

## Government Orders

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stephane Bergeron (Verchères):** Mr. Speaker, unless I am mistaken, I do have ten minutes to make my speech. Thank you very much. I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-43.

When we looked at the Pearson Airport deal, I think we were all hoping that a bill would be tabled to tighten up the Lobbyists Registration Act, and are pleased that the government decided to propose this legislation, even though it is, in our opinion, far from being enough.

I have rather mixed feelings about this bill. On the one hand, I agree that it is a first step in tightening up the provisions concerning lobbyists but, on the other hand, I feel that the proposed measures are not enough. I will discuss this more in detail later on.

Earlier this morning, the hon. member for Madawaska—Victoria said that lobbies were an essential component of our democratic system. She may be right, but we must ensure that lobbying does not corrupt the democratic process, and I think this is the goal of a bill designed to better monitor the role and the work of lobbyists.

The hon. member for Jonquière was quite right when he said that the bill, in its present form, would not have prevented what we refer to as the Pearson Airport scandal. In fact, it is very symptomatic to see that the government waited until the conclusion of the debate on the bill concerning compensation to those involved in the Pearson Airport deal, before finally tabling its legislation on lobbyists.

This bill is essential because, if we look at the American experience—which we can observe from up close—we see that lobbyists in the United States have gained such power that, in a way, they control several decisions made by the White House and the Congress. A number of positive points must be emphasized in Bill C-43. First of all, the appointment of an Ethics Counsellor. I think the principle is fully justified and that there was an obvious need to appoint an Ethics Counsellor. We also find it very positive that this Ethics Counsellor is being given investigative powers.

•(1345)

As the Leader of the Official Opposition said yesterday, we fully support Mr. Wilson's appointment to the position of Ethics Counsellor. Mr. Wilson has had a highly respected career; he is a very honourable man, and we think he is fully qualified for this position.

We note the government's intention to establish a parliamentary committee whose mandate would be to develop a code of ethics for senators and members of Parliament. We also note its intention to expand and tighten the code of ethics for public

[English]

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. There has been some consultation. I am not sure whether it is a conclusion yet. Perhaps while I am making this proposal, it will give further time for the House to consider it.

I would like to seek agreement that consideration for this particular bill be extended. In other words, that government business be extended by one-half hour, and that at the conclusion of the half hour the issue be disposed of, this particular item be disposed of at that time.

Second, that in exchange for doing that, so as to not inconvenience any members, we would agree by unanimous consent to have only two speakers at Private Members' Hour, dealing with the item put on the Order Paper by the hon. member for Kamloops. Only he and one member for the Reform would speak on that particular private members' item.

•(1340)

At the conclusion of that debate, the initiative of the member for Kamloops would be withdrawn and referred to a parliamentary committee. I do not know whether there is consent for the parliamentary committee on agriculture to be more specific. I know this is a lot to digest in a very few seconds.

It is done to accommodate members of one party who would prefer to speak on this bill and forgo the time for speaking on the other one. The ultimate effect essentially is not to lengthen the time of the sitting, that the House would terminate at exactly the same time. I do not know whether that suits hon. members.

Perhaps there is a request to repeat all of that. Of course I am willing to do so.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Perhaps we could split that in half. Is there unanimous consent to extend debate for half an hour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to the second part of the deputy whip's motion that only two members speak and that the matter be referred to the standing committee on agriculture?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I think you have listed the first and third items. There was one in the centre that was not addressed. It was the issue that this government order be disposed of at the conclusion of the 30 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I sort of assumed that was the case. Is it also agreed that it would be disposed of?