

*Government Orders*

Bill C-91 has no rationale today. It places our health care system in great jeopardy. It will adversely affect our seniors, it will adversely affect young families, and there is no reason for it.

Can we look upon Bill C-91 as an economic tool, or is it a bill that will provide safety and security to Canadians so that they have access to drugs that will cure them of their illnesses and restore them to health? Only then will they have a decent way of living and can participate in the workforce. Those are the questions, Mr. Speaker.

On that basis I strongly oppose Bill C-91. May the government have a change of heart and withdraw this bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to what my colleague opposite had to say about this most important legislation, Bill C-91. He is in a very good position to appreciate the problems caused by this legislation because, as it turns out, he is a medical doctor, someone who is well aware of problems in that community. It is interesting to note that in the medical, hospital and health care providers community, he does find flaws in this bill.

I listened carefully when he mentioned the negative effect this bill will have on older people. I would just like to point out to him that various seniors groups from Quebec and elsewhere in Canada have already made it clear they are dissatisfied with this bill. I would also like to call his attention to the fact that the provincial health ministries have already registered their disapproval of this bill, which is quite interesting considering the bill provides for a marginal increase in investments by pharmaceutical companies, which in turn would create jobs. However, the provinces are not convinced. They said: "Perhaps there will be a few little jobs created here and there and a slight increase in investments but, all in all, we the provinces will have to pay more, a great deal more, for those few extra jobs".

I have two questions. The hon. member mentioned two things. First, a document he is hoping the minister will table in this House today in order to have a better idea of the effect Bill C-22 has had so far. I would like to know what document he is referring to and what use it is to us.

• (1320)

My second question is the following. Does he not find somewhat disturbing the fact that one of the main lobbyists for this legislation on pharmaceutical products is a former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, namely Mrs. Judy Erola? I met her back in those days as a consumer advocate from Quebec. This bothers me and I would like to know if it bothers my colleague opposite to see this former Liberal member become the leading advocate for increasing the price of pharmaceutical products.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pagtakhan:** Mr. Speaker, in answer to the second question, I have the highest respect for the former minister Judy Erola. She served our country well. She is now head of that industry association and I congratulate her for that. Of course she will present her point of view to us and that, in a real sense, is the challenge and the test of the maturity of democracy in our country, that we can hear opposing views.

However, I am not troubled because I know where I and my party stands. Am I troubled? The answer is no. We are testing the maturity of democracy in this country. Ms. Erola has her point of view and we have our policy position in the interest of Canadians.

In answer to the first question, the document I was alluding to that I would like the minister of health to table is a report commissioned by the department of health. It has asked Dr. Denis Gagnon of Laval University to look at and review the drug approval process for Canada and to see how we can make it more efficient so that there will be a speedier process and no backlog. Its advantage is that it will also enhance the introduction of essentially important new drugs for the benefit of consumers. It will also benefit the industry. I think this is excellent.

In a sense what I was saying earlier is that there already is the potential benefit coming in, not through Bill C-91, but as a consequence of the present legislation. Therefore, we do not need Bill C-91.

If we extend the monopolistic control on prices to any one group of companies and if we eliminate compulsory licensing altogether, as is envisioned after this Bill C-91 is passed, there will no longer be any incentive to go back to the drawing board and discover new drugs because the profits will be so lucrative that there will be no more incentive to discover new drugs. In a sense by having a conclusion or an end through compulsory licensing we