

*Patent Act—Trade Marks Act*

that the food consumed by Canadians is really safe and will not harm them.

Mr. Speaker, I have already told the house that the problem was very simple. During our lifetime, however rich or poor we may be, we must at a given time, and because we are not in good health, see a qualified doctor, who of course recommends this or that pharmaceutical product.

The patient who very often does not know anything about the quality and safety of those drugs, simply goes to the drugstore and pays prohibitive prices for drugs without being sure of their quality and their safety. He pays for his drugs and returns home.

Here is where the problem lies, Mr. Speaker. First, we are not sure of the quality of those drugs.

Secondly, their cost is too high, even prohibitive, and I know many people in my constituency and in other Liberal constituencies, whose members refrain from speaking on this matter, who cannot afford some expensive drugs that could cure their illness in a very short time.

Bill C-102 is specifically designed to provide a solution to that problem. The government passed some pieces of legislation. For instance, it has done away with the 11 per cent sales tax in order to reduce the price of drugs. The excise tax on imported drugs has also been removed. However, those two measures have proved inadequate.

As a result, we are still in the same situation, and we are still hoping for lower drug prices.

Mr. Speaker, when the committee on health, welfare and social affairs was considering bill C-102, I had the privilege of asking the minister general questions about the possible economic impact of the enactment of Bill C-102.

Among other things, I asked him what would be the economic impact of his bill. The hon. minister simply answered: I must tell the hon. member that we do not know.

I also asked him if studies had been made with a view to ensuring that the measures he proposed would actually bring about a reduction in drug prices. The minister answered: We do not know, studies have not yet been made. But we do hope so.

Mr. Speaker, I feel we are about to take a step that we will regret later on, if we pass this bill without amendment.

That is what happened in the committee because of the dictatorial system of this government. In fact, we have not been able to move any amendment to the bill.

Mr. Speaker, at the report stage, more than 13 amendments have been moved by hon. members since the committee itself was unable to make any amendment, because proceedings were conducted in a dictatorial manner.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to stress the most is the necessity to protect Canadian enterprise as far as the cost of manufacturing drugs is concerned. Moreover, we are not at all certain that this bill will bring about the benefits expected by the minister since he told me himself that no study had been made in that field, that no effort had been made to forecast the economic consequences of the bill, and determine whether it would benefit the Canadian industry or the foreign industry. That is our greatest apprehension.

We are told about compulsory licences for the manufacture of products and of a lot of other factors to be taken into consideration. I, for one, Mr. Speaker, am extremely pessimistic, not only about the future of the pharmaceutical industry in Canada, but also about the quality of the products which will be imported. Mr. Speaker, when I realized that the dictatorial attitude of the present government made it impossible for us to bring forward amendments liable to be accepted by the committee, I told myself that if we could not do more to protect the Canadian industry, we should at least make sure that imported products are similar in quality to the Canadian products and that the safety of drugs is guaranteed on the Canadian market in order to protect the interests of consumers.

That is why I dealt with that aspect of the question, since I felt it was impossible, due to certain measures and to the procedure, to protect the Canadian industry to a greater extent. After having studied the problem of quality of products, I moved the amendment that was read a minute ago and from which I shall quote an extract:

—the Food and Drug Directorate of the Department of National Health and Welfare—

This body must make a report on all applications from foreign industries after consideration.

I continue to read further:

—that the applicant—