

Government Orders

tration fees, a measure which should encourage further compliance. Quite simply, this is what Bill C-76 proposes to do with respect to the Lobbyists Registration Act.

The government is committed to remaining fiscally responsible by implementing cost recovery measures wherever possible. Bill C-76 will help the government reach these goals.

Some members on the other side are raising questions about the Lobbyists Registration Act that go beyond the narrow fiscal intent of this bill. I should remind members that this issue is being taken up by the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations and I expect that it will conduct a very thorough study of this whole subject. It is important to bear in mind that the subject of this legislation before the House today is strictly the narrow fiscal aspect. Broader topics with respect to the program will be looked at by the standing committee.

Members are reminded as well that the new Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs appeared before that committee last week with a very thorough presentation and I might say he shows signs that he is going to be a very excellent Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and a very valued addition to the cabinet. I publicly compliment him on his appointment and congratulate the Prime Minister for making it.

The minister encouraged the committee to use the review process to examine and make recommendations to improve the act that would be in line with the act's basic principles of openness, unimpeded access to government and administrative simplicity.

The minister suggested some ideas for possible improvement, including first of all extending to one year from six months the limitation period before proceedings can be initiated against people who have not complied with the act; second, having tier two in-house lobbyists report the subject matter of their lobbying activity; third, giving tier one professional lobbyists a reduced time period in which to register their activities; fourth, requir-

ing that any change in tier one lobbying be reported; and finally, having registrations filed electronically.

The opportunity exists in that forum, the committee, to raise many questions and concerns about the Lobbyists Registration Act, other than the amendments we are discussing in Bill C-76.

With those few comments, I would encourage the members of the House to use the time available to discuss the issues that are raised in this legislation and for goodness' sake let us get on with the business of the nation, get this year old legislation through the House and get on with other priorities and concerns that Canadians have.

I commend the bill to all members of the House who I know will give it thorough consideration.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the haste of my friend from South Shore. He is known to be a fairly impatient man. It is not surprising the basic matter that brings us here is called democracy. It is the opportunity for people through their representatives to have some say in what the government is proposing to do, to at least have their say, the people of Canada, the people of Newfoundland and the other nine provinces, and have the opportunity to pass judgment through our voices as members of Parliament. That opportunity, I say to the gentleman from South Shore although he has dismissed it, is an important one.

Yes, we well understand the process to which the gentleman alludes. Yes, the government through the passage of the budget motion has general umbrella approval for its budgetary policies. Nobody argues that point here. We did not vote for them but we understand the numbers game. We understand that the government commands the votes of enough members in this Chamber to get that kind of motion through the Chamber.

I would invite the hon. member for South Shore to reflect on what he is saying. Surely the people of Canada, through us here, must have an opportunity bill by bill, measure by measure to comment on, to give support for or to be opposed to individual measures. Otherwise we could well have the situation in which a member on the government side of the House, or anywhere in this Chamber for that matter, approved of the budgetary policies of the government in general but