

Patent Act

Mr. McCurdy: Let us see if we cannot explain a couple of things to the Hon. Member. I did not object one whit to the extension of debate. I am perfectly willing to work here all night, and I chose my words very carefully, and I repeat again, that this Government is dishonest and hypocritical, and that is in order because it is the truth. On the other hand, distinctly heard on this side of the House was the specific epithet of "hypocrite" directed to me by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. That was clear. That person is, I guess, unfamiliar with courtesy and parliamentary language. However, we will not belabour the point because there are other more important things to address.

I think the most important thing to address within the context of dishonesty and hypocrisy are the statements made a moment ago by the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary when he said that virtually every socialist and social democratic country in the world was condemned to poverty.

Mr. McDermid: He did not say that. There you go again.

• (1720)

Mr. McCurdy: That is foolishness. If those Hon. Members opposite, bleating like the hypocritical lambs they are, cannot accept that truth, then that is unfortunate. That just reflects how ill informed and how little they understand, as they little understand the notion of science and research.

I heard the Parliamentary Secretary talk about how many jobs will be created as a result of Bill C-22. What dishonesty, what hypocrisy from a Government that is about to reject an amendment from the Senate that would make it a requirement that the pharmaceutical manufacturers guarantee that 10 per cent of their receipts be devoted to just that. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre) has said over and over again that the purpose of the Bill is to produce research in Canada on drugs and pharmaceuticals. He has said repeatedly that he has the promise of the pharmaceutical industry, not just for campaign contributions in the future, but for a significant contribution to research in Canada as a result of being relieved from the existence of generic drugs.

If Members of the Government were honest, if they were honest with the Canadian people, if they were being honest with all those young scientists on behalf of whom they purport to act, then they would have accepted this amendment. But we know that it is not the motivation of this legislation to create research in this country. It has always been transparently clear that even when they manage to understand what research and development is about they have not acted in order to encourage it with respect to this legislation or any other.

But with all of the bleating from the other side and the dishonesty from the Official Opposition, it is possible that the electors have forgotten what this is all about. What it is all about very briefly is this. There existed in Canada a situation up until the late 1960s in which the pharmaceutical companies which have fought for and obtained this legislation literally robbed the Canadian people, the sick and the maimed of their

money at exorbitant rates by setting extraordinarily high costs for drugs in Canada, among the highest prices in the world. They made great profits. They made great profits under circumstances which are going to be recreated in Bill C-22. Even while they were making those great profits at the expense of the maimed, the sick and the ill they did not spend a significant penny on research in Canada.

As a matter of fact, while the present legislation has existed, legislation which created generic competition for patented drugs, the rate of research in Canada increased just as did the rate of employment in the pharmaceutical industry generally and which in the latter area exceeded the rate of employment creation in the United States, the home country of the pharmaceutical companies that this Government thinks it was elected to serve.

We have established as a result of the legislation of the 1960s generic licensing which has made it possible for Canadians to get drugs at cheaper costs than in the United States by a significant degree. Not only have we produced less expensive generic drugs but the patented products themselves have been available more cheaply. There can be no question whatsoever that the Government is in the process of legislating a situation in which not only will there not be generic competition, and therefore a situation in which new drugs will cost much more, 100 per cent more—perhaps 200 per cent more—but inevitably the generic drugs will cost more as time goes on.

This results from the fact that instead of the immediate prospect of licensing after a drug has been approved, that is after four or five years, these companies will now have in total 15 years to 17 years. Let me repeat that. Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association companies will have 15 years to 17 years of exclusivity. That means it will be in the year 2004—let me repeat that, the year 2004—by which time generic competitive drugs will be available to the Canadian people in lieu of the patent drugs which will be more expensive on their introduction than they presently are.

We heard yesterday the Liberal spokesman talk about honesty and consistency, and there has only been one spokesman. The Liberals with their tremendous consistency and their tremendous honesty on this issue have shown their true colours. They have quit fighting Bill C-22. Not another word will be heard from them, unless they change their minds. But, of course, they have not been able to get their stories straight. The fact of the matter is that it was a White Paper introduced by Members of the Liberal Government that started the process of this Bill in the beginning. It was they who established the Eastman report. It was the former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who was the initiator of the changes which have been produced through Bill C-22. It was a former Liberal Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who appeared on CTV this morning and argued with her former Liberal colleague about whether there should or should not be a Bill C-22. It is a Liberal Senate that is sending the Bill back while it has had a firm notion of what it should do for a long, long time.