

*Lobbyists Registration Act*

Minister promised a new conflict of interest code. He promised another one after that, but he did offer us a new code on that day. He offered instructions to Ministers, imposing limitations on the hiring of family members. We know that some of his colleagues in Cabinet had appointed sons and daughters and cousins and in-laws, and all sorts of relations, to various positions. He wrote a letter to the opposition Leaders concerning the ethical standards for MPs and Senators. He established an experimental program for parliamentary scrutiny of Governor in Council appointments. He said at that time that we would have a system of registration of lobbying activity. Now, what he said is very important. I will repeat it. He said, and I quote from point five, dealing with the registration of lobbying activity, not that we would just register lobbyists, not that we would just register lobbying, he said that we would register lobbying activity. I see my friend from Nickel Belt is paying very close attention to this, because he and I are very interested in the registration of lobbying activity.

I want to read to you from page 9 of this letter. It is a very long letter that the Prime Minister sent to Members of Parliament. I guess the Prime Minister had a lot to think about on the weekend before that. He wrote long letters to MPs.

**An Hon. Member:** He knew what he wanted.

**Mr. Boudria:** On page 9, he said:

The fifth component of this comprehensive approach to public sector ethics is the undertaking of this Government to introduce into the House of Commons, at an early date, legislation to monitor lobbying activity and to control the lobbying process by providing a reliable and accurate source of information on the activities of lobbyists. We will require, among other things, paid lobbyists to register and identify their clients.

This will enable persons who are approached by lobbyists for Canadian corporations, associations and unions, and by agents on behalf of foreign governments and other foreign interests, to be clearly aware of who is behind the representation.

I repeat that part: "Who is behind the representation". I see that you are paying very close attention to this, Mr. Speaker. I will read further:

I have accordingly asked my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, to prepare, on an urgent basis, legislation to govern lobbying activity.

I did place emphasis on certain key words in there, and you will see why. I want to read a little further from this letter of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister does have a pretty mean pen sometimes, and it is important for us to be fully apprised of what it is that he has told us. On page 10, he states:

This initiative should not be misinterpreted to mean that this Government is aware of particular improprieties in the conduct of lobbyists or that it considers lobbying to be an inappropriate activity. On the contrary, the practice of lobbying plays an important role in ensuring that governments, in taking the decisions which affect the lives of all of us, are able to take properly into account the multitude of diverse interests involved. This Government is simply saying that something so important should not be shrouded in mystery.

It was said by the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

I thought that the Government was going to introduce on an urgent basis legislation to govern lobbying activity. I believed the Prime Minister, which I suppose is the first mistake. I believed he was going to do what he said he would. I know it is extremely unfair to quote the Prime Minister, using his own words, but I am doing it anyway so that all Canadians will understand that we were not quite given the merchandise that we were promised. I would be the last person to say that this Government broke a promise, because, of course, I am non-partisan. Nevertheless some of us, shall we say, have been somewhat disappointed that the Prime Minister let us down one more time.

● (1520)

I want to apprise you, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that a number of Canadians have not been satisfied with the actions of the Government as they pertain to lobbyists. We on this side of the House wanted to agree to a degree with the Prime Minister when he said that there was nothing wrong *per se* with the profession of being a lobbyist or with partaking in lobbying. There is nothing wrong with someone being a lobbyist and making representation to the Government on behalf of a labour union, on behalf of a corporation, on behalf of the Coalition on Acid Rain, on behalf of Campaign Life or on behalf of anyone else. That is okay. One can lobby for that. If Jean Bazin wanted to lobby to get a position in the Senate, that is okay too. I do not object to that. I thank the Hon. Member for Lotbinière (Mr. Tremblay) for reminding me that people have lobbied for a Senate position from time to time. Perhaps Senator Michel Cogger may have done it. Perhaps Senator Jean Bazin, who is a close friend of the Prime Minister, may have done that. It could be that people have lobbied for Senate positions. That is not illegal nor should it be. People have a right to make a representation to the Government for anything which they feel is important.

Canadians have a right to know who is doing what to whom. If, for instance, Mr. Speaker, you and I worked for the Coalition on Acid Rain we would want to know what that giant corporate entity has done in the way of lobbying the Government. If we were lobbying for the Coalition on Acid Rain we would want to know if Inco had lobbied against emission standards. If we were lobbying for Campaign Life we would want to know what the pro-choice group has been lobbying for in the area of the abortion debate which will start tomorrow. We have a right to know these things. I suggest that we have a better form of government when all these activities are in the public domain.

The Government did not initially deliver on the merchandise. As I indicated a while ago, the Government, instead of delivering the Bill that it promised, on December 19, 1985, gave us a White Paper on lobbying. That White Paper, a very thick document, was tabled in the House and everyone looked at the White Paper on Lobbying and asked what it was for. The Prime Minister promised us some legislation on an urgent basis. Remember what I said a while ago when I was quoting