

Lobbyists Registration Act

Minister. These people are not without influence and are the louder voices looking for a share of the spoils of the Government. The people have a right to know what they are doing in the Prime Minister's Office, how much is being paid and for what.

This program has attracted a very nefarious type of undertaking. The former Chief of Defence Staff and Deputy Minister of Transport, Mr. Ramsey Withers, is now on the payroll promoting this program. He held a very important position in Canada as Deputy Minister of Transport and Chief of Defence Staff. He is being paid a pension by the Government of Canada and should not be lobbying for private groups for private advantage. That type of activity cannot be allowed to continue. It should be made clear in this House that Ramsey Withers has no business lobbying this Government on this issue.

• (1240)

We have the spectacle of a former Minister of National Defence, Mr. Jean-Jacques Blais, who served in this House as a Minister of the Crown, now lobbying as well. It would appear he is not only receiving money as a lobbyist but he is also receiving money from the Government of Canada, although indirectly. That is unacceptable. It should not be allowed to continue. This Government must take positive action to deal with these amendments and this legislation to stop this. The Canadian public is being exploited in a very serious way by these kinds of activities. People who have held strong positions of trust in the Government are now turning around and using those positions of trust for personal financial advantage, and in this case, for a very questionable program.

It even goes further than that. Lobbying is being conducted by the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Beatty). There are reports in the newspapers that he is using officers of the Armed Forces to travel back and forth across this country promoting the submarine program. That is lobbying. It is absolutely unacceptable. It appears to be a politicizing of the Armed Forces, and we cannot tolerate that.

The Minister of National Defence has also used the resources of his Department to enhance the decision-making process around the nuclear submarine issue in the public eye. That is not acceptable. It undermines democracy. The particular issue of the submarines illustrates every negative aspect of the lobbying issue.

What it is is louder voices, smaller groups and louder voices. The Government is getting its message out by spending millions of dollars of taxpayers money. The submarine manufacturers in Britain and France are promoting this project using millions of private dollars. The defence contractors are spending millions of dollars in getting their message out. In short, there is a very small number of groups, who stand to make a very large amount of money, which are getting their message out.

What about the other side of the question, the fairness of the decision-making procedure, whereby these groups who are critical of this program do not have the resources to raise that kind of money. When there are private interest groups, which stand to make a lot of money off the success of this particular program, having access to millions and millions of dollars to promote it, and when the prize is in the billions of dollars, they ought to be putting up an equal amount of money to be allocated to other groups so that these groups can campaign and give the other point of view. That would be a legitimate approach to this issue.

The citizens of this country would then have a fair chance. They would be allowed to look at advertisements not only of submarines and Soviet threats and all the jobs that allegedly will be created by this program, but they would also be able to look at such things as Canada being mortgaged for generations for a program in which the first submarine will not be delivered for 10 years. The technology in that submarine will be absolutely out of date by the time it hits the water.

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Esquimalt—Saanich (Mr. Crofton), wants to use these nuclear submarines to chase dope importers and fisheries violators. He is right on track. When the Minister of National Defence first raised this, he wanted to protect Arctic sovereignty. When that fell apart under the criticism of experts in the field who said there were more cost effective ways of doing that, then the Hon. Member for Esquimalt—Saanich stands and displays his incredible knowledge of this subject by suggesting that we can use nuclear powered submarines to chase dope importers and fisheries violators. I guess we can. We can probably use a sub to surface ship missile in Esquimalt to shoot them as they come out of the harbour in Colombia. But I would think that most people would find there were other more cost effective ways of handling that problem. We have a serious problem here.

The message from the other side of this controversy is not being heard. The democratic system and decision-making procedure should be made to work. People with good reputations say we are not spending \$8 billion on this program. The Department of Supply and Services estimates it at \$10 billion. The security adviser to the U.S. Senate estimates it at \$12 billion. Other naval analysts are saying it will cost in excess of \$16 billion. The security adviser for the Senate suggests that this will mortgage the defence budget of Canada for a complete generation. That \$16 billion will not allow us to do anything else in defence, to take care of things like search and rescue and peacekeeping. The public should know that. The only way to let the public know is effective lobbying legislation. They should also know that this program will harm things like medicare and old age pensions.

Something else the Canadian public should know is that spending \$16 billion on a submarine program that will be out of date by the time the first sub goes in the water is going to destabilize the world situation. It is going to act as an initiative for further moves in the arms race. It will undermine the