

Government Orders

The fear that is being raised by some members of the opposition, not by my hon. friend particularly, that somehow there will be a huge price increase and the report in *The New York Times* are issues based upon less than factual information. They do not take into consideration the fact that we will have the PMPRB with enhanced authorities and enhanced abilities to ensure that drug prices are kept in line.

The information that the government has put forward is based on the understanding that the PMPRB will have these authorities and that we will have the ability to continue to regulate drug prices in the same way as we have in the past.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, if I let the hon. member have it her way, she would say that the price increases are to be so modest as to be negligible and let us not worry about it. Then I would ask her: Where are the millions and millions of dollars that the pharmaceutical companies have promised, and in fact are blackmailing us with, for new investment and research and development going to come from?

They are not going to come from the goodwill of the companies. They are going to come from the price increases. There is only one source; it is from price increases. If we have \$500 million going back out in reinvestment, which we are not going to have, then we need to have \$500 million coming in the front end.

There is only one place that supplies money for the front end, and that is the Canadian consumer or the drug plans. It is all coming out of our pockets. If it is \$500 million in, it is going to be some hundred million dollars out, but a chunk of that is going to go to profit. It is going to go to marketing. We are simply adding more gasoline to the engine. That is what we are doing.

Maybe some people think that is great, but when we are paying for the gas we have to question its efficiency and we have to question its appropriateness. In this case the government is simply not measuring accurately.

I do not know who has the right figures. All I know is that there are a whole lot of promises from a whole lot of companies made contingent on the passage of this bill and they are only going to happen because the prices go up. We know who is going to pay the prices and I leave at that.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of intent to the previous speaker. I guess I am left a little puzzled. I cannot tell whether he supports the bill or opposes it. I do not know why I should be puzzled because that is the position of the Liberal Party.

I would like him to comment on two matters. This bill was a direct result of NAFTA. Does he and the Liberal Party oppose NAFTA? Does he and the Liberal Party agree that they have to cancel the North American free trade deal which is the result of Bill C-22?

How does he justify or reconcile his position with that of the member for Saint-Henri—Westmount, the Liberal critic on science and technology, who supports the extension of patent protection to the multinational drug companies?

Mr. Lee: I will be clear for the hon. member. I am not supporting this bill, but I know what would make me support it. I would support a PMPRB, a prices review board that had some teeth and could deal with entry level pricing as well as price increases of existing drugs. I would support it if it did not have retroactivity agreed to by a minister who did not have authority to agree to it—that is another thing—and if there were commitments or monitoring mechanisms within the bill to ensure that additional money put into the system was invested back into Canada for research and development and marketing. I would support it if those things were there, but they are not there.

Taking away compulsory licensing with nothing in return leaves Canadians with zero and in the hole. I do not support this bill.

Mr. Karpoff: You support the principle then.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and to Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I would first of all like to say that I too was in favour of Bill C-22 and I must rise in this House to speak for Bill C-91. After all I have heard here, especially when I see my Liberal colleague opposite give figures, I really wonder whether he even knows where he lives, with all the figures he just gave that are completely wrong.