

contravention is given the opportunity to set out a date of hearing and to make representation. This adjudication mechanism would protect the rights of individuals, show respect and allow transparency.

• (1355)

A breach of these designated regulations would not result in a criminal type penalty of fine or imprisonment. Administrative sanctions would be handed down by the minister and not by a criminal court.

Another area of criticism relates to the impact of the bill on physician-patient and pharmacist-patient relationships and confidentiality. Both opposition members identified access to the confidential files of patients as an unacceptable interference in the private lives of honest Canadians, and I agree. However there is very little new in the bill that gives rights to the minister that have not been there before.

For over 30 years under the narcotic control regulations the Minister of Health has had the legislative authority to require a practitioner to provide information concerning a patient treated with narcotics to the Bureau of Dangerous Drugs. This information could include the diagnosis, history or prescribing information relevant to the patient. This has been going on for years.

We have now given inspectors the appropriate tools they need to ensure that health professionals comply with the regulations and to ensure that the public is protected from the hazardous consequences of drugs. The inspectors are also health professionals bound by rules of confidentiality. They are important resources for the department of health and for the Canadian population. They also ensure that the facilities used in the distribution of drugs are secure.

Legitimate program activities required under the current and proposed legislation to protect public health and safety will ensure that patient confidentiality is fully maintained. Any information obtained is subject to the Privacy Act. This prohibits its use or disclosure by any official, except in accordance with that act. The Privacy Act ensures that all information collected by the federal government for program purposes is treated confidentially.

Concerning so-called doctor shopping or double doctoring offences official opposition members cited evidence given by the Canadian Medical Association to the legislative committee which examined Bill C-85. They argued that Bill C-7 would be unsatisfactory to doctors. This criticism from the Canadian Medical Association was accepted by the committee and the provision in the bill was changed, in essence to revert to the existing section found in the Narcotic Control Act. As a result the revision now refers only to persons who receive prescrip-

tions from doctors. The act of providing the prescription in this circumstance is not considered a trafficking offence.

We understand the use of illicit substances is a complex problem and requires a multifaceted approach of prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, legislation and punishment. The complete Canada drug strategy addresses all these issues. Bill C-7 deals with the legislative components.

We all understand the regulation of controlled substances is a complex matter which requires a carefully constructed legal basis in order to be effective, judicious and fair. I believe the bill is the most appropriate instrument for administering the laws and regulations we need. We are dealing with an aspect of societal problems which demands proper protection of the innocent, the inexperienced, the young and the vulnerable. It also demands forceful prosecution of the exploitative, the criminal and the ruthless.

I believe the bill strikes just the right balance between these two requirements. While we continue to minimize harm through education and prevention and while we continue to show compassion for victims through treatment and rehabilitation, we must also strike at the criminal heart of the problem. In passing the bill we as parliamentarians would be making our contribution to the battle against drug abuse now and well into the future.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member will have a few moments after question period for questions and comments.

[Translation]

It being two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

### BICYCLE PATHS

**Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul):** Mr. Speaker, along with all cycling enthusiasts, I am extremely pleased that the bicycle path between Nuns' Island and Verdun will be built very shortly.

Cyclists have been waiting 15 years for this path to be completed.

I want to thank the Minister, Mr. Doug Young, and his department for the consideration they have given to this project.

The proposed bicycle path will link the paths on the South Shore and on Nuns' Island to the path in Verdun.