

Patent Act—Trade Marks Act

university graduates. This is another aspect which I believe should be kept in mind. We should also remember that under the strict controls now applied in the United States and likely Canada 6 per cent of the drugs now in use will be rated ineffective within a short period and no less than two-thirds now require revision of the claims made for them. This is according to a statement by the National Academy of Science of the United States.

The minister is opening the border to imports. How many millions will it cost to police the clinical safety of the products imported? How much would it cost to arrange for the inspection of the factories in which the products are made? How many more people will it be necessary to add to the existing staff? If these products are to be admitted, the department will have to police them. Can this work be properly done at any price? And if it can be done, is the price likely to be too high?

• (12:50 p.m.)

What would it cost to follow the Harley commission report findings and inspect factories where these goods are manufactured? Of what value would it be if notice of the visit is sent beforehand? Is there enough trained personnel to do this job if such drugs are coming into the country, and will we have to pay too great a price? Perhaps we might be saddling the taxpayer with a greater burden than any advantage he might derive. Even the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) had some doubts in this regard.

I have less confidence in this bill than I have in the Minister of Finance who said that he would balance the budget or he would put on his hat and walk out. He did not walk out but he certainly left the Canadian people holding the bag as a result of a mistake involving over \$600 million. I do not want to be unkind, but we have done some things here that have been wrong and made some mistakes which have been pretty costly to the Canadian taxpayers. As I say, at the moment I have no confidence in this bill. I think it is window-dressing, and like a lot of other things that the government does it is misleading. Again the Canadian people will be left to pay the piper.

I believe that every member of this house wants to see the cost of drugs lowered. I am sure that statement is correct and I give everybody credit for their views. But we also have to protect the Canadian people. We have to be sure that foreign drugs are up to quality

[Mr. Rynard.]

and, second, that they are clinically efficacious for the diseases for which they are used. No Canadian should lose his life just because some drug does not measure up to the standard the doctor expects of it.

The hon. member who preceded me, if I understood the interpretation of his remarks correctly, referred to the fact that tests can determine what are the blood levels of a given drug. I agree that can be done, but I would like to ask him what this would cost.

Counterfeit drugs have been sold in Canada, and it was not the food and drug directorate that discovered the sales. It is my contention that the food and drug directorate does not have the personnel to do the job of protecting the Canadian people and affording the protection that this bill promises to give. If such protection should be provided, would its cost be much higher than any saving that might be achieved through lower drug prices?

I now come to my final conclusion in this matter. A survey was conducted in the province of Saskatchewan which showed that 50 per cent of the people over the period of one year had bought prescription drugs. It is estimated that roughly 25 per cent of the people of Canada find it difficult to pay for prescription drugs. Who are these people? They are the chronically ill, the unfortunates, the elderly, people who are sick, people on mothers' allowances, people on meagre pensions that inflation has eaten away.

I suggest to the government that if they really want to do something they should assist the people crying out for help to whom I have just referred. For example, the other day I visited a house where a man is keeping himself alive by drugs that cost him over \$30 a month. He is receiving \$107.50 a month and out of this also has to pay for his food and shelter. I suggest that the government should introduce a bill to provide for payment of the greater part of the cost of prescription drugs for people in this situation. Such action would bring some comfort and satisfaction to the hearts of those who today are beset with financial troubles and find life very difficult. Some are unable to buy drugs and as a result become ill and have to go to hospital, and hospitalization costs between \$40 and \$50 a bed a day, depending on where the bed is in Canada. Therefore, if the minister wants to show the people across Canada that he really wants to do something for them, let him do something for the 25 per cent of the population who find difficulty in obtaining the drugs that they need to live.