

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in today's debate and speak to the first motion, the first amendment to the bill. I congratulate the hon. member for Dartmouth who so ably defended the interests of Canadian consumers and all Canadians who will suffer the disastrous effects of this Tory policy.

[English]

The Canadian Medical Association testified before our parliamentary committee and talked about this bill. Members across will say: "Don't worry, be happy. Prescription drugs only form a small part of the total health care bill anyway". That is the Tory argument.

The Canadian Medical Association told us that the amount now spent on drugs exceeds the amount spent on physician care in this country. It is a large component of our health care costs. The CMA should know something about it. It appeared before our committee and said that unless the bill was amended, it could not support it. I challenge any member across to say otherwise. That is exactly what was said. I was at the committee.

Even those who favoured the bill felt that it should be amended, that it should be strengthened to protect the consumer.

[Translation]

For instance, I have a letter here from the Montreal Urban Community, dated December 1, 1992. I will read a few passages. I quote:

— new powers enabling the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB) to calculate reasonable prices for new drugs and enforce them;

That is one of the amendments they want. They also want the following:

— a clear definition of what constitutes R & D spending. In our opinion, it should include basic research activities, the development of new products, and clinical research, not marketing research.

So you see that even groups that are in favour of the bill want certain improvements. These are people who happen to like the bill. Imagine what some of us who do not like the bill think.

[English]

I am one who does not think much of all this. My colleague has proposed an amendment with regard to the retroactivity provision.

We asked the members across at committee, the minister and the parliamentary secretary why we have this retroactivity provision. The first thing is they refused to admit it is a retroactive provision. To do something retroactively is not retroactive if you are a Conservative. This needs further explanation, as the House can imagine.

The government says it is a phase-in, it is not retroactive. It is a phase-in in reverse from the date that it is applied, but it is not retroactive. I would like the government to explain that a little better later so that all Canadian consumers can understand that concept.

People had applied, people had been granted something and it is cancelled after it was approved. For me, that is retroactive.

Imagine driving down the Queensway in Ottawa at 100 kilometres an hour, the speed limit, and someone changes the speed limit today to 80 and says you were driving at 100 kilometres last week, therefore you are fined. Imagine that parallel. That is exactly what we are doing. That cannot be right.

I say to the members of the Conservative Party, even if they insist with proceeding with this legislation, there is no way this legislation should come into effect prior to the date of proclamation. They will say it only comes into effect on the day of proclamation, but it is effective a day previous, December 20, 1991, which is retroactive. They are saying that is the fault of Mr. Dunkel and the Dunkel report on the GATT negotiations.

First of all, we have not concluded those discussions yet. We have not agreed to them. Assuming for one minute that we agree to what is in there, which is not at all clear at this moment anyway, and proceed from there, should there not be a phase-in to adopt what is in the Dunkel report?

**An hon. member:** GATT allows that.