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**Chapter 9: Citizens Effecting Change**

**Influencing Government pp. 291-296**

Canadian citizens can influence their government by contacting their local government representative, public servants, or the media. However, individual contact may not be the most effective way to initiate change. Special interest groups, known as **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, can initiate and influence government change more effectively. There are two kinds of pressure groups. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** groups are formal organizations that promote their interests, such as Greenpeace and the Assembly of First Nations. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** groups are informal organizations that promote a specific goal and then disband after accomplishing the goal. Free the Children is a pressure group that was started by a Canadian teenager and has success around the world. The goal of this group is to end child labour.

Pressure groups influence government by providing research and information about their cause. Pressure groups can use a **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, a person paid to represent the interests of a group, to get their message to government. Public interests groups can pay for this through **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** or funding from the **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. Unfortunately, government funding is not guaranteed and can be pulled if the pressure group disagrees with the government providing the money! There is the possibility that lobbyists can influence government policy for their own **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, not for the public. Also, there is a concern that pressure groups can have too much influence over government, promote **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** interests, and not represent the wishes of the majority.

Individuals and pressure groups can also use the **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** to create change in government policy: they will interpret the law within the context of the Constitution and the **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. This can cost money and even if the court strikes down a law, it cannot create a new one.

The media has a role in influencing government policy. Traditional **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** media forms, such as television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, are still actively used. In recent years, **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** media sites have also become an important way to influence government. Media reports on government actions, criticizes the government, questions government decisions, and represents the opinions of the people. Media is a double edge sword for politicians: it can work to your advantage to get your message out and connect a face to a name, however it also allows maximum exposure of mistakes and faults. All forms of media are powerful and political parties will higher media consultants, also called **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, to help shape their public image.

Just like we need to be aware of the role and power of pressure groups and lobbyists, it is important to know what media does. The media can highlight important issues that the government needs to address, however it can also be selective about what issues it chooses to publish. In Canada, media ownership has become concentrated in the hands of a few corporations. As a result, news comes from limited sources and Canadians do not have access to different viewpoints. The I**nternet** is now a place people can go to get different viewpoints.

One way to change unfair government policies is through **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**: intentionally breaking laws considered unjust. Martin Luther King, Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela used this form of protest to affect change in their individual countries. Civil disobedience can be **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** or **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, should only used when there is **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** from the law itself, and participants need to face the consequences of their actions.

An example of civil disobedience in BC was in **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** on Vancouver Island in 1993. The issue was **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** logging in **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** forests. Protestors resorted to many forms of civil disobedience, including blockading vehicles, “sit downs” on the logging roads, and chaining themselves to trees and/or machinery. The RCMP was brought in to restore order. Consequences for civil disobedience ranged from warnings to fines to jail time. This civil disobedience forced the government to change its logging practices in the area at the time and even has ramifications today.