

Lobbyists Registration Act

pursue Members of Parliament, the Senate, and the bureaucracy to achieve certain ends. Such firms as Government Consultants International and Public Affairs International will make certain contacts for a fee.

One may gauge that the effectiveness of such groups may be based on expertise and intimate knowledge of Government. However, it is perfectly clear that when one examines closely the way these organizations work, particularly GCI operated by Mr. Moores, one must be suspicious that it is not the expertise developed by virtue of education or anything of the sort, but the personal contacts and influences gained over years of intimate involvement in partisan political activity. That is what gives such organizations a special claim.

Furthermore, it appears that such a consulting organization may measure its fee on a contingency basis. If it is pursuing a contract like the Airbus contract, amounting to billions of dollars, such a consulting organization could earn millions of dollars. Obviously, the message to all Canadians is that the more money one has, the better one is able to influence the outcome of a bureaucratic or governmental decision. That is an important consideration in the issue of transparency of lobbyists and knowing how much it costs, how much is paid, how much changes hands, and for what. It is important to know what is being discussed and who is involved, because it could constitute a form of extreme prejudice to the rest of the population of ordinary Canadians who cannot mobilize these huge sums of money. This is one example of the application of a particular approach to charging clients to obtain goals on their behalf.

If we are going to have legislation to make lobbying transparent, it is self-evident that we should know what fees are changing hands. We should also be aware that if the size of a contract determines the fee, it will introduce the kind of bias and motivation to make as much as possible at whatever cost.

Contingency fees should be banned and we should ensure that we know what fees are being charged so that we do not create a situation in which wealth, even more than now, will determine a business' ability to gain an appropriate response from government.

Others have spoken about the artificial division between Tier I and Tier II. Tier I constitutes consulting firms such as GCI and PAI. The purpose of this artificial division is to create a loophole so vast as to provide all the room necessary for another scandal, which the Government needs desperately. We have a crazy situation in which the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association can spend all the money it wants and hire a former Liberal Minister for all kinds of money to do nothing but lobby while calling her a vice-president. She would not be included in this legislation.

Mr. Keeper: Who is it?

Mr. McCurdy: I would not mention names because that would be unparliamentary and impolite. This former Liberal Minister, in the face of purported Liberal opposition to Bill C-

22, was suddenly hired as a lobbyist, with the title of vice-president of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association of Canada. Surely her activities and activities like those should be registered in the same way as those listed in Tier I. That is elementary.

Since this legislation creates an artificial division, excluding from effective registration employees who function as lobbyists, it is an essential waste of time. This legislation is more rhetoric than substance, and therefore it fails.

There are other shortcomings in addition to those which I have already enumerated. This legislation is so deeply flawed that it should be rejected on that basis alone by any rational person who wants to make lobbying as transparent as it should be. The Government wanted to pass the test of honesty and fairness. I am happy to join my colleagues in voting against this legislation until something better comes along. We know that it will not come with this Government. We will have to wait until more rational and principled heads take power.

Mr. Kilgour: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that I think he is intelligent. He, along with his colleagues, is being a little more than self-righteous about these matters. What would be their reaction if we brought to the House Conservative Party resolutions that were sponsored by Joe's Diner, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, or General Motors?

I have noticed lately that his Party has resolutions from certain locals of unions. I believe the Canadian Auto Workers Association can introduce motions directly at his Party's semi-annual conventions. How can he to pretend for one moment that he is acting in the interest of his ordinary constituents, young, old, and of all incomes? In fact, the joke is often made that Bob White runs his Party. I do not think it is a joke; I think it is a reality with respect to the trade issue.

● (1720)

How is it that the Hon. Member can pretend that he is so virtuous and speaks for ordinary people when in fact members of one particular interest group can introduce motions and have them passed at his Party's conventions?

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to get a question from a colleague whose intelligence, which I also respect, is indicated by the frequent occasion he has to criticize the shortcomings of his own Party. However, there is that Tory flaw. The Hon. Member asks how we can talk about lobbying when UAW, the Womens' Incentive Centre of Windsor, or the farmers of Kent County can bring in resolutions that become a party policy. That is exactly the point.

Any policy initiative of the New Democratic Party is derived from a clear identification of source, and those who join our Party have the right and responsibility to determine what the policies of our Party will be. It is easier for the Hon. Member. His Party does not do that. Its policies are made in that chair right over there, and I suppose even the Hon. Member wonders where they come from, he has questioned them so frequently.