

Patent Act

Member on that side who wished to speak to take his or her 10 minutes uninterrupted, which is the usual courtesy extended in the House.

I just wanted to point out, as I have done, the recent poll which in fact asked fair questions. It pointed out that when the facts were put to the people and they are asked: "Are you willing to pay higher prices for more research and development", the answer was "yes", 64 per cent of the time. If we say: "Would you be prepared to see the establishment of patent rights with a control mechanism to keep the price of drugs less than the cost of living", which is in the Bill, as Members who have looked at the Bill know, the support was 82 per cent. It is simply false to make the statement that in fact there is overwhelming opposition.

Given that the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party sent out some 300,000 letters, according to the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young), who I believe made that comment; and given that the CLC, Bob White of the Autoworkers, the Government of Manitoba, and so on have really blanketed the country with all manner of brochures, letters, and so on, trying to scare the dickens out of people, without success, I think a support of 82 per cent is pretty remarkable.

It shows that people are smarter than some members of the Opposition give them credit for. I think that deep in their hearts members of the Opposition know full well that this is a good Bill and that this is a necessary Bill. They know that research and development is absolutely essential to our future, and that we will not have research and development unless we have patent protection for the researchers and the developers. That they know; other people know that.

Mr. Tobin: Who paid for the poll?

Mr. Andre: That is why, if we are acting responsibly as a Parliament, we will get the Bill through.

Mr. Tobin: No answer.

Mr. Andre: The delay has already cost the country several hundreds of millions of dollars in research and development. Every month of delay delays that activity in the country.

The Hon. Member's collar is pinching or something—

Mr. de Corneille: You poor fellow, you want to muzzle us.

Mr. Andre: The fact is that any objective examination of the facts indicates that this is a good Bill.

As to the question of senior citizens, 95 per cent of them in the country are covered by drug plans. They are not personally affected, and 100 per cent of senior citizens who receive the GIS are covered by drug plans. This constant tirade by the Opposition is bad for senior citizens, is simply false, on the facts, and is a scare tactic. Indeed, one might even call it "demagoguery"; I do not know, but it certainly is not the truth. In their hearts they know it, as do senior citizens.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Minister, who never told us who paid for the poll, once again used the term in reference to Members opposite and their views in respect of Bill C-22—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Using the same citation as the one raised by the House Leader of the Opposition in respect of the words "demagoguery" and "demagogue", again the Minister used the term in reference to Members opposite who have made their views known, on behalf of their constituents, in respect of Bill C-22.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, using the appropriate citation, to have the Minister withdraw again that lame excuse for a debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair does not believe the Hon. Minister was aiming his remarks at a particular Member, therefore—

Mr. Tobin: Well, Mr. Speaker, who was he aiming them at; at people in the Gallery or the Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. I think he was aiming them at members of the Opposition in general, which is not contrary to Beauchesne's.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the short time remaining in the debate this afternoon, I should like to return to the point at issue today and discuss the amendment offered by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow).

It was interesting to have the disruption of the day's proceedings by the Minister who spent no time addressing the particular amendment. It is unfortunate that he did not do so, because I believe he could have made a very useful contribution to the particular amendment dealing with Bill C-22. In effect it is a part of Bill C-22 which is a catch-22 for both consumers of drugs and producers of generic drugs in the country. They have been caught by the Bill in a situation where, even though most of the paperwork has been completed to begin the production of generic drugs at considerably lower prices than the ones which will be in effect after the drug Bill is passed, they will be locked into a position, as a result of some of the requirements of the Bill, dating backward to June 27, 1986.

We think it is very unfair that any group of citizens or producers who have virtually completed applications to produce generic drugs should be treated so badly and in a negligent manner by legislation which in effect will be retroactive to June, 1986. This will stop some 153 applications, so producers will not be able to produce them and consumers will not get the advantage of lower prices as a result.

I notice your time signal, Mr. Speaker. I will continue my remarks next day.