

Routine Proceedings

available will be small and it is the people of Canada who will suffer as a result.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): One very short question from the hon. member for York Centre, and that is it.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that this will be a brief question.

In the decision about Mr. Phillips' candidacy for this office, were other possible government patronage appointments considered? Was he offered any other government patronage appointments? Did he ask for any other government patronage appointments?

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, if I were in a courtroom, I know what I would say about that question. In the House, I will simply say that it is impertinent and insulting and I do not think that I will dignify it with a comment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are terminated. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier on a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There is such an amount of interest in this nomination, and we know the minister would like to answer further questions. I wonder if there could be unanimous consent to allow more members to ask more questions of this minister.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for York Centre has the floor on debate.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the appointment of Bruce Phillips, but I cannot resist replying to the minister for Brantford—

Mr. McDermid: Brampton! Get it right, if you are going to insult me.

Mr. Kaplan: —for Brampton who often comments that I find myself in the gutter when I take on the government. Well, I do find myself in the gutter when I take on

the government because that is where the government operates.

Those questions that were asked during Question Period today about Route Canada, the questions that we have raised and that I am very proud to have spent a lot of effort raising, deal with one of the most fundamental weaknesses of the government. That is the government's lack of class and its repeated insult to the Canadian people in the way in which it has exercised, in so many respects, its high office and the high responsibilities of its office.

It must be a great personal disappointment to the Minister of Justice to have to identify herself on her first assignment in nominating an officer of Parliament to have to choose Bruce Phillips who is unsuited for this job.

Mr. McDermid: Nonsense! That's your opinion.

Mr. Kaplan: As a matter of fact, I was quoting from a newspaper headline. It is an opinion that I share, but it is also an opinion that is widely held across the country.

In saying that, I want to say that Bruce Phillips is a very competent individual. I have no qualms about recognizing his competence, his great ability, his distinction as a journalist, and the service he performed for his country and for his government with distinction in Washington. I do not want to take any of that away from him. He is one of the able people in this country and he is the kind of person we want to see take part in the public life.

What I think the minister really recognizes and why she must surely find herself in a difficult position is because she has to take this individual who has served his government well, who has served his Prime Minister well, and make him an officer of Parliament in a job which should not be filled by an individual with the background of Bruce Phillips in the office of the Prime Minister during the last election campaign.

This country is not so small and there is not such a shortage of qualified, competent people that we could not have in this House agreed upon a proper candidate to fill this office of Parliament. If an effort had been made—

Mr. McDermid: That would rule out Derek Burney as Ambassador to Washington then.

Mr. Milliken: He's not an officer of Parliament.