

Oral Questions

will soon have a chance to vote for the whole Bill, not half and not one quarter, and that is when . . . You have been trying to scare people for a year now. Vote for the Bill and we will take care of reimbursing these people.

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[English]

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

IMPACT OF DELAY IN AMENDING PATENT ACT

Mr. William G. Lesick (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs concerning Bill C-22. As a pharmacist I believe in the necessity of enhanced patent protection to further research and development in Canada. Earlier we heard the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition tell us about the supposed exodus of researchers and scientists from Canada with the accompanying loss of millions and millions of dollars.

Could the Minister please tell this House what is the impact of the continued delay of passage of Bill C-22 on research and development in Canada?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is no question but that each day of delay in the passage of and Royal Assent to Bill C-22 is a further delay for those scientists who are waiting for the \$800 million of additional research that has already been committed. There are grants to universities included in the amount which are all conditional on the Bill's passage. Each day of delay means a further delay for Canadian scientists who want to get to work in this very important area.

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CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION

DECISION ALLOWING VARIABLE GRAIN FREIGHT RATES

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has expressed, to use its words, "disappointment", "shock", "intolerable", concerning the CTC ruling to allow variable grain rates between certain grain companies and the CNR in certain selected locations in Saskatchewan, which flies in the face of a High-Court decision on western grain movement. The only shipper is the Canadian Wheat Board, not the grain companies and not even the farmers.

Since the Sask Pool which represents 80 or more per cent of the farmers in that province and the National Farmers Union have appealed to the Cabinet to overturn that CTC decision, is it the intention to entertain that appeal and when will they get a decision?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue of great interest to grain farmers and, of course, there is divided opinion on it as there is on many issues both in western Canada and elsewhere. A number of groups appeared before the CTC supporting the variable innovation, and a number of groups, including the group which the Hon. Member mentioned, opposed it. They have appealed to the Governor in Council. That is now being processed and we will have to make a decision on it. I cannot say very well what the decision will be until we have considered it.

● (1500)

Hearings were held in the west and the experienced persons who make up the CTC have given their views on the matter. Of course they have instituted certain safeguards, including the fact that this is for a trial period of one year.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER OVERTURN DECISION

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, the CTC chose to ignore the evidence. As the Minister is aware, variable rates mean that farmers who live closer to Thunder Bay and Vancouver will pay higher freight rates than those who live farther away because they happen to live at or near a place where there are variable freight rates. Is it the intention of the Government to allow the railways and a few private grain companies to play God, picking and choosing which farmers will pay less and which will pay more? Will he overturn the CTC decision?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Transport Commission is a quasi-judicial body. To have a Member play-acting in the House saying that they ignored the evidence is beyond all comprehension, and is certainly improper, to put it at the very minimum.

Mr. Broadbent: Improper?

Mr. Crosbie: The hon. gentleman laughs. That is why he will not be first for very long.

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ENERGY

CONVERSION OF SURPLUS GRAIN TO ETHANOL

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Hon. Minister of Energy, the best Minister of Energy Canada has ever had.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Taylor: Given that the use of grain-derived ethanol as an octane enhancing additive for gasoline would use hundreds of ton of wheat and corn, and given that early adoption of U.S. standards in gasoline, plus a reduction in sales tax of two cents