

Time Allocation

it is much easier to carry out medical research in that country. This is why I think we are being misled when told that in the future, thanks to Bill C-22, the multinational drug companies will take advantage of the new Canadian situation to create jobs and launch scientific research and development projects in this country.

Hogwash, Mr. Speaker, nothing in the Bill guarantees that and gives Canadians any reason to believe that the multinational drug companies will promote research and development in Canada. It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, but again the Government is taking the gloves off and resorting to closure. And considering their overwhelming majority, 211 against 40 and 30, a total of 70 Opposition Members, they do have the big end of the stick. Once again, Mr. Speaker, they are using their majority to push through a Bill which we feel is bad and regressive and should be withdrawn.

[English]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): I am in agreement with the statements of the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) regarding the Government going ahead today with the time allocation. Mr. Speaker, I wish to say to you very clearly that it is almost without precedent that the Government has introduced a closure motion after only three hours of debate on second reading of any Bill in the House of Commons.

Mr. Gagnon: That is wrong.

Mr. Nystrom: An Hon. Member says that I may not be right on that point, but I would like the Hon. Member to pull out the facts and point out where I am wrong. I have been in the House since 1968, and I cannot recall a time when the Government has brought in time allocation after only three hours of debate on second reading. That is all we have had on second reading of the Bill dealing with pharmaceutical changes in this country. So it was without precedent. It is not fair, and it is not just. I am sure that even the government Members themselves are not too happy with this. It is a question of the Government trying to cut off fair and proper debate. The Parliamentary Secretary himself, when he was in opposition, was very concerned about closure and time allocation. Here the Government brings in time allocation after three hours of debate on second reading.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, it is without precedent in our parliamentary system that time allocation should be introduced after just three hours of debate of a bill on second reading—three hours only. It is most important that we have debate on that issue which is so essential to senior citizens here in Canada, to the sick, the families, the single-parent families, etc. It is most important that we have an in-depth debate. However, the Government has decided to cut the debate after only three hours at second reading stage.

[English]

This Bill is very important. It is very important for the pensioners. Pensioners are now organizing against this particular legislation. It is also an important Bill to many poor people, because with the increase in the price of pharmaceuticals it is the poor people who will suffer. It will not be the wealthier Canadians who suffer. It is very unfair that the Government is bringing in closure at this particular time.

In many ways, it is also a turnaround for the Conservative Party. They sat in opposition year after year and complained about time allocation being brought in, sometimes after a Bill was in second reading for several days. Yet now when they are in Government they are even worse than the Liberal Party was when they were in Government, in terms of the allocation of time in the House. Once again, this shows the Canadian people why the Conservative Party is falling faster in the polls than any Government in the history of Canada has fallen. We have never seen a Government fall so quickly in the public opinion polls all across the country. One reason is that they often mislead the Canadian people, and this is just another example when it comes to freedom of speech and freedom of expression in the House of Commons.

The reason that we were delaying getting to the time allocation motion is that the Government has done an impact study which shows that by 1995 the annual cost increase of drugs will be some \$650 million per year. Canadian people should know that the Government's own study shows that the annual cost increase of \$650 million per year will cause difficulty for ordinary Canadians. That is why we have been stalling in getting to this time allocation motion. That is why we have been saying that we need time for a full and free debate in the House, and a full and free debate across the country in terms of a parliamentary committee.

During the negotiations that broke down yesterday, I thought we had offered a pretty reasonable package to the Government of a little more debate on second reading, a committee which would travel to major centres to hear from ordinary Canadians about the pharmaceutical Bill, and then a reasonable time on third reading. The Government has rejected that, because it wants to impose a limit on all stages of debate on the pharmaceutical Bill.

You have been here as long as I have, Mr. Speaker, and I cannot recall a prior occasion when a Government has tried to impose a limit on all stages of debate, maybe with the exception of the energy Bill a few years ago when the bells rang for some two weeks. That was a real crisis. We have never had that happen before. At that time there was an agreement to end the debate in that way. If there was a guillotine, this is really it.

We in our party want the Government to do two things. First, we want them to release the studies that have been conducted on the impact of changing the patent laws on the price of drugs in Canada so ordinary Canadians will know what they will be hit with in terms of drug prices. The Party