

Patent Act—Trade Marks Act

examine. Consideration will have to be given to some substantial reduction in the manufacturing cost of drugs to pay for what the government is spending to have the Food and Drug Directorate police this operation.

I hope research will not suffer. Canada carries out a small but significant amount of research in this field involving the employment of a considerable number of our university graduates. We were informed in the debate last Tuesday that university graduates are looking for employment opportunities in this field. It would be unfortunate if this research was phased out and carried on elsewhere.

The supplying of drug information or promotion is a sore point but unfortunately this activity is necessary to some degree. The Russian drug industry complains bitterly that there is not sufficient promotion and physicians and institutions use the drugs the pharmaceutical industry of that country promotes. The government is going to get into the field of promotion by providing a drug information chart. One wonders how effective this information will be in view of the fact that the average physician receives 20 or 30 sheets of drug information per day. I hope it will be of some value inasmuch as initially \$400,000 or \$500,000 is being spent in this connection.

I wish to comment on drugs for elderly persons. Much has been said about this bill lowering the prices of drugs which will assist the elderly and infirm. Unfortunately it will be of little value to these people. Even if the profits of the drug manufacturing companies were reduced to zero, the saving would only be a few dollars now to those chronically ill elderly persons who spend from \$10 to \$40 per month. Our society will have to look for some other way to provide for these people. A great deal is expected of this bill that will not be forthcoming. Consideration should be given to a drug subsidy for chronically ill people. Many provinces are already doing this.

The statement of the minister emphasized that the probable effect of this drug bill could well be the importation of drugs from outside Canada. The manufacturing of drugs in this country is almost completely concentrated in Toronto and Montreal. If this bill does what is suggested, then the fact that more drugs will be imported from overseas will create a better trading balance for those parts of the country that are far away from the manufacturing centres of Toronto and Montreal. I speak particularly of western Canada with

its resources-based economy, exporting its products to Japan and western Europe. In turn we can now expect that drugs imported from outside Canada will be manufactured in Japan, one of our Pacific rim trading partners, and in the countries of western Europe such as England, Germany, France and Switzerland. As a result this bill may encourage better drug manufacturing facilities all over the world and benefit us all materially in that way.

• (2:50 p.m.)

Mr. Ed Schreyer (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I express the hope just as earnestly as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) that the passage of Bill C-102 will be of immediate tangible benefit to the drug consumers of Canada. While I share this hope I am not as optimistic as the minister that the bill in fact will have that kind of result. It is my sincere belief that the bill once passed will have a marginal beneficial effect.

I do not intend to say anything at all about the issue of quality control and its implications so far as the bill is concerned. My colleagues spoke at length about it during the committee hearings, and last night my colleague from Winnipeg North put considerable evidence on the record to show that there is considerable disagreement among the top experts in the field on this matter. Quite a number of experts in the industry made very plausible arguments that the bill's effect would be to cast serious doubt upon our ability to maintain quality control at the same high level as in the past. On the other hand, the former commissioner of the United States food and drug directorate said we should not take too seriously much of what was said by spokesmen for the industry in connection with quality control and generic drugs.

With respect to the price of drugs it seems to me that Bill C-102 will go part way toward reaching the goal we have in mind. It would be far more effective had the government seen fit to cast aside its ideological bias and accept the kind of thinking implicit in one of the amendments that my colleague from Waterloo wanted to move earlier today. I refer to the amendment calling on the government to establish a crown-owned drug manufacturing corporation. I urge that this be done if for no other reason than that it would have a beneficial effect by serving as a yardstick with which to compare the operations and the pricing policies of the private drug manufacturing corporations.