

Registration of Lobbyists

action, to make representation, to travel overnight to Ottawa, to stand on the steps of Parliament, to visit with Members in their offices, or to telephone at their own expense. Sometimes they share among themselves, but there is quite a difference between the view they might express as a result of their very strong convictions and the view which might be expressed by someone pulling down \$100,000 or \$200,000 simply for being available to express a view. We have to be able to measure that in our judgment about the force of the argument and the level of commitment.

Let us be quite fair. There may be someone living in Vancouver who has a very strong sense of miscarriage of justice in a particular issue. He or she may, together with some friends, pay the expense of coming to Ottawa to visit various Members of Parliament to express a concern. Such people are not lobbyists in the sense of the word to which this legislation refers. Indeed they are lobbyists inasmuch as they are lobbying Members to gain favour for their points of view. We are not talking about these kinds of people. We are talking about persons sitting in offices somewhere in high-rise towers. Not only are we talking about them, but about those who make the trip for considerable remuneration or at someone else's expense to present a well-thought-out brief which pays little attention to other matters than that it must be done in a professional and very technically correct manner. I do not want to leave the impression that we are in any way trying to do anything to keep down the level of public participation by anyone, but particularly by those whose opinions are being expressed because they are their opinions.

I say to the Hon. Member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore that I do not think I would be wrong in saying that no doubt he received at least one letter as a result of the recent statements of the Minister of State for Mines (Mrs. Erola). In fact, he smiles; I bet he even received two letters. I have received literally hundreds of letters from people who are vitally concerned about the statements of the Minister. Each and every one of them wrote to ask me to ensure that this proposal never saw the light of day. Each one asked me to do all in my power to keep the Minister of State for Mines from imposing her nutty scheme on the people of Canada. I am sure Liberal Members have also received similar kinds of communications. I can only suggest that the people writing to us are doing so in good faith. They are lobbying us quite justifiably. They are saying, "For Heaven's sake, stop that madwoman before she goes too far", and I agree with them. They are not the kind of people about whom we are talking in this legislation. We are talking about the Bill Lees and the Bill Nevilles of the world and the others moving in and out of the circles of Government, lurking behind the scenes in the halls, carefully sidling up to people at lunch and whispering in their ears.

It happens to all of us at some time. I am referring to people who attempt to influence us on behalf of others. It is time we all knew who they were. If someone walks through our doors, calls for an appointment or writes for an opportunity to come before a committee or to speak to us, we ought to be able to refer to a register and see who is this person and whom they

represent, so that we are able to make a judgment about his or her commitment to the cause being presented. Not only that, we might even want to make a judgment about such a person's contacts or general background so that we know—not because it would influence us—or sense how to deal with the individual in the question placed before us.

It was interesting when the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton pointed out a dilemma in terms of the soft drink association, was it?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Yes. They were very constructive comments.

Mr. Deans: It was a very constructive comment. I could relate to it because it was what was in my mind when I read the Bill. How would we deal with associations? How would we register them? Whom would we register officially? Would we make a provision for others to represent them? If so, at what cost if at all? Would they all have to register? That crossed my mind; we could deal with it in committee. Would we register law firms? There are many legal firms which take on substantial lobbying efforts. If I am not mistaken, I think the petroleum association was represented by a law firm. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I cannot tell you.

Mr. Deans: In any event, it seems to me that the petroleum association was at one point represented by a law firm. Would we register the firm? Would we register the principal within the firm? Would we register the individual? How would we go about doing that? To what extent would we have to have disclosure?

A question was posed as to whether we would want to know the level of income. I think we would be going a mite far if we asked for that, but by the same token there is some cause to look at the question of substantial contribution. For example, lobbyists could receive a substantial contribution and act, for want of a better word, as bagmen for one of the two major political Parties, Liberal or Conservative. Even though they may not be receiving any direct income from the work they are doing on behalf of contributors and, therefore, might technically fall outside the area of this particular law, they could nevertheless be influencing for gain, which may in fact turn out to be gain such as an appointment to the Senate. I think that is not unreasonable. I have looked around and I have seen some who have been appointed to the Senate who have been very active in the raising of funds for one or other of the Conservative or Liberal Parties and who have not perhaps received, I am not sure, any money personally for the lobbying they did on behalf of certain special interest groups but who gained, nonetheless, from their efforts.

• (1750)

I want, therefore, to make the point that the bill is somewhat deficient in dealing with that problem. I think that as we get it into committee, and I hope we will any minute now, we will be able to keep that in mind too. I am sure that the Hon.