

Business of the House

We are discussing the issue of whether or not we want to alleviate pain. I am sure that the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) would not dispute the fact that it is necessary to provide many other ancillary types of care to someone with cancer. However, there is no question but that one of the pre-eminent problems is pain. The purpose of the bill is purely to address the question of pain.

Mr. Benjamin: He's reading stuff that the Department of Health sent over. Quit reading what the Department sent you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): All Hon. Members are aware that the most difficult problem of the Chair is always the question of relevance. I have had some concern with the Parliamentary Secretary's remarks because I cannot quite follow the thread of the argument which he presents in terms of the Bill. However, I always have, and every occupant of the Chair always has, the difficulty that we must wait a long time to ensure that the Hon. Member in question is being relevant. Second, if we begin to apply very rigid rules of relevance, then we must apply them equally across the House.

I think I have done what I should have done, that is to say that there is some question in my mind as to whether or not the Parliamentary Secretary is being as closely relevant to the Bill as he might. Therefore, perhaps with that thought in mind he may wish to address himself accordingly.

Mr. Hudecki: Mr. Speaker, actually the point that I was reaching was to address myself directly to the subject of heroin. The first question that I raise is with regard to the authority on which so many of the current statements are based. The various people who have signed these letters have made a decision on the basis of information submitted to them from a variety of sources. Actually, heroin in Canada has not been used since 1955.

Mr. Benjamin: At least legally, that is.

Mr. Blaikie: I just said that.

Mr. Hudecki: Neither has it been used in the United States. It is not in the pharmacopoeia. Doctors have had really no experience with the use of it, except those who practised before the year 1955.

Mr. Blaikie: How could they, if it has been illegal?

Mr. Hudecki: The information comes from book learning, from reading, or it comes from people who have had experience with heroin for non-medical purposes, or from what must be a tremendous number of physicians and people who have come from the United Kingdom. Therefore, the first point is that people are speaking on this subject with apparent authority but they have had no exposure to heroin whatsoever.

I graduated from the University of Toronto in 1940 and practised from 1940 until 1955, at a time when heroin was available to the pharmacopoeia. I feel that I am in a position to speak on this subject with authority.

Mr. Benjamin: Did you prescribe it?

Mr. Hudecki: It was possible to use it as a junior intern and as a resident in surgery. I have had an opportunity to use it while practising general surgery. My impressions are not taken from text books or from opinions handed down from people who are writing on the subject. Indeed, in the *Medical Post* it was indicated that one of the principal promoters of the drug, namely Dr. Walker himself, had never used it professionally.

My impression of the drug is that it is a potent analgesic but that it is a very dangerous drug. During my time in the hospitals it was used quite widely for obstetrical patients in labour. At that time labour was very often prolonged. I might point out that many of the babies were born completely blue and required a considerable amount of resuscitation.

Again, the drug was used for surgical patients and there were numerous post-operative complications. These were related to the side effects of the drug which cause a depression of respiration and of the cough reflex. As a result, many patients developed bronchial pneumonia and died needlessly. Again, I bring this point forward because that is exactly the type of patient with which we are dealing.

Mr. Pinard: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want to apologize to my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hudecki), for interrupting him in the midst of his speech, but we have been negotiating between House Leaders and it seems that we have reached an agreement. I must attend an important meeting which is being held now. I would appreciate receiving the unanimous consent of the House to read our agreement at this time. If there is unanimous consent to permit me the time, I will speak for perhaps five minutes or less, so that the Parliamentary Secretary is not penalized.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): It is my Private Member's Bill which is being discussed. I appreciate the offer of the extra time. I certainly think that that is a reasonable condition and I am agreeable to it.

Mr. Pinard: I thank the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton for his usual courtesy and I will try not to abuse the privilege.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

DISPOSITION OF BILL C-151

Mr. Pinard: We have been carrying on consultations in relation to Bill C-151. In my view, whereas the Progressive Conservative and New Democratic Members desire that an amount of borrowing authority not exceeding \$10.7 billion be granted by Bill C-151, while the Government desires that if any further request be made for not more than an additional \$4 billion borrowing authority within the present fiscal year, such request shall not require more than three days of debate, the following order, concerning which I seek unanimous consent, shall take effect immediately: