

*Government Orders*

What happened? In spite of our history of pharmaceutical research in the Montreal area, activity in that field has decreased dramatically. What happened after Bill C-22 was passed in 1987? Research enjoyed a real boom. Why is that? It is because it is impossible to ask people to invest in research for 10 years or more in order to develop a product without ensuring in advance that the patent will be protected for a reasonable length of time at least.

All other developed countries have legislation that we are now agreeing to align ourselves on. If Canada is looking to innovate, it should be promoting research through tax incentives instead. There would be major things to change there. As far as patents are concerned, how can we ask companies which are in fact multinationals that can set up wherever they please in the world to come and invest here when the protection they get elsewhere is for much longer?

As a matter of fact, all the speeches on the price of pharmaceutical products and the threat to the health system we are hearing now we have heard before, in 1987. I remember them clearly. I was working for the City of Montreal, the Montreal urban community, at the time, and was sitting on the regional consultation committee which in fact was promoting Bill C-22 on pharmaceutical patents.

That bill was delayed for months by a Senate controlled by the Liberal Party. We debated it for months on end and a slew of arguments were put forward by dozens of witnesses and organizations from across the country. All the fears expressed then were later shown to be false.

What do we see now? We see a strange phenomenon concerning the Montreal region. Since this debate began in the House and in committee, I would like to know where the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel was to defend Montreal's interests? Where was the member for Saint-Denis? Where was the member for Saint-Henri—Westmount? Above all, where was the member for LaSalle—Émard, who writes nice articles on Montreal's development in the newspapers? He has a good opportunity to speak now. We have a law that is important for Montreal and no one spoke up, no one appeared in the

committee. They let people from the rest of the country speak against the bill.

An amazing thing this morning was the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell using the letter sent with the Montreal Urban Community's brief to speak against the bill. That is amazing. No Liberal member except one from Ontario spoke. He misused the letter because it begins, "We are for Bill C-91—". The letter does indeed say that to promote real basic and applied research, some restrictions should be made, not in Bill C-91—that is not what it is about—but in the Income Tax Act, on the kinds of expenses that are eligible for R and D tax breaks and in particular spending on commercial research. That is a correction that could have been made. Keep in mind that a partial correction was already made to the previous law, where any management expense was eligible.

What we see is the hypocrisy of a national party. When Montreal's interests are at stake but it bothers Liberals in other parts of Canada, all these people from Montreal say nothing, do not go to the committee and stay out of sight. People from other parts of the country speak against, but none of the members I just named, who claim to defend Montreal's interests, got up. We will see how they vote tomorrow. We see this kind of situation all the time when Montreal's interests are at stake. Those people hide, as they hid in 1987.

Why is it important for Montreal? It is important because we have very broad experience in clinical research. We also have basic research institutions like the biotechnology institute and the new pharmacology research institute. We have faculties of medicine and university research centres that are recognized throughout the world. All those people asked to pass patent legislation similar to what exists in other developed countries so that they could be as competitive and attract investments. In fact, we have had substantial investment projects and this is a rapidly growing sector despite the economic crisis.

I can tell you that I will vote for Bill C-91, as will all Bloc Quebecois members. In future, we can remind all the public of how the Liberal members from the Montreal area voted. If they vote against Bill C-91, they will have shown once again that when Montreal's interests are at stake, they hide behind the curtain or vote against.