

REQUEST THAT MINISTER RESIGN

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Eastman has been quite clear in his position that only competition from generic drugs has been keeping prices down and that the projected law before the House will destroy that competition. I suggest to the Minister in the strongest terms possible that both yesterday and today, through his performance in the House, the Minister has been misleading Canadians.

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I wonder if he has not come to the conclusion that he ought to resign his portfolio.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the only person misleading Canadians is the person who is saying that drug prices will rise as a result of this legislation. That is misleading and is designed to frighten those—

Mr. Riis: They will.

Mr. Andre: They will not.

Mr. Riis: They will so.

Mr. Andre: I challenge—

Mr. Isabelle: Put your seat on the line.

• (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Hon. Minister could complete his answer.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the letter I am holding will cover any questions of differences of opinion. In terms of the details of what will be the effects of the legislation, the proper forum for doing that is in fact committee. That is how our parliamentary system is designed. If the Opposition will co-operate in that—

Mr. Speaker: The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Minister refers to a difference of opinion, but Dr. Eastman is very clear and very specific when he states that the price of drugs will increase. The Minister says no. We take the position that in the circumstances, the Minister has misdirected the debate on this issue and he should now do the honourable thing: he should hand in his resignation to the Prime Minister. Is he going to do that?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the letter contradicts what the Leader of the Opposition says. If a drug is introduced at the price of a

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dollar under the old law, it will be introduced at the price of a dollar under the new law. The purpose of the Drug Prices Review Board under Dr. Eastman is to ensure that that happens. Prices will not rise. What will rise are research and development activities. What will rise are jobs in this important sector. Why is the Liberal Party opposed to research and development and jobs for Canadians?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER DRUG PRICES WILL INCREASE

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The Minister is contradicting his own words. Monday, when he answered my question about the \$100 million granted to the provinces, the Minister said: "I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the \$100 million way more than covers any additional costs". "Any additional cost" . . . ! Mr. Speaker, that is an admission that prices will increase. Yesterday, in answer to the same question put by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Sudbury, the Minister said: "I hope he was careful to listen to what I have been saying all along, that the price of drugs will not go up by a penny." Could we have the truth, once and for all? Are prices going to go up, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the truth lies in recognizing the difference between price and cost as we move from the old regime to the new regime. Because of the backlog of some 41 generic copies which have generated as a result of the intended change, there might be some increased cost to the provinces, not because of any increase in price of drugs.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: I repeat, not because of any increase in price of drugs. In June, 1983, the Liberal Party stated that to generate further growth in this industry the Government of Canada had decided to change the Patent Act to rebalance the 1969 policy. We are going to do that. Why has the Liberal Party changed its mind?

[Translation]

SITUATION OF CONSUMERS

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, at his press conference this morning, Mr. Calenti of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada said that if the Bill is passed, they will have no option but to increase the price of generic drugs. Since the Minister has no control over the industry's decisions, how and by whom will Canadian consumers be protected?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I was very disturbed to see that threat.