

one of the measures that it would introduce to reduce its own health costs—talk about a government that is swimming upstream.

• (1350)

Here we have an American administration trying to reduce health costs and we have a Canadian administration, because of a previous sell-out under NAFTA, saying it is going to go ahead with the bill.

It had received pleas from provincial health ministers of all political stripes right across this country to say this would put an enormous burden on the system.

Under those circumstances what nerve it has when its mandate is about through to go ahead and ram this bill through with a majority and I plead with Conservative members of Parliament who are responsible and accountable to their own constituents to tell their cabinet to withdraw this bill and not to proceed with this legislation.

I have heard some members get up and try to defend this on the other side, saying it will be a great boon to medical research. I look at the commitments. There has been some investment. Have they talked about the losses?

The generic drug industry of Canada is also investing substantially in original drug research. In my own city of Winnipeg several major companies have started up new plants and the president of Apotex has said without any hesitation that he will have to shut down a major plant in the city of Winnipeg because of this bill, not because it is not there, but because of this bill.

That example is reproduced right across Canada.

If you total the suggested increases in research with what we know are the known losses, the net impact in my view will be a substantial decline of a Canadian based generic drug industry that is prepared to invest right across Canada to use the facilities to start our own industry at a time when that is what we desperately need. Instead we are bringing in legislation in this House to serve the interests of multinationals and in which control accountability is missing.

Government Orders

As an intelligent, thoughtful member of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, can you find any reason to support this bill? You cannot because sitting in the chair in an impartial state you would have to make a judgment that there is no reason. There is no moral authority for this government to bring in the bill.

Members of this government will ultimately be answerable to the people, particularly to those in this country who must go daily to their pharmacist, their druggist to get medication. I had a case in my office about a month ago of a gentleman who has to take drugs on a daily basis for a very severe condition. They keep him alive. He has no choice in the matter. He has been buying generic drugs in bulk.

Even under those circumstances, as it has now shifted and the impact of Bill C-22, the old bill, has come into effect, it is harder and harder to get access to those drugs and he has seen increases of 10 per cent, 15 per cent, 20 per cent, 30 per cent in those prices.

If this bill goes through he has no chance. It will virtually double the cost of his pharmaceuticals. Who is going to pay for that? The health care system in the province of Manitoba, senior citizens, taxpayers.

I watched with some interest the Prime Minister last night saying he is going to have an economic renewal speech. What is his prescription for economic renewal? Increased cost; make basic pharmaceuticals higher priced, harder to get for people who need it. That is his prescription for economic renewal.

I can only say and plead there is only one way to stop the bill. We must recognize our limitations. We can only do that if certain members of Parliament on the government side have the courage of their conviction and the honesty of their view to know that the only reason for this bill, the only reason it was introduced at this time, the reason it is being rammed through by closure motion, why we are not being given proper opportunity to debate it, to hold hearings on it, is because of an obligation owing to a defeated president of the United States to get the NAFTA bill passed.