

Government Orders

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-91 is designed to encourage science and technology, to promote greater experience on the markets and to help our researchers meet the challenges which arise—

[*English*]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, this borders on privilege. Lest we get off on the wrong foot here, I know the member has laid the groundwork for his speech but I would not want him to leave the impression that I had given false figures, false information, to the House. If he is saying I did that then I want him to withdraw it. If he is saying he takes issue and differs with the figures I have used, that is one thing; but the way he has said it may leave the impression—and I hope he will clarify it—that I have delivered false information to the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Speaker, I hope that you will not take from me the time that the member spoke, but I must say that my hon. Liberal colleague has the wrong figures.

As I was saying before I was interrupted, our researchers must meet the challenges that arise in the international markets. Better patent protection will help us reach our objectives sooner and more effectively.

In our country, we have all it takes to be a leader in pharmaceutical research. Our medical profession is known for its excellence. Names like Banting, Penfield, Pinel and Selye have made us world famous. Our health care system is also the envy of the whole world.

Being from Laval, I personally knew Armand Frappier, who invented the first penicillin vaccine.

We also have a skilled labour force. Our tax credits are among the most generous in the world. But we lack something essential, namely protection for intellectual property to match the protection offered by other industrialized countries, patent legislation that would let us be competitive in R and D investments.

Since 1984, the government has attached high priority to reforming Canada's intellectual property legislation. It is part of our efforts for economic renewal.

• (1230)

Nevertheless, the government has continually had to fight to update, simplify and, I would even say, standardize these laws. The complaints expressed by the hon. members of the opposition do not surprise me at all. I remember that we had many difficulties with Bill C-22 that were often due to partisan politics. Through all these years, they have done all they could to compromise the progress we wanted to achieve.

I heard opposition members say that the government was rushing through second reading. They seem to forget that we are talking about an investment of some \$500 million. Innovative drug companies have said that they would invest such amounts after they heard the government say last January that it would strengthen patent protection for pharmaceutical products.

The investments that I am talking about here are of prime importance at a time when the pharmaceutical industry is restructuring world-wide. Make no mistake: many other countries would want to benefit from such investments. If Canada does not act quickly enough, the door that is open to us may close again, forever.

I represent Laval-Est, a riding in the city of Laval, and this bill will help us do wonderful things, which have already begun thanks to Bill C-22. You no doubt know that in our riding we have companies like Bio-Mega, Marion-Merrell, which has been bought by Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals Inc., formerly Nordic Laboratories Inc. We also have Biochem Pharma Inc. I recently heard its president, Mr. Bellini, a wonderful man, not because he has an Italian name but because he has made quite substantial investments in Biochem in Laval. By the way, Biochem has the rights for a drug to treat AIDS called 3TC, which was developed by a Quebec researcher, Dr. Bernard Belleau of McGill University in Montreal. This vaccine will be a Quebec product and the research and manufacturing will be done in our riding, in Laval, Quebec.

If these laws can help these people to invest but, as my opposition colleague just said, prices rose, I would not agree. When prices did not rise, they said it was due to the recession. If prices had risen, it would have been someone else's fault. It is always someone's fault. For now, the price has not gone up—it must be due to the