

Registration of Lobbyists

Member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, as also the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton, would be aware of the efforts of Bill Kelly, for example. He is one who comes to mind quickly, a person who has worked very hard on behalf of the Conservatives in Ontario and who knows how much he has raised and who knows whether or not he ever got paid. I do not. Nevertheless, he could be considered a lobbyist. Is that not fair? But he may not fall within the jurisdiction of this Bill. In any event, I make these points. I think they are important. I think there is value in what is being offered. It will find favour with us if amended appropriately. Maybe we can dash this Bill off to committee now, get the committee working on it, make it law, and we will have served the public of Canada in the process.

Mr. Gary F. McCauley (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating the Hon. Member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore (Mr. Robinson) for once again drawing our attention to this important issue. He is, of course, building on the arguments advanced in this House before by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker), as my colleague here says, with eloquence and passion. It was a privilege to hear him once again on this subject which we know is dear to his heart and important to us all. As my colleague, the Hon. Member for Etobicoke Lakeshore has said, this is a subject that has received a thorough airing in this House and also in other places.

I refer to a 1979 symposium organized by the Conference Board of Canada. The topic was: Lobbying: A Right? A Necessity? A Danger? Lobbying is probably all of those things and more.

I believe it is important that we define what we mean by lobbying. In a speech on his Bill in January, 1977, the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton defined lobbying as:

I think of a lobbyist as someone who seeks, by means of contact with persons of power or influence, to have a significant effect on executive or legislative actions to be taken by the Government of Canada. Lobbyists may act directly for themselves, or on behalf of organizations which hire professionals to make their case. Lobbyists are, in short, special interest and pressure group publicists or their representatives.

That definition encompasses quite well one kind of lobbyist; those whom we would call special interest advocates. It seems to me that is the same kind of lobbyist to whom my colleague, the Hon. Member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore was referring. But there is another kind of lobbyist. There is a group or an individual who could be defined as a public interest lobbyist, a citizens' interest lobbyist.

In the symposium organized by the Conference Board of Canada, this type of lobbyist is well defined. The distinction is well made. Let me quote from the symposium as follows:

Public or citizens' interest groups can and should be distinguished from special interest groups. Public interest groups have no financial or other vested interest

in the causes they support—They want a better society and so challenge politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen and others to take into account in their decision making aspects of the public interest that might otherwise be overlooked or not given proper weight.

This morning, those of us in the Atlantic Government caucus had an example of that kind of public interest lobby group. We had before us representatives of the International Union of the Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of Canada, Local 3, Saint John, New Brunswick. They presented to us in a forceful and passionate way their beliefs regarding the shipbuilding industry, not only on the East Coast of Canada but on the West Coast and wherever that industry is situated in this great country. They did a fantastic job presenting their case. We were very impressed by the quality of their arguments. I do not think any of us who heard them would be of the opinion that they were a special interest advocacy group about which we have to be concerned, that they were the kind of people who had to be registered, noted and so on.

Another group who fits this category about whom I would like to make note, and I am sure my colleagues in the House who have had experience with them will agree with me, is made up of the various and sundry groups throughout the country who represent the UFFI home owners. They were pleading and lobbying all of us in various and sundry ways and were a great help in forming Government policy, in responding to the needs of these people with UFFI in their homes. They were a great help to us in the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs when we studied this whole question of how UFFI came to be and how the whole problem arose. This group appeared at committee meetings and made their point succinctly and well. They were of great assistance to us. No one in the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs would say that these people should be registered, noted, or that a record should have been kept of who they were and from where they came.

I do not think any of us in this House this afternoon would have any objection to public or citizens' interest groups. There is no need to take note of them or to register them. There is no need to register those who speak for the poor, the dispossessed, the unemployed or the powerless in our society. In fact, some would argue that such groups should be assisted by Government to lobby. That would create certain problems, but it is a point worth debating.

May I call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): It being six o'clock p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 2(1).

At 6 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.