

*Motions*

**Mr. Waddell:** Of course, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work on the committee. In this Parliament we are trying to make Members independent to a degree. This is not the congressional system, but it is a new beginning in Parliament. I consider Ged Baldwin, a former Conservative Member, to be one of the initiators of this trend which was taken up by many other Conservative Members. We, in the House, are striving for freedom of information and freedom for MPs to have some say rather than always being bound by government discipline.

This is the report of an all-Party committee and what we are bringing to the attention of the Government is fairly unanswerable in law. This is an occasion upon which the members of the committee need the support of the House. There are Conservative Members of the committee and this is a unanimous report. I do not say that this is a non-partisan issue, but it does involve the freedom of individual MPs. Let us continue to move forward rather than taking a step backward with this particular vote. I ask Conservative MPs to vote with the committee to accept the report. If they do not do that, it will put the Conservative Members who are on the committee in a very difficult position.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments and ask the Hon. Member a question. I agree that if the Conservative Members are sensible and, as parliamentarians, are truly interested in parliamentary reform, they will support their parliamentary committee which has tabled a unanimous report in the House.

Mr. Speaker, last Friday I asked the Minister during Question Period what she intended to do about this unanimous report of the committee. I asked the question mainly because of my concern that the Minister would make the same mistake twice. I don't want this to go on. I don't want her to go on thinking she was misinformed and that a parliamentary committee could, and these are her own words as reported at page 12416 of Hansard:

It is my view—

She was referring to the Committee's report.

—that it has been based on misleading and inaccurate analyses of the situation.

Mr. Speaker, it is insulting and even offensive when a committee is told by a Minister of the Crown that it has made a misleading and inaccurate analysis of the situation.

*[English]*

In the first session of the last Parliament, which lasted three years, we adopted 173 statutes, but there were 4,000 instruments made pursuant to those statutory powers. What assurance do we have as parliamentarians that this or other Ministers will not take this high-handed approach to regulations and operate by press release? Is the central point of this debate this morning not to ensure that this Minister or others do not repeat the action taken with regard to the insulation program?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Waddell:** Yes, I agree with the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier). I think the Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) has a strong case. However, I would rather wait and hear what the Parliamentary Secretary has to say, since he is supposed to speak on behalf of the Minister and the Government.

*[English]*

As I tried to say in my speech, Mr. Speaker, this is just one example of many cases. The ability for deterrence which this committee has is that it is not known which Department it will choose. If we can get support from the House on this matter, in the future Departments will be very careful to ensure that these regulations are carried out under the law.

In summary, these regulations are very important in our lives, perhaps even more so than the statutes. Second, they are hard to scrutinize. Third, the committee has been expanded in its mandate and jurisdiction to scrutinize these instruments. Fourth, this was accomplished through the support of the House which has built up over many years and was started, quite frankly, by many Conservatives. Although I have not yet heard the Government's reply, I think this is a case in which the Government could accept some chastisement and indicate that its conduct will change. Finally, this is a very good test for the new parliamentary procedures which we have embarked upon.

*[Translation]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Papproski):** The period for questions and comments has now expired. Resuming debate. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. McDermid).

*[English]*

**Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to participate in this debate today. I appreciate the high level of debate, for the most part, which we have heard from the Opposition side. There are two questions to be debated. The first is that of regulations coming in after an intended deadline for a program. The criticism that the regulations came in late is fair. The Government accepts that. We accept the recommendation that regulations should be made and enacted before a deadline is set. However, with regard to this being illegal in this particular case, I think I will be able to present the facts as to what happened in that period of time which will perhaps somewhat change the opinion of the House about the chastisement of the Department.

Before I get into that, I want to reaffirm that the Government supports the proposition that if regulation making is to be based on the principles of openness, fairness, efficiency and accountability, as called for in the *Citizen's Code of Regulatory Fairness*, it is essential that regulatory initiatives which impose new burdens on citizens or, as in the present case, which detrimentally affect their rights, be announced and