

Patent Act

and the elderly which brought in the 1969 Patent Act amendments. It was the then Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in 1968 who introduced the Bill and is now the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner). Another Minister continued with the same Bill after it had stayed on the Order Paper and died because of the very successful 1968 election. The new Government continued this very progressive legislation which lead to lower drug prices and to a situation which was very helpful for very many Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, if the Bill before the House today were to go through all stages in the House and end up as an Act of Parliament, most of the Members of this House would still be able to buy the pharmaceutical products they need, there is no doubt about that. Nor is there any doubt that a large number of Canadians will not be affected by these measures. However, I have to say, as the Member for an electoral district that is not very wealthy, that many of my constituents will have considerable problems when they will want to purchase the drugs they need.

[English]

The Liberal Government recognized that more funds were needed for investments in research so that our young people could have jobs. Our Government appointed the Eastman Commission and it produced a report. This is not to say that with the Liberal laws now in force that Canada lost a substantial portion of its investment. As a matter of fact, Dr. Eastman in his report, which I have here, says that:

Total expenditures on intramural research and development for the pharmaceutical industry were equivalent to 3.5 per cent of the value of factory shipments in 1967 and 3.8 per cent in 1982.

Therefore, the legislation that is in force now has not drastically reduced investment, at least not according to Dr. Eastman.

However, no one should be satisfied with that. Of course we want more investment into that area. We also want the people to be able to afford to buy what the factories produce. That surely should be the main concern of Members of this House, Mr. Speaker.

Let me talk a bit about the growth of the industry. I refer you to page 65 of the Eastman Report from which I read the following:

Increases in both the total number of employees and production and related workers only has been greater in Canada than in the United States. Though these differences in growth since 1967 are relatively small, they are indicative of a more buoyant market for pharmaceuticals and medicines in Canada than in the United States.

You see, Sir, that the existing legislation, in spite of what these Tories across the way are leading you to believe, has not been all bad. It has lead to lower drug prices than otherwise. Many people would argue that it is still expensive and too expensive when you need to buy drugs, but in any case we do have lower drug prices. We have not, according to the Eastman Report, reduced the amount of research proportionately. It is greater now than it was before this legislation was

passed. Finally, the report says that Canada has been an area of larger growth for that industry than the United States.

Why do we now have this Bill, Mr. Speaker? Why do we have a Bill that will give 10 years of protection for patent holders in some cases and seven years of protection in others? During this 10 year period manufacturers of products will be able to charge virtually anything that they can get away with in the market-place.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Canadians will be hard-pressed to pay the additional, yes, I say additional, costs they will be charged as a result of this Bill, Bill C-22, if the House decides to approve the proposed legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Eastman Commission suggested a happy medium that would be just about fair. The Commission recommended four years of exclusivity. In the former Minister's Bill, the Government offered ten years of exclusivity in every case.

After last summer's Cabinet shuffle, the new Minister shortened this somewhat by granting ten years in some cases and seven in others, but still twice as much as the Eastman Commission recommended.

It is difficult to understand why the Government insists on pursuing this Bill. Some of us, however, have drawn our own conclusions. Some of us believe that pressure has been put on the Government of Canada by the US Administration, and that is why the Government wants to proceed with this legislation.

One thing for sure is that the American drug manufacturing multinationals have made strong representations to U.S. administration officials urging them in turn to lobby here in Canada to have us amend our legislation and make it more favourable to the Americans in terms of profitability.

• (1230)

[English]

I will bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, a few examples of how prices are more advantageous to Canadian consumers under our present law than they are to consumers in the United States where producers of prescription drugs can charge almost any amount. The Canadian generic price for chlorpropamide is \$19.03 for 1,000 250-miligram tablets. The brand name product in Canada sells for \$141.80. The brand name product in the United States costs \$431.58. The price ranges from \$19 for the generic Canadian product to \$431 for the U.S. brand name product. I have a whole chart of such examples.

Why would the Government want Canadian consumers to pay \$431.58 for something for which they now pay \$19.03? Is it reasonable to want the Canadian consumers, whom we are here representing, to pay those exorbitant prices? Surely, Mr. Speaker, being the objective person that you are, you have