

Government Orders

Just now a New Democratic member addressed the issue of what the government intended to do in 1983 when it mandated the commission to review the whole matter. I think it was time to review it in 1983. Then the Eastman commission reported to the government and recommended some changes that could benefit drug manufacturers in Canada.

The Conservative government opposite did not even listen to the Eastman commission. It gave away more.

Bill C-22 went much further than the Eastman report. Subsequently, as I said before, we had Bill C-22 and the promises of the government opposite, promises which were never kept.

On June 23, 1992 the government once again was ready to give the pharmaceutical companies an advantage and put an end to the present system which allows the manufacture of generic pharmaceutical products. In any case the government's bill will certainly weaken the potential of the generic drugs industry and raise the prices of pharmaceutical products for the Canadian consumer.

Earlier I heard the hon. member for Winnipeg South say that we should not scare Canadians and tell them that the price of pharmaceutical products will increase. Mr. Speaker, as you know I am not afraid of telling Canadian consumers the truth. I am not afraid to tell them they are being had by the government opposite. I hope Canadians will keep sending the kind of cards I have here in my hand, signed by hundreds of people who are going to tell this story to all members in this House and to the Prime Minister. I hope they will call him up today or tomorrow and ask to speak to him personally and say: "We want to maintain an affordable drugs system, and we don't want Bill C-91". That is the position we and the Liberal Party have taken. I am not saying Bill C-22 should go on existing in its present form. Some day we will probably have to amend the bill but let us study it and determine what is best for consumers. Then and only then can we consider moving away from what we have now.

Meanwhile Bill C-91 goes much too far. In any case it goes further than what we as members of the Liberal Party are prepared to support. More important, I think it will make pharmaceutical products far too expensive for most Canadians.

Interestingly the government is about to make life easier for the big pharmaceutical companies at a time when the U.S. government, the new government that will be installed quite soon, is about to tighten the reins. What does this mean? We will probably see a Canadian government giving more latitude to the big pharmaceutical companies, while in the United States they will be concentrating on better protection for consumers. In that case the government would not only be going against the wishes of Canadians and members of the opposition but also against the wishes of those they claim are their friends, the government and authorities of United States of America.

I say to the Tory members opposite that they still have time to change their minds.

[*English*]

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said the government had promised back in 1987 when it passed Bill C-22 that we would have 3,000 new jobs by 1996. He pointed out that just a couple of years later we had about half that. It is only 1992. Since Bill C-22 was passed in 1987, 2,400 jobs have been created, well ahead of the predicted number of jobs that were supposed to be created when Bill C-22 was passed and in spite of the predictions of dire consequences that were made by the Liberal Party of the day.

• (1720)

We see from the lessons learned from Bill C-22 that Bill C-91 will indeed produce new jobs, new investments and new growth in our economy, which is what everybody wants. We all want jobs.

I have a question for the hon. member. I want to know if he believes in patent protection, if he believes that when people get a patent they should have that patent right protected. Is that not a valid and reasonable right? If he does believe in patent protection then I want to know how he can defend the Liberal government's invention of something called compulsory licensing, which was in fact a mechanism designed to break its own patent law. Either you believe in patent protection or you do not believe in patent protection. It seems to me that the Liberals were confused. I cannot think of anything else. If they believed in patent protection I do