

We recommend that the Assistant Deputy Registrar General be given sufficient investigatory powers so that he can enforce compliance with the requirements of the register of lobbyists. This would include the authority to receive complaints, carry out investigations in order to verify the complaint and where he deems it necessary refer the matter to the appropriate authorities for further action.

We recommend that the statute establishing the register contain penalties for non-compliance which would be severe enough to make compliance a desirable and necessary goal on the part of lobbyists.

The Registration of Lobbyists and Our Legal System

We recognize that the introduction of a law requiring lobbyists to register and to disclose certain information represents a new departure for our legal system. It is therefore important in this context that we consider how it will interact with existing laws.

The registration of lobbyists is an attempt solely aimed at the disclosure of information, not regulation of a profession. It is not our intention in any way to limit access to public servants or Members of Parliament. The registration requirement does not interfere with one's right to petition Parliament to seek redress of grievances. This is one of the main reasons why we have recommended a system which is easily complied with. We feel that registration is the least restrictive way to deal with political intercourse.

We have heard arguments on the subject of the Access to Information Act and The Privacy Act on the basis that both acts militate against the release of either commercially sensitive information or personal information such as "information relating to financial transactions in which the individual has been involved". We strongly believe that the public's right to know in the field of lobbying activities takes precedence over these prohibitions on release of