

*Motions*

I have appreciated the opportunity to speak on this issue, to be part of the debate and to concur in a report of which I am particularly proud, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank each and every Member of the committee who was with me through that process because it has been a very good one, one that has been educational as well as profitable.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Chairman of our committee, the Hon. Member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper) did an excellent job in outlining some of the difficulties that we had concerning registration of lobbyists. One of our recommendations concerned those who initiate and are paid to organize mass mailings, advertising campaigns to disseminate material designed to influence Government through public opinion. Would the Member comment on that as well as on the requirement to register non-profit organizations, volunteer groups and single industry groups, the conditions under which we want them to register their lobbyists?

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, dealing with the non-profit groups, this area caused a great deal of difficulty for the committee because we did not want in any way to appear to be restricting access of the general Canadian public to either their own Members of Parliament or to the Government at large. In this particular circumstance we have asked that groups which are strictly made up of volunteers having no salaries or contracts not be included in the registration. However, if you have a group that is a volunteer organization—let me pick one out of the air, let us say the Red Cross of Canada—which has an official who is paid a salary or has a contract to engage in lobbying—if that person is in part a professional lobbyist and it is part of his job description—we ask that such people be included in the registration. We are trying to get at the “professionals”. We are not trying in any way to restrict access, but we are trying to register those who do lobby in a professional capacity.

Regarding what I call the political action committees in the United States and mass mailings, it is difficult to tell where that will go in Canada. We do have a sense that that area will expand. Because that is a professional form of lobbying and activity that, as I mentioned earlier, is highly financed and well organized, we felt that it should be included in the registration. We feel that this may well be something that will happen in the near future. That is why we used the word “indirect” in the report.

● (1210)

**Mr. Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, I heard the Chairman of the committee just say that groups like, for example, the Red Cross would be asked to register as a volunteer organization. That response confuses me a bit because on page 4 of the report, the committee says that it has determined that for the present, volunteer associations, single-interest groups and non-profit associations would not generally be required to register. I wonder if the Hon. Member could clarify that for me.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, again, the distinction is the definition of a paid versus an unpaid lobbyist. There are volunteer organizations that have in their employ people who are paid to lobby. That changes the role of those individuals. They then become professional lobbyists.

Let me give two examples that I think will help clarify this situation. Group A is a volunteer organization. No one in that group is paid a salary to do any kind of lobbying. Group B is also a volunteer organization but it employs one individual who may be called a government relations officer or perhaps a chairman who is paid a salary or is on contract. Part of this person's responsibility is to lobby. That individual, because he is paid, would then be included in the registration requirements. The person from Group A, on the other hand, receives no salary or payment for lobbying. That is where we drew the line for those who ought not to be registered.

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, it a pleasure to participate in this debate and to add a few comments to the very worthwhile comments that have already been made by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) and the Hon. Member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper), the Chairman of this committee which did very excellent work. If you will permit me to make a comment as an aside, Mr. Speaker, I could not help but think, as both Hon. Members commented on the intent, purpose and motivation for this recommendation respecting lobbyists, that we want to see who is doing what to whom, where and when, that that might very well be an accurate description of what a peeping-Tom might say about his motivation.

**Mr. Cooper:** We will register them too.

**Mr. Andre:** However, there is not only unanimous agreement in the committee but in the House that registration of lobbyists is an important and timely issue.

The Hon. Member for Nickel Belt has asked that the House move concurrence in the recent report of the committee. Certainly I as Minister responsible for this particular area have no difficulty in supporting that recommendation. As the Registrar General for Canada, I am likely to be responsible and have the responsibility now for creating and maintaining a registration system. The committee has made many valuable recommendations and I am presently working to produce a proposal which takes those recommendations into account wherever possible. I hope to bring that proposal before my cabinet colleagues within days as opposed to weeks or months. From that process, hopefully legislation will flow to be presented to the House in relatively short order.

The principles about which the committee talked and the principles dictating our work in the Department and before Cabinet are openness, clarity, public access and administrative simplicity. We want there to be openness because, while peeping-Toms or voyeurs are in certain circumstances engaging in activities which are improper, when it comes to government activities, a degree of voyeurism is necessary. We