

Motions

exploitation of those lands, as opposed to turning them over to the self-government of the native people involved. It is a serious philosophical error to lump that type of activity together with the activity of paid lobbyists for multinational corporations, or whatever the case may be. The committee was wise in its unanimous judgment that that not be done.

● (1610)

I know the Hon. Member has to run over to committee, but now he is debating whether to stick around for the question and comment period.

Mr. Friesen: You got it.

Mr. Blaikie: It will be interesting to see what he does.

To be talking about lobbying today is timely. Lobbying has everything to do with the question of morality and ethics in the public sector.

Mr. Towers: There are not too many listening over there.

Mr. Blaikie: That is too bad. I know I have the ear of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. McKnight). He was probably interested in what I had to say about land claims.

Mr. McKnight: I want an answer on that.

Mr. Blaikie: There has been a lot of attention paid in recent weeks to the question of political morality as it pertains to the issues which have come before this House. In bringing this up I am not trying to address any particular issue. It is a simple matter of fact that we have had questions before us which pertain to how contracts are awarded, the degree of political influence involved, either at a partisan political level or whatever, in the awarding of contracts, and many other allegations, founded and unfounded, about improprieties on the part of government Members. As we know the allegations have reached as high as the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). Therefore it is timely for us to have a debate about how the political process works. Certainly lobbying is one of the main elements in that process. This gives us an opportunity, within the bounds of relevance, to reflect on political morality in general.

Personally I feel that one of the problems with the notion of registering lobbyists is that lobbying has a kind of negative connotation. One reason for that, in my judgment, is that it is associated with American politics and the American model of how the political process works. That is not to say that the committee has not come up with what we hope will be a uniquely Canadian understanding of lobbying. Nevertheless, it remains a fact that lobbying, professional lobbyists, and registration of lobbyists are all associated with the American system. I think there is a danger that this, along with a number of other trends which I may or may not have time to go into, could become part and parcel if we are not wary, that is to say, if we do not adopt the views of the Hon. Member for Surrey—

White Rock—North Delta, of what I would call the Americanization of Canadian politics.

There are some things we can learn from the American system. I am not completely closed-minded on that. I was part of the committee on the reform of the House of Commons which wanted to invest our committees with more independence. Not independence identical to congressional committees, because that would be impossible as long as we want to maintain a parliamentary system, and I believe we do. Nevertheless, there are things which can be learned. What I am saying is that I perceive on a number of fronts what I would call the Americanization of Canadian politics. I think the Government we have today is a good example of that. Some of the government Members might find that irritating, especially those who consider themselves part of the old Tory tradition which sees Canada as having a unique political tradition apart from the U.S.A. Yet there is this political irony in the air today that the Conservative Party, more than any other Party, has become the leading edge of the Americanization of Canadian politics.

Miss Carney: What ridiculous nonsense that is.

Mr. Blaikie: The Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney) has taken the Americanization of Canadian politics to the nth degree. She should be saying the least. She not only believes in the Americanization of Canadian politics, she believes in selling out the whole country.

Miss Carney: Irresponsible statement.

Mr. Blaikie: To even talk about Canadian politics in the presence of the Minister is a mistake. We should be talking about how we can become fully integrated into the American political system.

Miss Carney: You can talk about that, we will not.

Mr. Blaikie: We might even be able to defend ourselves better as the 51st state than we would having the Hon. Minister go to bat for us.

Mr. Friesen: Where does Manitoba borrow its money?

Mr. Blaikie: When I heard a petition had been filed concerning steel exports to the U.S. I had the same thought that I had when I heard about the potash petition. For Heaven's sake, do not send the Minister for International Trade whatever you do, Mr. Prime Minister. In fact we thought of having an emergency motion—

Miss Carney: Tell it to your constituents.

Mr. Blaikie:—where perhaps the whole House could unite together in a common anxiety, that however the Government responded to the most recent protectionist actions south of the 49th parallel—

Miss Carney: Tell it to the IWA.