

Motions

Quite obviously we are concerned with the issue of the registration of paid lobbyists. There are several reasons that we are only registering paid lobbyists. I ask the Hon. Member to pay attention to this.

First, on September 9, 1985, the Prime Minister stated in the House: "We will require, among other things, paid lobbyists to register—" That is a quote from the Prime Minister's speech. What the Prime Minister asks us to do is to register paid lobbyists. The Member is asking why do we not register people who are not paid, and all those other things. It is mainly because that is not what his own Prime Minister wanted. That is the first point.

Second, in my view it is improper to ask people who are not paid and who, as volunteers, are seeking to reach public officials, to register or to divulge their source of funding. It interferes with freedom of association. We also have to concern ourselves with that. Our committee listened to those deliberations on both sides of the issue. It is not one Party in this House that had a weird and eccentric view of how those things should be done versus another. It was unanimous in all its respects that we cannot place burdens upon people who are not paid, or interferences in any way, shape, or form for them interfacing with their Members of Parliament or their Government because of freedom of association, and because of the privilege of Members of this House for which all of us collectively on that committee have great respect.

Those are some of the reasons why the proposal was made in that manner. I suggest to the Member that he confer with some of his colleagues from his Party who are sitting on the committee. It is quite obvious to me that it will be very difficult to register lobbyists who are not paid. We have no business asking people how they receive their funding, if it has nothing to do with the purpose of lobbying public officials. If an organization is advocating peace by buying advertisements in the newspaper, surely they cannot be asked where they receive their money. That interferes with their freedom of doing things. In terms of charitable contributions, the provincial government has something to do with the receipts, as does the Revenue Department, but not in terms of us identifying who pays for it before they can associate. That is not right. The Member should reflect upon that, and he will see that that is not a correct way of looking at things. There are enormous repercussions which he should think about seriously, and which I ask him to do in consultation with his colleagues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On debate, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie).

Mr. Friesen: Sorry, Bill, I have to go to committee, otherwise I would gladly listen to your speech.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): I was going to have something to say about the speech of the Hon. Member for Surrey—White Rock—North Delta (Mr. Friesen). The argument that he was making is one that I worry about as a possible extension of the argument that the committee made.

It is no secret to those who have paid attention to this issue, that one of the reasons I have expressed reservations on the whole question of registering lobbyists is that it may lead to the very type of world view espoused by the Hon. Member for Surrey—White Rock—North Delta. If those recommendations were to be adopted, I would call it a total victory of liberalism. I wonder if the Hon. Member has given any thought to that.

Mr. Friesen: Please expand on that.

Mr. Blaikie: I think I have his attention.

Mr. Friesen: Forget the committee.

Mr. Rodriguez: You did not have to hit him between the eyes to do it.

Mr. Blaikie: If the Hon. Member's views were to be implemented, one of the results would be that the very world of ideas which he talked about—he was correct when he said it was so important to the political process—that very important world of ideas by virtue of the suggestions he made would be reduced to a world of interest. That is to say, to a perfect model of the Hobbesian liberal view of what politics is about. In the final analysis it is not a question of different ideas competing for the public mind and the collective imagination, it is a question of brokerage politics, of the Government playing one interest against the other, and making decisions as to what trade-offs have to be made. In other words, precisely the kind of liberal politics, in the small "l" sense—although the Liberal Party has certainly embodied this type of politics for many years in Canada—that I would have thought the Hon. Member for Surrey—White Rock—North Delta would have been critical of.

I find it somewhat surprising that he rose to his feet to suggest that this liberal notion of registering lobbyists be extended presumably to include church groups, and ecumenical coalitions that gather together around certain concerns. I find it surprising that the Member would take the view that these should be treated in the same way conceptually as a paid lobbyist for an oil corporation coming to Ottawa to advocate a certain tax benefit for his or her corporation, or that that should somehow be at the same level as the work of Project North or other groups concerned with those issues which have no immediate or long-term financial self-interest in the measures that they may be asking the Government to implement. In fact, sometimes the case may be that the measures that they are asking the Government to implement impact negatively on their own well-being.

For instance, if non-native southern Canadians come forward and advocate that the Government settle land claims, and the Government return to the native people the lands which in their judgment have been unjustly taken from them, this certainly could not be considered to be in the self-interest of non-native southern Canadians who may have everything to gain in the traditional sense of financial self-interest from the