

Delaware Law Firm Makes Maine Deal

a satire by Douglas A. Frank

WILMINGTON, DEL., August 3 - Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meacher & Flom, the large law firm in Delaware, said yesterday that it would merge with the Ellsworth, Maine, office of Hale & Hamlin next month as they join the race to become one of Downeast Maine's largest law firms. The new firm, which will use the name Ward LLP, will be run by Rodman Ward, Jr., partner in charge of Skadden Arps's soon-to-be-closed Wilmington, Delaware, office. The new firm will be run from Great Cranberry Island, Maine.

With approximately 1,450 attorneys, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and its affiliates is one of the largest law firms in the world. While they provide a broad range of legal services to the corporate, industrial and financial communities, they have never had a presence on the coast of Maine. Although Skadden Arps represent a broad spectrum of clients, from small high-technology start-up companies to nearly one half of the Fortune 250 industrial and service corporations, as well as many financial and governmental entities, the addition of five attorneys at Hale & Hamlin will finally bring the prestigious firm to Maine. "Our practices will integrate quite easily," stated Rodman Ward, Jr., from the new firm's headquarters. "But you'll have to speak up. I'm on a cell phone next to the Brush Beaver I've rented for a month and it's very loud."

Lawyers from both Skadden Arps and Hale & Hamlin cited conflict-of-interest issue when explaining why the new headquarters were moved to the remote Maine island which is the summer home to Ward. One senior partner in New York stated, "For Ward to think that this makes good sense because we are a few hundred miles closer to multinational clients we represent in antidumping and countervailing duty proceedings is beyond the pale of my comprehension. But the severance he offered me is worth taking."

Among the additional changes that Ward has revealed is a radical revision of the summer-associate program. "No longer will law students spend the summer doing relatively little work, going out for expensive meals and still getting paid more than \$2,000 a week," stated Ward. "They'll come to Cranberry Island to do the kind of work that I do. It's a boot camp for island living: brush chipping, tree felling, driving pickup trucks and general maintenance. Anyone can depose a witness."