

Lobbyists Registration Act

Let me read the amendments we wanted the Government to include in the legislation. We wanted, first, to ensure that the Bill would provide that someone who collects information for the purpose of having someone else do the lobbying would also be identified as a lobbyist. I introduced that motion. Unfortunately, it did not get anywhere. My second amendment was to ensure that we were asking the same thing of Tier II lobbyists as we were of Tier I lobbyists, that is, of course, to correct the situation I described a moment ago.

● (1540)

I introduced another motion, which was debated but refused by the Government, to prevent a lobbyist from charging contingency fees. Our committee, which for the benefit of Conservative Members listening to this debate was largely composed of government Members, was opposed to lobbyists being able to charge contingency fees. However, that is not in the Bill.

The Minister says he could not make such a requirement because he does not have the constitutional authority to do so. That is, apparently, due to the fact that contract law is provincial and we are obviously dealing here with federal legislation. Although the Minister may technically be correct in saying that contract law is provincial, which is true, we should remember that the federal Government can require someone lobbying it to meet before it will entertain such a lobby. In other words, this Bill could easily include a provision which would prevent an employee or federal legislator from entertaining a lobby on the part of someone who is charging a contingency fee.

The Government had every opportunity to do that. Such a condition in the Bill would prevent legislators from receiving such a lobby. Perhaps there are other means of satisfying that. There are indeed ways in which the Government could have prevented lobbyists from charging contingency fees.

As I indicated a while ago, we are dealing with this Bill today after some delay. I want to make it clear to the House, to the Minister, and to all Canadians that in no way has either Party in the Opposition made any attempt to delay the passage of this Bill. I indicated that in April of 1986 our committee started to do its work on that report. In September of 1986 the Government prorogued Parliament. It recalled Parliament at the beginning of October, and on November 19 the Government decided, through a motion proposed by the Government House Leader, to reactivate our committee. On January 27, 1987, our committee tabled its report in the House of Commons. On June 30, 1987, we gave Bill C-82 first reading. I do not know why it took from January to June.

However, if you think that is strange, wait until you hear what I am going to say next. We only started to debate the Bill on March 8, 1988, some nine months later. I do not know why that gestation period was required, but nevertheless we started at that time.

Perhaps some would think that after we started debate on March 8, 1988, the Opposition may have dragged its feet. No, Sir, Mr. Speaker, the whole debate was concluded on March 14, six days later, and some of those days were used to discuss other legislation. In fact, only about four hours of House time was utilized to debate Bill C-82. You can see, Mr. Speaker, the great co-operation offered to the Government by opposition Members of Parliament in an attempt to have speedy passage of this legislation.

I hear a Conservative Member speaking. If he is congratulating the House on having disposed of the motion so rapidly, I thank him for that. I assume that that is what he is saying.

In April of this year the committee met. After only two or three hearings the committee dealt with the Bill in its entirety. We had had only two or three meetings on the Bill and the Minister was not pleased. He felt it was taking us too long to deal with the Bill in committee after we had had about three meetings. He literally had a temper tantrum.

On April 27, 1988, in an interview given to *The Globe and Mail*, the Minister threatened to shelve the Bill to register lobbyists because it was taking too much time. Can you believe that? The Minister took three years to produce a Bill which the Prime Minister promised on an urgent basis, and because we did not have it ready after three one and a half hour meetings of the parliamentary committee, the Minister literally had a tantrum.

If you do not believe me, Mr. Speaker, I will read to you what *The Globe and Mail* says. Surely you will believe *The Globe and Mail*. An article of April 27, 1988 says that legislation to register lobbyists could be postponed indefinitely if opposition Members continue to push for amendments. The Opposition was guilty of trying to improve legislation. What an awful bunch we were for trying to improve the Government's imperfect Bill!

The article continues: "He directed his comments at New Democratic Party MP John Rodriguez and Liberal MP Don Boudria who have been trying to toughen the Bill which is scheduled to be sent back to the House of Commons for final reading in May". You will notice, Mr. Speaker, that even the media thought this Bill would be dealt with in May. Today is July 25. I have been lobbying the Government since May to bring this Bill back before the House, and it only did so a week ago.

Mr. Keeper: Did you register?

Mr. Boudria: No, I did not register my lobbying activity at that time, in response to the question of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper). We do not have such legislation yet.

I would like to read an article from the April 18 *Calgary Herald*. I ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre), who is reading *Maclean's* magazine, to listen