committee for his report. The committee has done its duty in reporting to this house and reporting the incident to the Speaker according to the traditions, procedures and practices recognized in this house and in the mother of parliaments upon which they are based.

**The Chairman:** Shall the clause carry?

**Mr. Regier:** Mr. Chairman, on Friday last the hon. member for Kootenay West raised the possibility of this case being referred back to the committee. I was very pleased to know that this house did not follow through with that suggestion and that the bill was not referred back to the committee because I feel that would have served no useful purpose.

It is now several years since I first raised the question of the contempt of parliament that I was noticing taking place in these divorce cases, and I think the hon. member for Kootenay West is to be congratulated on raising his voice in an effort to avoid further contempt of this institution and of its committees. I am not for one moment going to condone the actions of the attorney in question, the attorney for the respondent. I believe his actions show, although possibly in desperation, though they none the less show it, a clear contempt for the rules by which this parliament and its committees operate. This is possibly, if my information is correct, one of the last times, or the last time, that this subject will be brought up for discussion in this house at this current session. Therefore, I would like to express at this time my compliments to both the members of the committee this year and our very helpful and amiable chairman of the committee this year. When we sat through this Maille case—despite the fact that I was absent from the evening session, I was there for the whole hearing of the case and missed only the summary of the various attorneys at the end—I noticed on innumerable occasions the chairman lending a helping hand to the petitioner and his attorney and the respondent and her attorney. It is a bit of a different arrangement that we have there. We are a court and yet we are not a court, and nobody seems to know exactly what the line of procedure is or ought to be. The committee likes to consider itself as a court. Some like to consider themselves as a court of appeal from the similar committee that is in existence in the other place. On occasion, the Prime Minister has denied that assertion. His claim is that we are not acting as a court but that the petitioner is exercising only