

I would like to remind the Minister for International Trade about the World Economic Council report which stated that Canada's health and education systems give us competitive advantage. Well, let us treat our health care system with care and not imperil that advantage.

• (1310)

I wish the minister could have spoken to one witness, a mother, who appeared before the standing committee on health and welfare. Speaking about the death of her daughter from hepatitis B, these were her words: "After my daughter's death, we were all vaccinated against hepatitis B and we were paying \$137 for three shots. It varies from clinic to clinic, and probably from city to city but in fact that is far too high. The federal and provincial governments have worked hand in hand and then we must bring the pharmaceutical companies to be responsible and give us a fair price because this is outrageous. They are just raping the citizens. We cannot afford this cost factor and it is not necessary".

I wish the minister had heard those words. Perhaps the minister should also try to listen to the seniors of this country, like those in Manitoba, those in Winnipeg North who launched a court action against the government because of the threats of Bill C-22. Now we are even going farther. Indeed, it is a disgrace that we are proceeding with this bill.

I bring to this House a certain amount of experience as a clinical doctor and a medical teacher. I know that if this government really wanted to help our universities, teaching hospitals, scientists and technicians it would have defined research and development by demanding a quota of basic research.

In one study published by the department of economics of the University of Pennsylvania in the journal *Research Policy* in 1991, looking at the role of basic research and how it has hastened the introduction of new drugs, the average time lag between the conclusion of the relevant academic research and the first commercial introduction of the innovations based on this research was about seven years. The estimated sales and savings of these new products to industry accounted for over \$30 billion. We do not need Bill C-91 to ask our pharmaceutical industries to invest in research and development, there is already the moral force.

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Academic research has allowed them to come seven years earlier than would have been possible. They have an obligation to contribute to research and development. They have an obligation to contribute to a medical discovery fund even without Bill C-91. Then a decade later, two decades later we would see what has happened.

Who does the minister serve? Does he and his government serve the people of Canada or multinational giants? I think the answer is clear. Nearing the conclusion of my debate today with the query directed to the minister of health, I know he has in his possession a study done by a University of Laval professor, Dr. Denis Gagnon. This study recommends to the government ways to clear the drug approval backlog and make our system even more efficient.

I estimate that in fact we will reduce the delay in the approval process by at least one year. That is one year of additional exclusivity already from the notice of compliance. Therefore, why has this minister of health not tabled in the House of Commons a document that I understand already exists and has been on his desk since July? I call upon the minister of health to release that document so that it can be part of the relevant debate today.

In closing, I wish to bring to the attention of the House the concern that this bill really fails Canadians in many, many ways. Once again, *The New York Times* of yesterday said that the differences in the price of drugs in Canada and across the border in the United States is anywhere from 5 per cent to 183 per cent. Take one group of drugs, those used for anxiety. The cost of drugs across the border in the United States is about 183 per cent more. No wonder they is a lot of anxiety in the States. Are we to import that level of anxiety to Canada and increase the price of drugs?

The argument that will be used to develop research and development, to encourage more jobs in this country, is the same argument used in 1987 when Bill C-22 was passed. It is the same old argument. In fact, Mr. Stewart MacLeod in a special article in *The Free Press* published last July 6 reminded us that if jobs are to be created in the pharmaceutical industry we must also remember that jobs may be lost from the generic industries. So there could be a balance.