

Motions

I want to point out that the impression is the Hon. Minister's problem and his Government's problem. I am here trying to help them clean up their act so the Government can start rising in the polls. I must be getting old when I reach out to my downtrodden Tory friends and give them a hand up. I moved this concurrence motion to give them a chance to clean up the mess, and here is the Minister accusing me of casting aspersions on Mr. Frank Moores. I would think that he would want to cut him loose. The Minister has a responsibility to tell us when there will be lobbyist registration. The Minister should tell us that, and not quibble over whether it is selective advocacy, or influence peddling. The impression of Canadians is that if you have powerful friends at court, you can get things. That is what the people out there recognize. That is what the Government has to deal with. After all, it is in third place and sinking like a stone.

Mr. Andre: I wish to withdraw my earlier comment about accusing the Member of being temperate. I lost my head there for a moment and thought that the Hon. Member had matured and grown reasonable. I was trying to make the point that one ought not to use, even inadvertently, language that accuses someone of criminal activity, unless the Hon. Member is prepared to back it up. I do not think that making that point as temperately as I attempted to do warranted the outburst of partisanship from the Hon. Member, given that his original remarks were more temperate, albeit from a perspective that I did not agree with every step of the way.

Let us be cautious about our language, and let us not accuse people of criminal activity unless we are prepared to back it up. That simple point should not have brought forward that tirade from the Hon. Member. It is regrettable that he responded in that manner, and then at the end of it all said that it is terrible what the public now thinks of the Government and our institutions, and we have to clean up our act. It goes both ways. You cannot pick up gobs of mud and throw them and then say, "Look at all the mud around". Some of the responsibility has to be borne in that regard. That was my only caution. Let us not accuse people of criminal acts unless we are prepared to back them up with facts.

Mr. Rodriguez: I did not say anything in the House that I did not say in the committee when these witnesses came before it. When I asked the representatives of Frank Moores' firm specific questions about ownership of the company, clients, costs, and the connection that they had with the Conservative Party, they all refused to answer those questions other than to point out that they have also hired Liberals. I said to them at that point, and I said it in the House, that that leads Canadians to come to one conclusion. If it cannot be dealt with out in the open, out in the sunlight, or if it has to be dealt with in the shadows, as the Prime Minister refers to it when he says that it should not be shrouded in mystery, it leads Canadians to come to no other conclusion but that this whole operation is influence peddling. When Canadians see how closely connected the lobbyists are with the Government, that is the only conclusion that they can come to. It is obvious that this is the conclusion

they have come to, and the judgment that they have made about the Government.

Instead of quibbling, the Minister should be standing up and telling us when he will bring down the legislation to register lobbyists, and to create transparency in the operation of Government. Some degree of transparency is required. That is one of the advantages of lobbying registration. It does provide a degree of transparency to the Canadian people. The Canadian people have a right to know who is doing what to whom, and I would add for how much. Instead of making fractious comments about my temperance, as the Minister responsible for this legislation he ought to be telling us when he intends to bring forward a Bill.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to take part in this debate, and particularly to follow my good friend from Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). I have had the pleasure of working with him for some time on this particular subject. Through that process I have discovered that he is twice as bright as I am, twice as kind as I am, and he works twice as hard as I do. To top it all off, today I found out that he is twice as old.

One of the things that I find very intriguing about this process that we have just gone through is that we as a committee came up with a unanimous report. As the Speaker and Members of this House well know, that is an unusual circumstance in Parliament, particularly on an issue of such controversy. I went through the whole process and tried to figure out why this group of people would come together with a unanimous report. The first and obvious reason would be that they are all from the same Party, and everyone knows that this is not the case. The second reason would be that the members of the committee are a bunch of docile people. Anyone who knows the membership of this particular committee would know that the Hon. Members for Glengarry-Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria), Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), Okanagan—Similkameen (Mr. King), Prince George—Bulkley Valley (Mr. McCuish), and myself do not fit into the docile category. I finally figured out what allowed this group of men to come together with a unanimous report. We all have one thing in common, and that is the fact that virtually every one of us can walk under any table standing up, there is no bending down required. It is the only common bond that I can find through the whole process.

It was a unanimous report. The process took us pretty close to a year, because we discovered as we got into the issue that it was a difficult issue, and one of tremendous complexity. Wheels within wheels are turning in this issue. Another point that came out was that in reality we are dealing with a changing world.

I wish to quote from the report which talks about that changing world that we face. On page 5 of the report, when speaking about the influence of lobbying, it states:

This influence in Canada has been primarily focussed on the bureaucracy and the executive. However, with the introduction of recent reforms to the committee