

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister is trying to lure me into a different tone, but I do appreciate the generosity.

● (1420)

MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said recently on the CBC radio program, *Sunday Morning*, the following:

There has been pressure on Canada since 1969 to change that law and it costs us a lot. Because when you go down to talk about anything, acid rain, you know, lumber, talk about anything and this has been going on a long time, this is raised.

Why would the Prime Minister make drug prices and the pharmaceutical industry part of the bargain with the United States? Why would he knuckle under to American interests and inflict higher prices on our pensioners, our older people and our sick?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there is no knuckling under. There is no inflicting of higher prices on anyone. I think my right hon. friend knows that. As I have said, it is a balanced and, we think, progressive package consistent with the requirements of an industrialized country in competition with other countries around the world and desirous of establishing our share of that research and development industry here.

I have not read the transcript to which the hon. gentleman refers, but the Minister has given, in other circumstances, assurances in regard to prices that I hope will satisfy my hon. friend. They are intended to ensure that the less well-off in our society do not in any way suffer and that the prices will not rise to affect them.

Mr. Nunziata: We don't trust you.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT WITHDRAW LEGISLATION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's opening comments were most generous and I appreciate that.

Perhaps he could be as generous to the ill and the aged in Canada. In the circumstances, could he ask his Minister to withdraw the Bill that will affect the price of drugs?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman must recognize that the manner in which he puts his question does not cover the full aspect of the matter having to do with the very best and newest drugs in Canada and that Canadians can also have access to and research in those drugs.

I want to indicate to the Hon. Member as well that it is not quite as clear in terms of senior citizens. The *Fédération de*

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l'Age d'Or du Québec has come out strongly in favour of the Government's legislation. I think we should recognize that as well.

POSITION OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Is it not true that the major reason the U.S. Government pressured the Canadian Government to change the Patent Act with respect to pharmaceuticals is that U.S. multinationals fear that other industrialized countries will adopt the Canadian system forcing generic competition as the model legislation in the world?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no, it is not only the United States. It includes France, Britain, and other countries in Europe especially. I say to the hon. gentleman that we want the very best health care system, inclusive of technology, and one of the major technologies is with respect to new drugs. We as Canadians expect the very best, and we should have the very best.

If I were to ask the Hon. Member to name a drug developed in Canada over the past 50 years from inception he could not give me one.

An Hon. Member: Insulin

Mr. Epp: Insulin was developed 64 years ago, which is proof of the reason why we have to change this Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of National Health and Welfare can answer this question. Why is it that his Government has totally disregarded every one of the major recommendations of the Eastman Report and has gone far and beyond the recommendations in that report, and you have succumbed, you have knuckled under—

Some Hon. Members: Order, order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Frith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize.

The question I want to ask, which is the more important one is this. Why is it that the Government has knuckled under to the interests of foreign-dominated multinationals without any concern for the interest of Canadian workers and consumers?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, none of the charges is correct. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has just announced a \$70 million program in Dalhousie and Memorial Universities. It is that type of research we want at Dalhousie, in Montreal, in