

## Motions

this very important debate. I have read and studied the report of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure, chaired very ably by the Hon. Member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper). As the Minister stated, the report was unanimous, which is not a frequent occurrence in the House of Commons and its associated committees. I want to commend members of the committee and the Chairman on an excellent report which outlines very precisely and succinctly what needs to be done, as a result of a very thorough evaluation.

I cannot think of a more appropriate moment than now to discuss and hopefully take quick action on a very specific set of recommendations for one initiative that may in fact bring back some sense of reason, credibility and respect, not only to this institution but to public institutions generally and, perhaps most important, to the Government of Canada.

In the last few hours I have reviewed a number of headlines which remind us just how significant and important it is to get on with the recommendations in this report. For instance, one headline states: "Letter links Ministers, PMO to contract". This refers to the allegations of influence peddling and the involvement of Ministers of the Crown and members of the Prime Minister's Office in manipulating contracts through the system.

Another headline refers to the swirl of scandals surrounding various contracts that had been let, and the fact that many of them were not going to the lowest bidder, but appeared to be offered as a result of political involvement by certain lobby groups or individuals.

Another headline quotes the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), who said just a few days ago that the Government had a grave problem of the public's perception of his Government's morality.

Indeed, we are discussing the morality of the Government itself in terms of how it deals with the letting of contracts, how the tendering process is set up and who uses certain influence in manipulating these contract procedures that result in a certain political outcome.

Another press clipping comments on the influence peddling charges against a certain Member of Parliament. Another headline refers to influence peddling in the awarding of a contract for the construction of a federal museum in Hull, Quebec. A headline from yesterday states: "RCMP Probing Tory Influence Peddling". This refers to people within the Prime Minister's Office.

Another headline in *The Gazette* in Montreal states: "Millionaire insists PM interfered in lawsuit".

We need not spend more time reminding ourselves of how complicated and confusing the situation has become. That is why I believe today's debate is most appropriate and I congratulate the committee members and the Chairman for their unanimous report which perhaps shows the way out of this morass.

I hope the Government will see fit to act now. My colleague, the Hon. Member Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), who began the debate for the New Democrats on this concurrence motion, reminded us that it was way back in September, 1985, when the Prime Minister said: "We will require, amongst other things, paid lobbyists to register and identify their clients". He went on to say that he had asked his colleague, the former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, to prepare on an urgent basis legislation to govern lobbying activity.

Of course, we want to accept the Prime Minister at his word. After all, if we cannot trust the Prime Minister's word, whose word can we trust? We heard the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) indicate that immediately upon his return from Africa the Prime Minister would make a statement on actions that the Government of Canada planned to take. He has been back for two weeks, but there is still no hint of a statement. I noticed today that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader (Mr. Lewis) indicated that perhaps there would be no statement at all. One begins to wonder to what extent we can accept the word of the Prime Minister. He said back in September, 1985, that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I am not convinced that the comments on this particular issue are relevant to the report.

**Mr. Riis:** I appreciate the point, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I can make this link: When the Prime Minister indicated in September, 1985, that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs would prepare on an urgent basis legislation to govern lobbying activity, we were expecting that such legislation would be on the floor of the House for debate within a matter of weeks or months.

● (1240)

You and I both know, Mr. Speaker, that if we want to avoid dealing with an issue, there is no better way to do that than to send it off to committee for study and after many weeks and months, perhaps we can study and evaluate the report and hopefully the problem will go away, if it is a messy situation. Did the Government bring in legislation on lobbying? No, it gave it to the committee, and what we are discussing today is its excellent report after a thorough examination.

I do hope, as a result of what has happened with the Government over the last few weeks, it will see the appropriateness of taking steps to set the whole process of lobbying right. The Government should not only do it right, but should set it up in such a way that it is perceived to be the right, thorough and just approach to the whole matter of lobbying.

The Minister who spoke previously, of course, is very interested in the generic drug Bill, the changes to the Patent Act which will, in my estimation, give some advantage to the foreign multinationals in the drug business. It is interesting to see who lobbied on behalf of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada, in other words, the 65 drug companies which wanted to have this change made to the