

We in Canada know how important our health care system is. That is what we are here to protect. My colleague, the hon. member for Surrey North has worked diligently in committee. He has worked tirelessly to oppose this legislation, and I urge all thinking members of this House to vote against Bill C-91. It is bad legislation. As an opposition party, we have the responsibility to oppose bad legislation. It is not going to bring in the much needed jobs, the much touted jobs that this government says it is going to do.

It is going to cost Canadians more for drugs and that is frightening. That is frightening because we are not talking just statistics here. We are not just talking numbers. We are talking people and people's lives.

I have a very sorry story to tell of a constituent of mine who has suffered from epilepsy. This man had finally had his condition stabilized through a particular drug. This was after years and years of frightening occurrences of epileptic attacks.

All of a sudden, the drug company removed the drug that was able to assist him from the market. His parents came to me and said: "You have no idea how this is going to affect our lives". This is a man in his 20s who for the first time had a job. He was contributing to society. Previous to this drug, he was not able to contribute. He was a dependent on his parents. He was now contributing, paying taxes, contributing to society, having an independent life as a young man. With the removal of this drug, we went to the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board and asked them to intercede.

As my children say, the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board had an attitude problem. Their attitude reflects much of the attitude of this government. It is not our problem. We cannot do anything. It is the multinationals that are running things and we will just get out of the way.

We have a different view of the role of government. When somebody has a problem, it is our problem. We take it on. We tried find a solution and fortunately, we were able to find a solution through the orphan drug program and assure that that young man would get those required drugs.

That is what the role of government is. It is to help the citizens of Canada—not to help the multinationals make

more money. I want to know how a government can give an unrestricted monopoly on pricing for drugs at a time when federal financing for medicare is frozen.

• (1620)

I know that my provincial counterpart, my colleague in riding, the Hon. Elizabeth Cull, minister of health for British Columbia, came before the committee and gave some very telling statistics on what would be the increase in the costs to our provincial system if this bill was introduced.

We hear a lot about federal government off-loading. This is an example. This legislation would increase the costs to the health care system in British Columbia, a health care system that is already under attack.

I think that it is a callous bill, that it has to be opposed. All of the provincial health ministers unanimously disagree with this bill aside from Quebec. There is only one provincial minister who agrees with this bill; 9 of the 10 ministers of health disagree. I think that says a great deal when you are talking about the kind of philosophical approach.

It is we who are on the right side and the government that is on the wrong side. This kind of legislation shows a short-sighted view. As my colleague from Kamloops says: "the tinkle-down, trickle-down economics of the Tory government have to be stopped". We have to defeat Bill C-91. We have to defeat the Tory government. We have to get a new vision for Canada so that we can get on with building the economy of Canada and ensuring health care for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, the primary purpose of the bill before us today, Bill C-91, is to make sure that Canada's, and therefore Quebec's, legislation regarding patents on pharmaceuticals is absolutely identical to that of other developed countries.

This bill is introduced after experimenting for five years with Bill C-22 which had partly corrected the mistakes made by the Liberals by significantly limiting the scope of patents on pharmaceuticals. Obviously, we were asking companies and researchers to invest without getting patent protection in return or the protection afforded being so weak as to make investing pointless.