

Oral Questions

Mr. La Salle: Apologize!

Mr. Mulroney: Finally, after the Liberal terror, there is justice from the Conservatives—

Mr. La Salle: Right on!

Mr. Mulroney:—and now the Liberals dare raise this matter. The people of Mirabel and Saint-Hyacinthe will remember you at the next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

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[English]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY TAX DEDUCTIONS—REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Elections and Privileges.

The Member is aware that NDP supporters are receiving federal tax deductions contrary to the spirit of the present legislation, by washing their contributions to municipal candidates through the federal New Democratic Party.

Will the chairman undertake to have his committee investigate this NDP tax rip-off? Will he also undertake to determine how it is possible for the NDP to condone this sort of activity by calling before the committee, as a witness, the Hon. Member for Oshawa?

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, may I say that the Hon. Member for York East has had a long, distinguished career as a municipal politician.

I am sure that all individual Members in this House, including New Democrats, would like to see this item referred to the Standing Committee. I ask the Hon. Member to send his request in writing to the striking committee which will be pleased to review it.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

DRUG PRICE INCREASES

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who is also responsible, supposedly, for consumers.

We have learned that the price of generic labelled drugs has dropped about 1 per cent in Manitoba while prices of many brand name drugs have increased over 100 per cent in some cases.

Will the Minister explain, especially to four million Canadians who have no drug plan at all, why his friends, the multinational corporations, are being so greedy? Will he also explain to consumers why he is doing nothing as Minister for Consumer Affairs to stop this price rip-off?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member will know or should know, if she were following the debate on Bill C-22, there was nothing in Bill C-22 which could in any way shape or form contribute to an increase in the price of existing drugs. Even the most severest critics of Bill C-22 acknowledge that fact.

She may also be aware that, for example, in 1983 the CPI went up 5.8 per cent while the price of drugs went up 12.8 per cent. In 1987 the price of drugs went up 8.9 per cent while the CPI went up only 4.4 per cent.

The Member will also be aware that Bill C-22 provided for the creation of a Patent Medicine Price Review Board which has the power to keep the price increases of drugs below the cost of living unless there is justification not to. In other words, it will exercise a downward pressure on prices. The reason the Board is not in place and working now is because of the delaying tactics of her colleagues and friends in the Liberal Party. If she wants to blame someone for current price increases, she should blame her colleagues sitting around her.

• (1500)

REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF DRUG PRICES

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister should also explain why the price of generic drugs has gone down. Perhaps he could explain that to the Canadian people.

I would also like to remind the Minister that the Bill is not yet in place. However, the Drug Prices Review Board was ready to go ahead in December. Under this new Act it will have a mandate to look at drug prices over the past five years, as I understand it.

Will the Minister ask this board to meet immediately to review drug prices and recommend action to protect consumers and the provinces whose health systems are being completely eroded by the very high price of prescription drugs?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible that I am now hearing representations made by that Party which did everything it possibly could to prevent the creation of the Drug Prices Review Board. The Hon. Member is now asking why we did not have it in operation yesterday. This is just absurd.

The Hon. Member should also talk to the former Health Minister of the Province of Manitoba who said to some researchers at the St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg that Bill C-22 was a good Bill but they had to oppose it because it was