

## CANADIAN PATENT SYSTEM—REPORTED EXAMINATION BY UNITED STATES

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister compared American and Canadian drug prices. Canadian drug prices are appreciably lower than American drug prices, so much so that is he aware that the United States Department of Health has been examining our current patent system in order to try to give lower drug prices to Americans? Why, in this instance, would the Government attempt to adopt an American-styled system when the American Government itself is looking at ours?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I will try again. Ninety-three per cent of drugs do not have generic competition. For those 93 per cent of drugs the prices in Canada, without generic competition, are cheaper than they are in the United States. The reason is that it is a different market. It is a different country. We have a different way of selling drugs. The provinces are the big buyers.

**Mr. Axworthy:** That is right. Let's keep it that way.

**Mr. Andre:** That will remain in place. We are going to keep it there. In exchange for granting patent protection to inventors or creators, we will gain at least 3,000 high-tech jobs in an area from which it is unforgivable that Canada should be excluded.

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## LABOUR CONDITIONS

## REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT—REQUEST FOR NEW POLICIES

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. While the national rate of unemployment has declined to 9.4 per cent—

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Allmand:** —I want to remind the Government that there are still 1.2 million Canadians unemployed. That rate is still far above the pre-recession rate of 7.5 per cent in 1981. However, most disturbing is the continual deterioration in the regions of Canada—in Quebec, Alberta, and especially the Atlantic provinces. The rate of unemployment increased in every Atlantic province. When will the Government recognize that reliance upon a free market economy will not cure these regional problems? When will it recognize the growing gulf between the rich and poor regions in the country; change direction; and bring in policies which will stimulate growth in these regions and create new jobs?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is quite right that the level of unemployment today is higher than it was compared with the pre-

## Oral Questions

recession lows. However, it is an awful lot lower than it was in September, 1984. It is down from 11.7 per cent to 9.4 per cent. The youth unemployment rate went down three percentage points during that same period. I agree with the Hon. Member that the rate is still too high. We are doing everything we can to get it down.

The Hon. Member pointed out the problems which have been felt in the regions of the country. Yes, we are acting there as well. We have acted in the Province of Alberta, as he knows. He referred to the Province of Alberta. We have introduced the Atlantic Enterprise Program, the Atlantic Opportunities Program, and the Cape Breton tax credit. We have maintained the investment tax credit—

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

• (1125)

## RESULT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, whatever they have done has not had much effect in Atlantic Canada and the regions of the country. Does the Minister not realize that if he sticks with the *laissez-faire* approach of the Government, the comparison made by the Minister of Transport of Atlantic Canada with the Third World will become a reality? That is what is happening in Canada, with the division between the rich and the poor.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that 610,000 jobs have been created since September, 1984. The Hon. Member should admit that a number of those jobs have been created in Atlantic Canada, Quebec, and regions of western Canada. If the Hon. Member had a sense of fairness he would be repeating that as well.

We have stated quite clearly that more must be done about the problems of regional disparity, particularly in the Atlantic provinces and the Province of Quebec. More is being done, and we are continuing to work on that. If the Hon. Member would give us credit for what is being done he would know that a tremendous amount of progress has been made.

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## PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

## PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF PATENT ACT—COST OF DRUGS

**Mr. Neil Young (Beaches):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In defence of the Government's move to amend the Patent Act for pharmaceutical products, he stated that this policy will not cost Canadian consumers any additional money and will not cause drug prices to rise. Will he not agree with a critic of this policy that Canadians in fact will end up paying anywhere from \$100 million to \$250 million more on the cost of prescription drugs because of this policy?