

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 27, 1969

The House met at 2 p.m.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received, which is as follows:

Ottawa, November 27, 1969

Sir:

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Emmett M. Hall, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, acting as Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 27th November, at 5.45 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

I have the honour to be,
sir,

Your obedient servant,
Louis-Frémont Trudeau
Assistant Secretary to the Governor General

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

MISCELLANEOUS ESTIMATES

First report of Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, in both official languages—Mr. Leblanc (Laurier).

PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

Second report of Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections—Mr. Laflamme.

[Note: Text of foregoing reports appears in today's Votes and Proceedings.]

[English]

DRUGS

STATEMENT ON FIXED COMBINATIONS OF ANTIBIOTICS

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, as a result of several inquiries, mainly from the hon. member for Winnipeg North, I wish to make a statement concerning antibiotics and their labelling.

Several announcements have been made recently by the United States Food and Drug Administration that certain combination drug

products will be removed from the market. This action was based on reports from the drug efficacy study group established by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council that products containing fixed combinations of antibiotics are ineffective for claims made in their labelling.

We are well aware that fixed-ratio drug formulations have been the subject of controversy in medical circles for some years. However, in spite of the opinions expressed in the U.S.A., there are some physicians who believe that these combinations are of value and would wish them to be retained on the market. The debate as to whether fixed-ratio combinations should be prescribed is a matter which properly rests with the medical profession.

Nevertheless, some months ago the Food and Drug Directorate, Department of National Health and Welfare, initiated discussions with Canadian manufacturers of certain antibiotic combinations. If these investigations show the need, manufacturers will be required to include additional explanatory or cautionary information on the label of the drug or in the professional literature accompanying the drug or being supplied to the professions. If evidence is obtained that these combinations are less effective than their individual components or if they are found to represent a hazard to health, the directorate will take further appropriate action.

● (2:10 p.m.)

The directorate has authority under Section 9(1) of the Food and Drugs Act to prevent the sale of a drug product that is labelled in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive in regard to its merit or safety.

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the minister for giving me advance notice of this statement. I am glad he has realized there has been a mild controversy in medical circles for a good many years about fixed combinations of antibiotics. Those who work in universities and hospitals tend to believe that there should not be combinations while those who are involved with the general care of the public have often thought that in certain cases these fixed combinations are of value.