

Government Orders

• (1100)

Bill Clinton is on the hook. His "read my lips" means two things. He said: "I will bring in a national health insurance program and I will do something to control drug prices". If he cannot deliver on those two things, he will be, like George Bush, toast, and he knows it.

The multinational drug companies are getting anxious because if Bill Clinton comes in and starts looking, he will have to look north. The government said: "Oh, that's not true, that's not true".

Two prominent Democrats, Henry Waxman and David Pryor, have stated clearly that they believe the U.S. should introduce a system of compulsory drug licensing to allow early entry of generics into the marketplace and to create a patent medicines prices review board to lower health care costs in the United States. These are two prominent Democrats who will be advising Clinton.

We also have learned, and I think it is significant, that the real push behind this is from the American Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association. It said clearly that it had two or three goals: One was to get rid of compulsory licensing.

I will quote again from Edgar G. Davis, the former vice-president of Eli Lilly, who said: "Putting the patent provisions in the North American accord was a master stroke—was a master stroke."

Gerald Mossinghoff, president of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, said that once they get rid of compulsory licensing they have two other goals. Again, I will quote. He said his members "would like to eliminate Canada's government price controls" and that American drug makers would "oppose formularies because they bring down the costs".

What we have here is a classic battle: On the one side, we have seniors who are concerned about their health and escalating drug costs, families, particularly low income families, that have difficulty paying for medications when they are required, and provincial pharmacy programs which see their costs escalating dramatically. For one drug alone, B.C. has estimated it will be \$120 million. On the other side we see the Tories fronting for the multinational drug companies, along with Judy

Erola, chief spokesperson for the multinational drug companies, the rich and the powerful. They are saying: "We do not care about Canadians, we do not care about the poor, the elderly, the families; our bottom line is we want to maximize our profit".

Myself and the New Democrats will always stand on the side of the seniors, families and the elderly.

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to speak to every single motion that the opposition put forward today. I do feel that it is important to set the record straight because some of the things that have been said this morning are clearly inaccurate and outrageous.

First of all, the member of the Official Opposition who spoke to begin with would have to admit under pressure that in fact other members of the Official Opposition agree with this bill. It is a member of a previous Liberal government who is leading the lobby forces in favour of this bill for the innovative drug companies. In fact, she was the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs at one time.

I think it is highly inaccurate to say that they all officially oppose the bill because in fact that is not true. I understand of course it is their task and their job to stand up and beat us up today because of this legislation and make it look like they are doing their jobs in opposition.

The Liberals, the NDP and my other hon. friend over here made a great deal of fuss about the fact that there is not enough time to debate the bill. The facts are that the NDP, some Liberals as well, not all, but the NDP particularly, filibustered throughout all stages of the committee, making a mockery of the legislative committee process.

I think they should be ashamed of not just their activities during the committee stage but some of the things they have said since. It is highly unfair to the parliamentary process. It makes a mockery of the very important work that we all try to do here every day and the serious attitude that some members take toward that work.