

*Patent Act*

Why is this basic principle of intellectual property rights suddenly so different when it comes to the pharmaceutical industry? Well, it is not. It is just that the opposition Parties want to gain some political mileage by striking fear into the hearts of Canadians through unfounded allegations.

Without adequate patent protection, Mr. Speaker, there is no incentive to invest or create. If we applied the current pharmaceutical patent legislation to all creative thinking in Canada, we would force all our inventors and creators out of the country. We might even lose a few members of the Opposition who think they have a new idea once and a while.

In the case of the pharmaceutical industry, we have seen the results of the 1969 policy; no significant investment in Canada, no research we can call our own and sell to the rest of the world, and no jobs for our bright young researchers in the biomedical industries. So they leave the country. Maybe that is acceptable to some Members, but it is not acceptable to me.

The second point is the industrial benefits of our policy. We have not even passed the legislation in this House and already there has been more than \$800 million in new research and plant expansion commitments. That is money taken out of the country before our proposed changes. That is money which the generic money manufacturers did not invest even when they were getting a free ride under the 1969 policy. This \$800 million is not an investment in one facility, in one location, in one region. We are talking about more than \$200 million in Quebec, upwards of \$80 million in British Columbia, at least \$70 million in the Maritimes, about \$100 million in Alberta and more than \$250 million in Ontario. These investments do not include, of course, the aggregate increase in investment over the next few years, which will see every region of Canada benefit.

For instance, of the \$400 million earmarked for educational and research institutes, almost \$50 million will go to Manitoba. That to me, Mr. Speaker, seems to be a pretty important and substantial contribution to regional development in Canada.

The \$800 million in planned investments to which I referred earlier is part of a package worth \$1.4 billion over the next 10 years, 10 per cent of sales, up from 4.9 per cent. These funds will not begin to flow until after our legislation becomes law. That means every day of stalling by opponents exacts a price in terms of industrial benefits and health care research. More than that, every day of delay in passing this Bill means it takes that much longer to reach the research and development targets of 8 per cent of sales after four years and 10 per cent after 10 years.

The opposition Parties attack this Government constantly because they feel we are not doing enough for the regions. Here we have a policy which does not rely on government grants, which are favoured by the Liberals, it does not rely on government subsidies and takeovers, which are favoured by the New Democratic Party, but it is the private sector at work,

doing what it does best. Why are the Liberals and New Democrats condemning it? That was a rhetorical question, Mr. Speaker. They are condemning our policies only because if they did not, they would not have anything to say at all.

The infusion of funds in our universities, teaching hospitals and private research facilities will help build a greater pool of expertise in this important area. The Opposition tells us this Bill is a bad thing. But then we are told that research and development funds are extremely important to the future of Canada. Well, Mr. Speaker, I wish the opposition Parties would get their act together. Here we have a policy that puts private sector money to work in our universities and research institutes, a policy that brightens the future for our talented young research scientists here in Canada, and the Opposition is telling us that we are doing the wrong thing.

I have the feeling that these misguided opposition Members would not be happy until the Government announces travel subsidies for our scientists and biotechnologists so they can seek research jobs overseas. That is the approach they are advocating with their opposition to this legislation, and it is wrong.

Members opposite have raised a great hue and cry about how drug prices are going to shoot so high that the elderly and infirm will not be able to look after their own health. Well, I can think of a lot of words to describe this attitude, Mr. Speaker, but most of them would be ruled unparliamentary.

This Bill provides a number of safeguards. The fact that the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board will function under the stewardship of Dr. Eastman is a safeguard. The federal contributions to the provinces is another safeguard. Finally, there is the type of health care system we have in this country. I think we are putting more safety valves in the drug system than it ever had before. Consumers are not going to suffer because of this legislation. They will benefit. This will be especially true in the area of improved health care. New drugs and new therapies will be introduced earlier. The need for hospitalization will be reduced, perhaps even the need for surgery, because we will have new drugs to cure old problems.

It is incomprehensible, Mr. Speaker, how Members opposite can risk trading away these advantages for a couple of percentage points in the current popularity polls. Do they not realize that they are playing with the future health of all Canadians? I am thinking especially of our increasingly aging population who will need these new drugs more than any other group.

Another point that must be emphasized is that through this legislation we have overcome the blight on our international reputation that has existed since 1969. We are signatories to many international agreements protecting intellectual property. We are entering a new round of GATT negotiations where these rights are being put on the table as part of international trade relationships.