

## **Vote of Thanks**

### **The Right Honourable Lord Mustill**

Secretary General, ladies and gentlemen, there is an old saying that one volunteer is worth ten Press men. I am a Press man in the sense that I was put on the agenda to speak at this point and am doing so. But I do from the heart and wish to thank all those who have put this evening together so successfully. I speak on behalf of the very large number of you who have chosen to attend this important meeting. I think it is the biggest meeting of its kind I have ever been present at.

The former head of state of a foreign friendly nation justly prided himself on his ability to achieve warm relationships with large audiences and he was very good at it. But it was noted that on one occasion he said “It gives me a feeling of warm satisfaction to stand before such a dense crowd”. Well it is a large crowd and I would not suggest for a moment that the participants are dense.

Huckleberry Finn, when in the care of the widow woman was given a copy of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* to read, said of it: “I read in that book somewhat and the statement in it was interesting but tough”.

The statements this evening have been interesting but tough. Tough because the questions and problems that have been canvassed are intractable not insoluble.

Our speakers and contributors from the floor have succeeded in making them not only manageable but also interesting.

It would be invidious to select for mention any individual contribution. All have had something worthwhile to say – something to provoke thought – something to take away and reflect upon at leisure.

But to traverse all that ground would imperil our reward for hard work in the shape of the delicious Greek food promised to us by Aleka Sheppard. So I will confine myself to generalities. First, I wish to thank on your behalf the three panellists who have generously given us the keys to the intellectual warehouses where they store their experience, skills, knowledge and insights.

This has not just been an evening for celebration though that is certainly what it has been. It has been an evening for learning and I believe all of us have learned this evening. But there has been a space for refreshment – gastronomic and musical. We are all grateful to those who have arranged and sponsored these delights – most notably Mr George Tsavlis.

Next, we are of course grateful for the hard work devoted by the headquarters staff of the London Shipping Law Centre and of IMO towards making the evening a success. But in the end, I am driven to do something which I had disclaimed – namely, the naming of names. Three names:

First, Francis Cadwallader, how touched and proud he would have been to know that a regular intellectual feast bearing his name has proved to be so successful during a decade and I am glad that an intervention from the floor recognised this.

The second name is that of Dr Aleka Mandaraka-Sheppard. I have several times paid tribute to Dr Sheppard at the end of meetings in London for her remarkable efforts in raising the Centre into life. In fact, one might almost say in levitating the Centre single handed and against great odds, probably people do not realise the odds, against great odds they have kept it alive and kicking which is what it is today.

Shipping lawyers, not just in London but world-wide owe a great deal to Aleka and I wish that more voices were raised and were raised more loudly and clearly in acknowledging her efforts than sometimes one may think. We have a chance tonight Aleka.

Finally, I would like to thank our Chairman, the Secretary General. The backing of Mr Mitropoulos and his presence tonight in an active role is both a highly significant symbol of the relationship between the LSLC and IMO, and a guiding hand for our discussions tonight.

So what I would ask you to do, ladies and gentlemen, is to pay tribute in the usual manner for those who have worked hard to lay before us such a challenging and fruitful occasion.

You may have thought that at last I would shut up, but not quite. I have a little task which gives me very great pleasure and it is to spring a little surprise on our Chairman tonight. We wish to present him with a gift and I would also like to present to Aleka a gift on behalf of the Centre's Steering Committee for her tremendous contribution to the Centre's work and success.