

It is going to be much more.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Up to 14 years.

Mr. Volpe: Up to 14 years, my colleague from Dartmouth says and in fact the average is about 9.5 years. Not only is it going to reach forward, it will also reach backward. I have not seen anything so inane. On a moral basis, it just does not make any sense. On a legislative basis, it is an affront to liberal democratic principles that you would pass legislation that reaches further back and makes criminals of those who have abided by the laws of this country and made investment decisions on the basis of the laws of this country as unjust as they might have been.

No, no. The members of the government opposite are not happy to have pilfered Canadians and pillaged our political system. They want to make sure they burn and raze to the ground any vestiges of Canadian industry, Canadian bio-medical research and Canadian achievement through a medical system that is the paragon of example the world wide. They want to erode for all time the basis of a social policy that might in fact give credence to the claims, to our boasts in fact, we are a truly progressive society and we are doing it on the basis of investment decisions. The members opposite have the courage, the temerity, the effrontery to suggest this bill is necessary so companies can make their investment decisions and bring us money.

One of the reasons we have a crisis of confidence in our political system today among our citizens is we essentially tell all Canadians: "You're fools", and we are if we believe those kinds of claims.

Can you imagine, and this is not a partisan statement, on a very conservative estimate we are going to give, through this amendment, a gift of an additional \$500 million to the brand name companies, the multinationals. That \$500 million has to come out of our medicare system. It is not going to finance better doctors, better nurses or better facilities. It is \$500 million that is going to be taken out of our tax system to give to companies that are already earning 100 per cent return on their investments.

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We are going to do all that and we are going to tell Canadians: "Go ahead, give us that \$500 million per annum over the course of the life of this contract. Do you know what we will do in return? We will throw away \$500 million over the course of the next 10 years and that is \$50 million a year in investments". Good Lord in heaven, there is not a member in this House, even from the NDP, who would not say: "Give me but a tenth of that money and I will gladly throw it back into the pockets of all Canadians through whatever kind of investment, because after all, we are dealing with your money".

This is an insane way to do business. It is a crazy way to run a government. It is an absolutely idiotic way of putting together legislation. If my colleagues on the NDP side are really honest like we are, this needs to be defeated. If passed, it should be rescinded when we get into government.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to speak against Bill C-91. The more truthful title for this bill would be "a bill to increase the prices of prescription drugs and the profits of the multinational prescription drug manufacturers".

The bill does not of course say that openly and directly. It does it indirectly with all kinds of diverting and irrelevant propaganda, including promises of jobs. We have heard this for eight years now: jobs, jobs, jobs. With all this government has done for jobs, we now have 1.5 million Canadians officially unemployed. There are many more unemployed unofficially and another couple of million Canadians who have to depend in whole or in part on government aid. That is the result of eight years of the Prime Minister's promise of jobs, jobs jobs.

That is what the government is promising here: jobs, jobs, jobs. The facts do not support it even on the prescription drug industry, as my colleagues have already pointed out. The fact is we have lost 700 jobs in this very industry, including lay-offs by companies promising to make more jobs.

There was a time when the multinational corporations got the highest price in the world for prescription drugs from Canadians. Our prices were higher than any others. That was before 1969.