

That is the kind of discussion we should be having in committee. Why will the New Democratic Party not help us take it to committee?

COST OF DRUGS—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, in light of all the evidence, why is the Minister the only one in the world who believes that the cost of drugs in Canada will not be higher than they otherwise would be as a result of this legislation which he is insisting on imposing on Canadians?

• (1500)

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think almost everyone noticed the change in tone from the questions the Hon. Member's neighbour asked earlier in terms of prices. However, let me indicate, as I indicated earlier, that on average the generic competition has taken 11.5 years to come on. This Bill provides for generic competition after seven years if it comes through manufacturing. In fact we could and should have that discussion. We should look at costs and benefits, jobs, and the fact we are going to have people doing research, looking for cures for the sick and elderly, about whom the Hon. Member's Party claims it is concerned.

PATENT PROTECTION FOR MANUFACTURERS

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs just repeated for a third time today that it takes on the average 11.5 years for a generic drug to come on the market. Can the Minister explain why he is now offering the brand name manufacturers a 10-year protection?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the explanation is very simple. For an individual company planning a research program, trying to develop a new drug, which takes about \$100 million, averages are not that helpful. The company could be driven out of business in three or four years or five or six years. It needs the security of the 10 years to do its planning, to do that research and to employ perhaps some of the Hon. Member's constituents.

Mr. Broadbent: Their profits are already higher than the Canadian average.

REASON FOR PROTECTION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Eastman thought that four years was enough. However, if it takes these companies three or four years to develop the product, as the Minister says, why would they need the protection, since the Minister says that it takes on the average 11.5 years for a generic product to come on the market? That is hard to reconcile.

Privilege—Mr. Reimer

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of debate we should be having in committee.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: Right here.

Mr. Axworthy: This is the House of Commons right here.

Mr. Riis: This isn't the Petroleum Club, Harvie.

Mr. Andre: Let me repeat again, averages are very important to provinces which deal with over-all costs. Averages are not very helpful to an individual company which might be hit with a generic competition. I believe if the Hon. Member thinks about it for a while he will see that is a pretty reasonable argument.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Government House Leader for a statement of Government business for the coming week.

And also, if I may do so, I would ask that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre) table in the House the letter from which he has quoted so fulsomely but not necessarily completely.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, we will be proceeding with Bill C-22, Bill C-25, Bill C-18 and Bill C-19. Next Friday the House will not sit because of a very special event taking place in connection with the Liberal Party. With respect to the tabling of the letter by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, I am sure that he—

Mr. Andre: I just did.

Mr. Mazankowski: He has already done so voluntarily.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Clerk has the letter in question and I would be pleased to table it formally.

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PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS

Mr. Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of Hon. Members an application on a question of privilege and recognize the Hon. Member for Kitchener (Mr. Reimer).