

Oral Questions

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I guess probably 10 or 12 times this week I have tried to answer that question. When the Bill gets to committee we will have a chance to deal with it, perhaps in a calmer atmosphere. However, I will ask the Hon. Member a rhetorical question in return. Has the Liberal Party which, in 1983, recognized that the Patent Act had to be changed because we were penalizing Canadian researchers and not doing our fair share of medical research in the world, thereby jeopardizing the future of a great many of our young scientists, as well as perhaps not providing as good health care as would be possible if we had that research in Canada, changed its mind?

ONTARIO MINISTERS' LETTERS

Ms. Sheila Capps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the Minister talks about calmness. He has had over three months to respond to a letter from the Minister of Health of the province which will be most affected by this legislation. Why did the Minister not even bother to reply to an August 7 letter from the Minister of Health for the Province of Ontario who pointed out the need for discussion before any introduction of legislation? He also pointed out in his letter that the Province of Ontario is where drug prices will be increasing, where there is the highest number of consumers of any province, and where more than half of the pharmaceutical industry, including generic and brand-name industries, are located. Why would the Minister not meet with Murray Elston? Why would he not even reply to his mail?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Elston said in his letter, he wanted our officials to contact, and they have been in contact. In fact, there have been no significant changes since June 27. I have a letter from the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs of Ontario, Monte Kwinter, who states in part:

—it seems only fair that research-based companies in the pharmaceutical industry who expend large amounts of money for research in developing of new drugs should be able to recoup their moneys through patent protection for at least 12 years.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Beatty: Supplementary, Sheila!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member for Beaches.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER TABLE IMPACT STUDIES

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. His arguments that the unemployed are willing to subsidize the multinational companies to provide jobs for themselves reminds me of the same Government's arguments that senior citizens were willing to take a reduction in pensions to reduce the deficit.

Mr. Murphy: Equally as ridiculous.

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, yesterday a number of provincial Premiers—

An Hon. Member: Speech!

Mr. Mazankowski: Double-talk over there.

Mr. Lewis: Where's the question?

Mr. Young: Control yourselves.

Yesterday a number of provincial Premiers indicated that the compensation the Government was offering on these legislative changes was totally inadequate. In view of this will the Minister not now agree to table in the House those cost impact studies which the Government has done on the actual cost to Canadians?

● (1130)

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I suppose I have answered that question four or five times. In committee I am prepared to show in great detail why in fact those cost estimates the Hon. Member keeps raising are in there. The cost estimates are based on assumptions which simply have no validity and I will be able to demonstrate that to the Hon. Member in committee if he will keep an open mind.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDIES

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, could the Minister explain to the House why those cost-impact studies are not available to Members in the House because of cabinet confidences but somehow magically will be made available to Members in committee? Could the Minister explain that to us?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have explained that several times. I invite the Hon. Member to re-read *Hansard* of this week. I wonder why members of the New Democratic Party feel that it is somehow wrong for Canadians to invest in research and development. What is immoral about Canada doing its fair share of research and development?

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[Translation]

PATENTS

PROVISIONS IN JUNE LEGISLATION—MULTINATIONALS—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel—Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The legislation prepared by the former Minister in June contained a clause obliging the multinationals