

Time Allocation

Mr. Mazankowski: Not officially, but the Bill has been in the public domain for consideration. It is not new. There has been debate even though it has not always taken place during the course of the allocated time. This issue has dominated a good portion of Question Period.

We have been reasonable in trying to work out a realistic and sensible solution. Having failed, I regret that we have to move in this fashion and I commend passage and acceptance by all Hon. Members of the House.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I am surprised by the move of the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski). We are not surprised by the Government utilizing tricks about which it has become quite expert. Some of us believe the Tories wrote the book on all the dirty tricks that can be used.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gauthier: The Deputy Prime Minister is using very creative accounting when he says that this debate has been going on for some time. The fact is that in total we have spent six hours and 47 minutes on this most important Bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, there was one hour and thirteen minutes remaining in the eight-hour period normally allowed, during which Members may use debate to explain their positions. I think all Members will agree that at the second reading stage we are considering the principle of the Bill. And to prevent us from continuing consideration of Bill C-22, which we feel is a bad piece of legislation that should be withdrawn . . . We wish the Government would understand that public opinion, that Canadian men and women don't want to be saddled with measures as regressive as this one. And speaking on behalf of—

Mr. Charest: The National Assembly is unanimous.

Mr. Gauthier: —speaking on behalf of those Canadian men and women you are constantly ignoring, we want to make this Government understand what is so wrong with this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the Minister, who may not have had time to familiarize himself with the Bill, I may recall that with this Bill, the Government wants to amend the Patent Act where it concerns pharmaceutical products. These are major amendments which, according to many experts and many Canadian men and women, will increase the price of pharmaceutical products for the consumer and also, for many people, make it less likely they will be able to purchase drugs.

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-22 is also a bad Bill because it will affect the neediest, people who cannot afford to buy these drugs and who often have to forego good medical care because the price is too high. And here is a Government that says no, we are going to remove the protection consumers enjoy because generic products are competing with the pharmaceutical products manufactured by the multinationals.

Mr. Speaker, during the few minutes I have left, I would like to try to explain to the House that the argument that this legislation will stimulate research and development does not hold water. It does not stand up to an objective assessment. We all know, we have heard it in the course of debate, and Members have said that the multinationals have made profits. And these are not my words, but the Task Force on Pharmaceutical Products has often said in its reports that the drug companies were making a reasonable and sometimes very substantial profit, thank you very much, from their operations. My point is that there has been no undue competition from the companies manufacturing generic products and that the existence of these companies has not kept the others from making a profit. But, Mr. Speaker, there are some aspects which should be stressed besides saying that it will mean increased costs for consumers and provincial Governments which, in many cases, pay for drugs used by elderly citizens—

An Hon. Member: Read the Bill.

Mr. Gauthier: I beg your pardon, does the Minister want to speak? I regret, Mr. Minister, but look at the facts: Nova Scotia said it did not want it. They said so the day before yesterday, keep up with the news.

● (1240)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Would Hon. Members please address their questions through the Speaker.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-22 entails additional expenditures for the provinces. As a matter of fact under the provisions of the Bill the Government will give the provinces \$100 million over four years to compensate them for these additional outlays. The \$100 million are a tacit admission that the provinces will have added expenses as a result of this measure. It is also the best proof and example that the Government is yielding to American pressure just so Canada can sign a free trade agreement with the United States no matter what it may cost. To this end the Government is quite prepared to sell, give or abandon absolute control over the Canadian market to the multinationals, and we know this is bound to have a negative impact, Mr. Speaker.

I realize that I do not have much time, barely a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, but I had drafted a whole speech because I thought I would be here tomorrow and have my 20 minutes to explain the research and development issue, because this is where we must force the Government to come clean. We have no proof that the multinationals have invested in research because, even though they may have been posting good profits until now, they have not done any drug research in Canada. As anyone would expect, they do that where they are headquartered, in the United States or elsewhere in Europe. They do no research in Canada because the market is too small. They keep saying that the Canadian market is made up of only 25 million people, whereas they have 225 million in the United States and