

Oral Questions

Mr. Andre: If the Hon. Member is really interested in Bill C-22, its provisions, and its effects on manufacturing, research, and health care of Canadians, he will co-operate with the House in sending his Bill to committee where we will have all of these discussions as parliamentary procedure dictates we should.

POSITION OF MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, we know who influenced the Minister. Mr. Stettler of the U.S. multinationals said last month that the November 7 Bill is more satisfactory to them than the June one. He claimed the penalties in the June Bill were too harsh. Can the Minister explain why the U.S. multinationals are happier with this Bill than with the June Bill?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, one of the people who influenced me on this Bill was Dr. Philip Seeman, the head of the Pharmacology Department of the University of Toronto, who said in Toronto yesterday:

Senior citizens are being seriously misled by politicians, who tell them prices will skyrocket or that their provincial drug plans may be cut, but they're being denied drugs that could improve their life.

We want to stop that denial.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHY AMERICAN MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES PREFER NOVEMBER 7 BILL

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the Minister was influenced in some way. On a program televised by the CBC last month, Mr. Stettler, representing the U.S. multinationals, said that the Bill introduced on November 7 was more acceptable than the June Bill. Could the Minister explain this preference of the U.S. multinationals?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I was also influenced by the writer of a letter to the editor in Saturday's *Globe and Mail* who said:

As a father of two children with cystic fibrosis I find appalling the hysterical criticism by, among others, the opposition parties concerning proposals to amend the Patent Act.

Our family literally depends for its survival on more and better drugs. Companies producing only generic drugs have contributed nothing to our survival and will not in future.

Any proposal that will encourage the development of better drugs deserves universal support.

I support that father of sick children and the father of any sick children who want more health care in this country. If the Member does, she will support this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1425)

PROPOSED COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question on the same subject is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Government House Leader. I was just informed before Question Period that the Government has refused to go along with a request to have a committee studying this Bill go to Halifax, Vancouver, Montreal, and a number of other communities, and that the Government plans to bring in closure. Will he tell the House if the real reason that the Government will now try to stop this Bill being discussed throughout the country with the people of Canada is that he has been informed by the Nova Scotia Government that it wants the federal Government to withdraw the Bill because, in the view of the Nova Scotia Government, this Bill will serve only the interests of international drug companies and that Nova Scotians ought not to be treated like guinea-pigs?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Not at all, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that we have had discussions for some time, trying to work out a proposition. I believe the Government has put forth a very reasonable proposition, with additional time for debate at second reading, and conditions to travel. It is certainly a new step in the new spirit of parliamentary reform to have a legislative committee travel and visit various cities across the country, as was requested by the New Democratic Party. We were really proposing up to two and a half months for further consideration of this Bill.

What we are really after is to allow the debate on this Bill to go ahead so that all Canadians and all parliamentarians can get a full understanding of the comprehensive nature of the Bill, and all the facts can be laid out on the table so that the people of Canada can judge. However, the opposition Parties have been frustrating our attempts to bring the Bill ahead and send it to committee for full discussion.

PUBLIC'S VIEWS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that what the Government really wanted to do in those negotiations was effectively shut off all debate in the House of Commons after the committee hearings took place outside the House of Commons? Will the Minister confirm that? More specifically, will he acknowledge that the Government of Nova Scotia, a Conservative Government, has now joined with thousands of Canadians across the country and demanded that this Bill be taken off the Order Paper?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party keeps insisting that the people of Canada only see things his way. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has been citing many, many experts on this subject who fully support