

Government Orders

He quoted Dr. Michael Rachlis in *Second Opinion* in his speech. I happen to be a strong believer and supporter of his. He is a constituent of mine. The members of the New Democratic Party should know that in the province of Ontario right now, the ministry of health has had many of Rachlis' recommendations before it for many months.

The member comes into this House and pretends to be so sanctimonious when in the province of Ontario his New Democratic partners are doing absolutely nothing. They are delisting medical services, they are delisting drugs to seniors, and they are making a sham of the medical system in the province of Ontario. He should make sure that when he is throwing darts across this House, whether it be our way or across that way, that he examines the performance of his own NDP government in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this very important amendment to the Patent Act.

My colleagues on this side of the House have made a very strong case for the balance of Bill C-91. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in his September speech for one has shown how the legislation before us balances the needs of economic development with those of the consumers who require access to reasonably priced drugs.

For a relatively young agency, the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board has done a great job in keeping price increases for patented drugs below the rate of inflation. As I understand this legislation, the board will be given even tougher powers to better control both existing drug prices and the new drug prices.

I, too, would like to examine the balance of this legislation, but rather than focusing on the needs of producers and consumers, I would like to remind this House that the economic benefits of this legislation have already begun to tip the balance in favour of a broader distribution of research and development activity across our country. One of the first regions to benefit from this new balance will be my province of British Columbia.

The research community in British Columbia is well aware of the importance of this legislation that is before us today. Ever since the government first announced its intention to reform Canada's patent laws, we have

received letters of support and encouragement from across the country and from British Columbia in particular.

Dr. Keith Dawson, for example, of the University of British Columbia maintained that patent protection is an essential feature to maintain Canada at the forefront of medical care, and I strongly endorse the extension of patent protection for pharmaceutical products.

His views were echoed by Dr. F. L. Ervin, of Pitt Meadows, B.C.: "I believe that it is essential to preserve the incentive for entrepreneurial development in this area", said Dr. Ervin. He added: "I believe that drug patent legislation which will give us a level playing field compared to other GATT countries will be the best way of ensuring our further growth and development in the research and development field".

Two doctors from New Westminster added their voices to this course of support for the proposed changes to the patent laws. Dr. R. A. Kuritzky wrote: "I am well aware of the enormous costs and efforts involved in the research and development to produce patented drugs, and I believe that your measure will promote the research and development of these drugs in Canada rather than abroad".

Dr. Kuritzky was joined by Dr. John Lien, also of New Westminster, who wrote: "It is high time for Canada to march in step with the rest of the world and afford patent protection that has some meaning for an industry that is prepared to invest in the immediate and future good of this country. Not only will we benefit directly from such a move, but the spin-offs of increased medical research funding and employment should also be recognized".

These British Columbians recognize the importance of patent protection in fostering an investment climate that will promote research and development. Each of them, I would venture to say, hopes that a good deal of that new investment will find its way into the laboratories and research facilities in British Columbia. This House is always aware that in exchange for improved patent protection in 1987, the Canadian pharmaceutical industry set a goal of increasing its investment in research and development from 4.9 per cent of sales revenue in 1987 to 8 per cent of sales by 1991 and 10 per cent by 1996.