

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Pursuant to Standing Order 38, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—Atlantic Fishermen; the hon. member for Davenport—The Environment; the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast—The Economy; the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso—Westray Coal Mine; and the hon. member for Ottawa West—The Environment.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, as a member of the consumer and corporate affairs committee and as a member representing a riding in which there is a university, the University of Alberta, I am pleased to add my comments to those of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who spoke in September and today of the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology on Bill C-91, an act to amend the Patent Act.

The legislation before us today is designed to foster science and technology, build expertise in niche markets and to enable our research facilities to respond to global trends.

Bringing Canada's patent protection more in line with intellectual property laws in the rest of the world will help do all these things.

We have what it takes to become a world leader in pharmaceutical research. We have a well respected medical establishment, a health care system that is the envy of the world, an educated work force, and R and D tax credits that are among the most generous in the world.

However, we have been missing an essential ingredient: intellectual property protection in line with the standard practices of the rest of the industrialized world and patent laws that compare with those of the nations with which we compete for R and D investment.

Since 1984 the government has given high priority to the reform of Canada's intellectual property laws as a component for its agenda of economic renewal. It has

### *Government Orders*

recognized the need for patent laws that protect ideas and innovation and that attract investment.

But the government has had to fight every step of the way in its effort to modernize and streamline these laws. It comes as no surprise for me to hear the complaints of hon. members opposite. Over the years they have tried in vain to halt the government's progress.

I have heard some members across the floor complain that the government is moving too quickly with second reading of this bill. They seem to ignore the fact that some \$500 million in new investment is at stake here, that innovative pharmaceutical companies stated their intentions to invest that amount once they heard last January that the government intended to strengthen patent protection for pharmaceuticals.

This is a substantial investment at a time when the world-wide industry is scrambling to restructure. Make no mistake about it: other countries around the world would love to get hold of that investment.

I often wonder about my colleagues opposite. They talk about the economy and they talk about how we need to do something. Here is \$500 million waiting to be invested in Canada and yet they say we should not go ahead with it.

If Canada does not move quickly to take advantage of this offer, a window of opportunity will slam shut. I would remind those in the House that hon. members opposite and their colleagues in the other place have a track record of delaying patent legislation well beyond any reasonable time frame required to study the bill adequately.

In the last Parliament they used every obstruction tactic at their disposal in an effort to defeat or delay the first phase of patent reform. During the last Parliament Bill C-22, an act to amend the Patent Act, was given first reading on November 7, 1986. The Liberals and the NDP in this House obstructed the bill to such an extent that it was not forwarded to the other place until May 6, 1987.

I remind this House of the turbulent history as a warning that we cannot afford to see a similar delay in the passage of this bill. What I find disturbing is that many of the arguments I have heard today from the opposition benches echo the arguments made in the other place when it tried to thwart the government's legislation.