

● (1530)

[English]

These are the recommendations that we made with respect to what is required of lobbyists. We recommended that registered lobbyists be required first to disclose their name, firm name if applicable, a contact person, address, and telephone number; second, name of clients and their place of business; third, the matter upon which the lobbying activity is to take place. I said moments ago that we should prohibit contingency fees or fees contingent upon a result. We also recommended a definition of lobbyists and so on. We produced a good report that was tabled in this House in early 1987.

Because this was a compromise position, we felt the Government would introduce a Bill which pretty well mirror imaged the unanimous report of the parliamentary committee. After all, the Opposition had watered down its expectations in favour of getting a unanimous report, so we figured the Minister would probably introduce something pretty close to what we asked. Yet that did not happen, if one can believe it. Instead, the Government introduced a two-tier system of registering lobbyists. From now on, there will be a Tier I lobbyist, which is a consultant or, if you wish, a professional lobbyist. That lobbyist would be operating under a contract with a client, or the lobbyist could be a member of any profession when engaged in lobbying for pay; in other words, a lawyer or accountant who acts as a lobbyist. This kind of lobbyist would be asked to register detailed information such as that I described a while ago pursuant to our unanimous report.

There would also be Tier II lobbyists. I have no idea where the Minister got this idea. It certainly is not from my report, not from his White Paper, not from anything any Member ever raised in this House in any speech at second reading, report stage, or anywhere else. It was not even raised in committee.

The Tier II lobbyist consists of employees and officers of trade organizations, labour federations, business corporations, unions and voluntary groups who, as a significant part of their duties, lobby for their employer.

Those people will be asked to supply only limited information by the Government. For example, they will have to register once a year in a manner which has been described by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt as providing a copy of their business card. The only thing we will be asking them to do is identify themselves once a year with their name, address, and phone number. Providing a copy of their business card would pretty well do that.

My objection is that these people, the so-called Tier II lobbyists, are getting away with something that other people cannot. Why do we offer Tier II lobbyists those kinds of advantages? The Minister says the reason is that in the case of a Tier II lobbyist we know who they are, we know who they act for, and it is pretty obvious what they want. He says in his

Lobbyists Registration Act

press release on page 5, that even among paid employees there are distinctions worthy of recognition. Certain individuals may, on rare occasions, represent the views of their business or association, but they are not primarily engaged by the employer for the purpose of lobbying. By contrast, many groups and corporations retain full-time individuals on staff who are responsible for liaison with and communicating ideas and concerns to the Government. While the latter should be required to register as lobbyists, the former can hardly be considered to be a paid lobbyist. That is quite true. He says further that this system of two different tiers of lobbyists is based on the well established distinction between the often hidden interests of the clients of the third party paid lobbyist, in other words Tier I, and the transparent and well understood interests of the corporations, industry associations, public interest groups, and other such organizations whose staff lobby on their own behalf, or Tier II.

Let us look at the distinction the Minister is making. He says that Tier II lobbyists are transparent, well understood interests of corporations, industry associations, public interest groups, and other such organizations. I say to him that sometimes that may be the case. I will concede that, and even that there are occasions where one can tell by the organization what it is they are concerned about. I will use as an example an organization which has been in contact with me lately, one which I have a certain closeness with, and that is the Campaign Life Coalition. They are obviously going to lobby for pro-life legislation on abortion. However, although that is true for that organization, it may not necessarily be that obvious and that transparent and well understood, to use the words of the Minister, in certain other groups.

Let me give an example. Let us say, for example, that someone is a full-time employee of a giant multinational. I will use Imasco as an example, a parent company of several other companies. If someone is a paid lobbyist for that company, how is it obvious, how is it transparent, how is it well understood what he or she is lobbying for or against? There is no logical answer. When the company is so big one cannot tell which one of the subsidiaries the lobbyist is speaking for or against or which legislation they would be favouring or opposing.

Another example is someone campaigning on behalf of George Weston Enterprises or someone like that. That company's list of subsidiaries is the length of your arm, Mr. Speaker. How can you tell which one of the subsidiaries they are lobbying for? They could just as easily be lobbying against the very thing you may think they are lobbying for. It is not, contrary to what the Minister said, transparent and well understood what they are lobbying for or against.

In order to correct some of those deficiencies I offered some amendments, and I know other Members did as well, to the Bill proposed by the Minister. I say this having supported his Bill on second reading debate and having supported the unanimous report of the parliamentary committee. We suggested amendments which would do a number of things.