

Committee Reports

would represent 30 or 40 sheets of paper a day. If we multiply that by the size of the Government, I do not know what it would mean administratively. We must look into that in order to develop a system which is administratively simple. We are struggling with that issue. The House may be sure that we will come up with a recommendation.

I do not want to take too much more of the time of the House. The debate which has gone on for months, indeed years, is reaching its climax. The legislation will be brought forward in very short order. We hope that with the passage of that legislation we will all contribute toward elevating the reputation of the process and the system to a level above that to which it has fallen in recent times. It has fallen to such a degree that we are all tarnished, those who are the recipients of the targeted mud and those who are the throwers, because in the process we all end up muddy. The country is damaged as a result.

Again I would like to acknowledge publicly the excellent work done by the committee under the chairmanship of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Peace River. Unanimous reports are few and far between in this institution and when we get one we want to act on it. That is the intent of the Government.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, the Minister used as an example a company in Ottawa wanting to bid on a contract, as compared to a company in some other part of the country. He said that the company outside of Ottawa may hire an agent. The agent, of course, is covered by our registration proposal. We would also cover the company in Ottawa. At page 214 of the report we say: "Employees or officers of nongovernmental business organizations, nonprofit organizations, volunteer groups, single interest groups and foreign nationals who, for pay or other benefit, perform duties which, from time to time, include lobbying". Therefore, I can tell the Minister that we recognized the problem and tried to cover it with that.

We place the responsibility for enforcement firmly in the lap of the Assistant Deputy Registrar General. He will be empowered to check the files for deficiencies. We also say that he should be given investigatory powers and should receive complaints and enforce compliance. If he finds a deficiency or noncompliance, he must take the appropriate action, which would be to refer the matter to the appropriate authorities. The use of similar statutes, sanctions and punishments would also be set out in the Bill. We hope the appropriate sanctions will be in the Bill, such as banning them from registering.

● (1230)

Of course, that raises the very important question referred to by the Minister: what does the bureaucrat or MP do when someone phones to make an appointment to talk about a certain contract or project? Perhaps the onus could be put on the bureaucrat, MP or Senator to inquire first as to whether the lobbyist is registered. I do not know how this could be done, but it is something the Minister may consider. Possibly a phone call to the Assistant Deputy Registrar General could

confirm the registration since there are also time limits within which they must register and deregister. This places some onus on the individual MP and the bureaucrat to make sure that they protect themselves by determining if the lobbyist is indeed registered.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the comments made by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt. However, in terms of that onus, while we will meet it somehow, the concern is not to create a torrent of paperwork within some registry.

Personally, I see delegations and people in my office here as well as in Calgary. I see people in other parts of the country as a result of my travels on behalf of my Department. It is sometimes difficult to draw the distinction between what is lobbying and what is not and when we should check.

We are considering a variety of ways to deal with this problem in a way that will be administratively simple. This will take some time, but as usual, when we talk about general ideas and try to make them law, questions such as these with which we must deal inevitably arise.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Prior to resuming debate, the Hon. Member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper) wishes to make a point of order.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, if you were to ask, I believe you will find that there is unanimous consent in the House to revert back to presenting reports from standing and special committees.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there such unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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ELECTIONS, PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURE**PRESENTATION OF THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the third report of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedures.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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ELECTIONS, PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURE**CONCURRENCE IN FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Rodriguez that the first report of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure be concurred in.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to make a few comments in