

Privilege—Mr. Riis

too much of a political opportunity. I think we have some political opportunism here in the House now.

Mr. Speaker: This will be the last question in Question Period.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question too is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. He will know that senior citizens, the poor, and working-class Canadians are appalled at the gouging that is taking place at the hands of multinational corporations. They are even more appalled by this in view of the Minister's statement of November 18, 1986, when he said that the price of drugs "will not increase by one cent, not those now on the market, not those coming onto the market".

What is the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs prepared to do today, not next week, next month or next year, to protect Canadian consumers from an unprecedented rip-off by the multinational corporations? What will he do?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped that the Hon. Member might have had the integrity to read the entire quote in its context. I said there was nothing in Bill C-22 that would cause the price of existing drugs to go up by one penny. That fact was even acknowledged by the most severe critics of Bill C-22 and the Hon. Member knows that. I wish he would stop misrepresenting my position in that regard.

Second and most important, Bill C-22 provides for the first time at the federal level an agency that looks at the price of all drugs, not only those that have generic competitors, and will be exercising a downward pressure. It is not in existence today or fully operational because of the delays of the Hon. Member and his colleagues in the other place. As I said the other day, if he wants to find a villain, he should look in the mirror.

REQUEST THAT PRICE INCREASES BE ROLLED BACK

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. It is not I who have raised the issue of integrity, it is this Minister. It is not only an issue of the high cost of prescription drugs, it is an issue for the Prime Minister and the Government about the integrity of the Government and how it keeps its commitment—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member will put his question.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, in view of the clear, unequivocal commitments the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs made to the House and Canadians that there will be no increases in the cost of prescription drugs, will he rise in his place today and give a clear undertaking to those consumers, senior citizens and the poor, that he will roll back those prices and reimburse Canadian consumers? Will he do the honourable thing?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what one can do to prevent members of the Opposition from making those patently false statements the Hon. Member has just made. It was an absolutely false statement.

Perhaps the Hon. Member should also be a bit more responsible and cease trying to invoke the elderly and the poor, and recognize that in Canada all senior citizens are covered by drug plans. In Canada, no one goes without drugs for lack of money. Everyone on welfare receives drugs.

Finally, the Hon. Member should acknowledge that under Bill C-22 there is, for the first time at the federal level, an agency looking at the price of drugs and exercising a downward pressure. He should be applauding the Government, not invoking these false, phoney accusations of which he has just been guilty.

Mr. Dingwall: Supplementary—

Mr. Speaker: I know the Hon. Member would want to pursue this matter, but the time for Question Period has expired.

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PRIVILEGE

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT—ACTIONS OF FORMER COMMISSIONER

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a Question of Privilege arising out of the actions of the former Commissioner of Canada Elections, Mr. John Gorman, in a decision he took during the investigation into the breaches of the Canada Elections Act of the Hon. Member for Frontenac (Mr. Masse) and several of his associates during the last federal election campaign.

I would like to begin by reviewing the mandate of the Commissioner of the Canada Elections as laid out in Section 70(3) of the Canada Elections Act which states as follows:

The Chief Electoral Officer shall appoint a Commissioner of Canada Elections—

Mr. Speaker: I certainly have every intention of hearing the Hon. Member, but before the Hon. Member gets too deeply into his argument could he assist the Chair by setting out exactly what he feels is his point of privilege? That, I think, would give the Chair some assistance. If he could do that, then the Chair might be in a more comfortable position. At the moment, I am having a bit of difficulty understanding exactly where the argument may be leading.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intervention and I will do just as you have requested. I believe that there is a case of privilege in that the actions of Mr. Gorman have diminished the public's respect for the House of Commons and for