

Committee Reports

very important work this committee has been doing. I just want to compliment the committee members on their efforts to make sure, regardless of who is in power, that the regulations promulgated are in order under the law that was passed.

Mr. Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary whether he feels that the remarks of the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps), about which he just commented, were more or less out of order than the speech he made in the House last week on the subject of the committee's third report.

Mr. Gauthier: More or less.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I entered that debate on patent law with very little knowledge of patent law.

Mr. Gauthier: We know that.

Mr. Lewis: And I managed to prove it. Any hope I have for a position with Gowling, Henderson as a patent attorney is gone, in the same way that our QCs went last week.

Mr. Fennell: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) how much time he had for preparation and how frequently this House is asked to take part in these types of debates. Under what circumstances do we usually have to debate on concurrence in these reports. As I understand it, this came upon him somewhat by surprise and I would like to know exactly the length of time he had to prepare before standing up in this House and giving a speech, which I thought was excellent.

Mr. Lewis: I will do this as modestly as I can, Mr. Speaker. Although I did not have an awful lot of time, I would have wished that the chairman had given me some time. However, we all jumped into the breach and did the best we could to put those very important remarks on the Patent Act on the record. I am sure posterity will give them the credibility they deserve.

● (1440)

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, having advised the House that he has been denuded of his Q.C., the Member is, nonetheless, still a lawyer and is fairly familiar with the high cost of taking people to court. The Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) pointed out very succinctly that the Government is avoiding the all-Party resolution which points out the difficulties that the Government is going to have if it forces a company to take it to court on the issue of the specific regulation dealing with this specific geographic location.

How much does the Hon. Member think it will cost the taxpayers of Canada to fight that issue in the courts? Does the Member not believe that it would be easier if the Government would accept the recommendation of the all-Party committee, which would prevent any future legal action by any person or persons who have a direct interest in this particular legislation?

Mr. Lewis: That is very easy, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Member was not here when her colleague discussed the regulation. The regulation is to prevent a ship going through a passage. It is awfully difficult to imagine that there would be an awful lot of litigation arising from that. Mind you, lawyers are inventive and there is often a way to find litigation where others may not.

I might point out that this was an initiative of the former Liberal Government, so I would not get partisan on this. This is in the interest of the country. We put the interest of the country above partisan politics, which is advice that I might address to my hon. friend. There are more important things than scoring cheap political points. My colleague has brought forward an important matter which we are trying to deal with. I hope that the committee will address itself to this very important matter.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I rise to compliment the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Lewis) on his excellent presentation. I realize, of course, that he did not have a great deal of time to prepare it, but I would like to bring to his attention the fact that he said that this is a big country and that we have a lot of water to the east, to the west and to the north to look after. I would like to bring to his attention the fact that one of our busiest waterways is to the south. I live in the riding of Essex-Kent beside Lake Erie, which is part of the Seaway system. I was wondering whether the Member left that out on purpose or whether his research notes did not bring that to his attention.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, the speech I made was strictly a saltwater speech. I have another speech I make for waters that have no salt in them. That may have escaped the attention of a lot of people, but this was definitely a saltwater speech.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, we all know that this report was tabled in the House on October 17, 1985, so the Parliamentary Secretary has had two months in which to prepare his speech. I listened to him very attentively. I see that in the Statutory Instruments Act and the Oil Carriage Limitation Regulations which are before us there is reference to the 60th parallel. I know that the Member is a good lawyer and a good accountant, but I wonder if he is a geographic expert as well. Can he tell us exactly where the 60th parallel is?

Mr. Frith: It's 11 degrees above the forty-ninth.

Mr. Lewis: I have done a lot of research into that. You will find that the 60th parallel is directly above the fifty-ninth and below the sixty-first.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Member has commented that we should approach this in a very non-partisan fashion. On the eve of our Christmas break it is certainly incumbent upon all of us to approach this issue in an extremely non-partisan fashion. That is why I am a little confused. In his speech the Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) made it quite clear and plain that an all-Party committee composed of Liberals, Conservatives and New Democrats had made certain recom-