

Patent Act

family has had the misfortune of experiencing medical difficulties including burns, blood clots, cancer, heart attacks and surgery requirements as a result of broken bones. I am quite prepared to recommend to my family and all Canadians that if medicine can be improved, let us do it. If this is the kind of legislation that is required, let us support it.

I am dead set against the presentations which have been made by both opposition Parties. I find particularly contemptible the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) today. If Canada heard that speech, he made no gain in the polls. If there was ever an explanation for his status in the polls, he gave it for 25 minutes in this House today. I object to it because its single thrust was against the United States. This Government is not subservient to anyone in the United States. However, we do not want to generate a situation in which we cannot deal with the United States as friends or in which they are depicted as the worst enemy of this nation. It is depicted in that fashion by both opposition Parties, both of which have members from British Columbia and Ontario which are provinces that require a lumber market in the United States. It is unjustifiable for Members of this Legislature or members of any other Legislature to focus a total attack on the United States of America, because there are drug manufacturers of note and quality in Switzerland, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and a multitude of other countries. All of them have multinational research capabilities whose inventions and improvements in the medical structure have contributed to the better health of the world.

● (1600)

This is a scurrilous, unjustified and improper basis for an attack. If there is a matter of principle involved, it should be used to the best possible advantage, but I have not had one letter of complaint about this legislation from a senior citizen of this land in spite of all the threats by the Opposition that medicine might cost them more. I believe that senior citizens in this country are looking for the maximum opportunity—

Mr. Benjamin: You are afraid to see them.

Mr. McCain: Incited no doubt by yourself and others of comparable nature. My senior citizens are looking for the best possible medicine for all the difficulties of geriatric life in this country. That is what they want.

I believe that any senior citizen who is given a true and proper picture of what this may mean for medications that he or she requires—

Mr. Benjamin: Your truth is not their truth.

Mr. McCain: —and the improvements that this legislation offers, will see that they have had very poor leadership from both opposition Parties. They have conducted a scare program and used a political opportunity without concern for the health of the nation.

Canada has generated programs which have probably given this nation the best level of social medicine anywhere in the world.

Mr. Benjamin: Which the Tories opposed.

Mr. McCain: Both those programs were put into effect in the Province of New Brunswick by Tories.

Mr. Benjamin: You opposed it. You opposed medicare. Don't give us the gears.

Mr. McCain: I protest that statement. That is not an accurate statement but a false statement. I submit that the Member should retract it now. If he wants to document—

Mr. Benjamin: I have the evidence.

Mr. McCain: If he can in any way document that statement, I will be the first in the House to humbly retract and apologize.

Mr. Benjamin: I will be glad to give it to you.

Mr. McCain: I challenge you. Excuse me for not addressing the Chair, Mr. Speaker. The world of medicine can be peculiar. Occasionally, innovations are rejected by the medical world and subsequently may be rejected by citizens or religious groups. However, I want to give an example of two friends who were given a prognosis of a very short life span. They went to Tijuana, Mexico to receive cancer treatment that was available there. In spite of that medical prognosis, those two gentlemen received that treatment and returned to perform their normal daily activities. The point is that we cannot afford to put all medicine in the same category and restrict the opportunity for treatment in Canada because certain medicines which may be beneficial will not be made available here.

The Government has subsidized some public and academic research in the sphere of biochemistry and medicine.

Mr. Benjamin: We have to do more of it.

Mr. McCain: If my good friend from Saskatchewan were to remember how much international research had contributed to agriculture, the stubble jumper, as he sometimes calls himself, would realize that he would be quite hungry without that research. Now we are talking about the kind of research that preserves health and increases the life span. I admit that it may cost some money, but I also submit that generic drugs are not the answer.

Let me give two illustrations. Last week, a gentleman who is required to take medicine for the rest of his life visited me at my house. This medicine is a foreign drug which costs him more than if it were made in Canada. He decided to try a generic substitute, but in one week had to return to bed. As soon as he returned to the original drug he recovered. It may be possible to manufacture another drug with the same elements and molecular arrangements, but if there is a degree of differential in temperature in the manufacturing process of