

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

LAWYERS' RIGHTS TO COMPENSATION

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the suicide last week of Rosa Becker, a woman who made legal history when the Supreme Court of Canada established in 1980 that the contribution of a common-law wife to the building up of a family farm entitled her to a half interest when her common-law husband kicked her out after 18 years, to marry someone else. However, Rosa Becker meant her suicide to draw attention to the injustice of living with that judgment. She received no money at all as of the time of her death. She held a \$60 a week job while her ex and his wife lived on the farm she had helped to create. Her lawyer appropriated as fees all the money received.

We can be critical of Gerald Langlois, the lawyer who carried the case for years without financial compensation because of the reward he received in national fame and approval. However, it is regrettable that he pushed to the limit of 100 per cent his right to be compensated ahead of his client. That right of lawyers needs to be examined. I call on law societies across Canada to examine the facts of this case and review their policies on payment of fees to lawyers.

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INSURANCE

SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT INSURANCE AGENTS

Mr. Bill Gottselig (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, this Government supports the agency system and general insurance agents. It will not give more power to the banking institutions of this country. As a former operator of a general insurance agency I know how well the consumers' interests are served by their independent insurance agents.

I would like to reassure not only my constituents and residents of my Province of Saskatchewan, but the over 10,000 independent insurance agents and their employees right across Canada that we will vigorously oppose any plan to allow financial institutions to include in their range of services the sale of general insurance products presently marketed through general insurance agents or brokerage agencies.

The driving force for this change seems to be the financial institutions rather than the consumer so it should be quite obvious whose best interests would be served by the proposed change.

S.O. 21

FISHERIES

ATTACK ON FISHERIES OFFICER ON QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, on the November 1 weekend the Fisheries and Oceans patrolman on the Queen Charlotte Islands, Mr. Marvin Boyd, was beaten unconscious, had his face cut up and his leg broken. His injuries were serious enough to have him flown to Vancouver for urgent medical attention. He is now without work, without an income and likely will be laid up for months to come.

• (1405)

Increasingly we hear of such attacks on the Fisheries officers responsible for enforcing federal regulations. The federal Government must illustrate confidence in the good work of its patrolmen and enforcement personnel if we are to prevent a repeat of such incidents. The Government also has a responsibility to pursue all avenues of redress for Mr. Boyd to ensure he is fully compensated for his losses.

I ask the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) to issue, at the very least, a public declaration supporting the often thankless work of those who must carry out his policies on the ground level. We must not allow innocent public servants to take the brunt of a Government's unwillingness to resolve resource conflicts or educate the public on the need to protect fish habitat.

Sadly, I am now informed by the Minister's officials that no supportive action will be taken. The Conservative Government runs out to spend \$350,000 to defend Sinclair Stevens on conflict of interest charges. The same Conservative Government refuses to defend a patrolman who has carried out his duty. The Department concludes, in a November 10 letter to the Standing Committee on Fisheries, that because the Fisheries guardian was not on duty at the time he was assaulted by two individuals, no further action is being contemplated by the Department. Is that justice, Mr. Speaker?

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

CONSEQUENCES OF CALGARY DRUG STORE ROBBERY

Mr. Elliott Hardey (Kent): Mr. Speaker, is anyone listening? Is anyone hearing the cry going across our nation? Victims of crime are fighting back, and the average person on the street understands and sympathizes.

Case in point—Steven Kessler, ordinary, patriotic Canadian of Yugoslavian descent, well known as mild mannered and honest, reacted with violence last week against two armed robbers intent on stealing money and drugs from Kessler's store. This shocking incident left one man dead, another seriously injured, and Kessler charged with second-degree murder.