

Government Orders

It is my recollection the generics are now trying to convince Canadians not only that drug prices are going to skyrocket but that they are going to be put out of business. They said the same thing in 1987 and the generic industry in Canada, with all due respect, is stronger than it ever was.

As for the issue I suppose there is an implication on the other that we do not want investment by multinational corporations, that there is something kind of villainous about being employed by a multinational corporation.

I grew up in a very nice household in a modestly affluent family, because my father was employed by a multinational company, an American based multinational company at that. That company enabled us to live in a very nice standard and enables my father to live in retirement in a very nice standard. I might also mention that in my own constituency of South Shore we have a huge multinational that employs 1,600 people, the Michelin Tire Corporation.

I suppose my hon. friends opposite do not think that anybody should be allowed to work for Michelin because it is a multinational company. The 1,600 families in my constituency whose lives and security are based on employment with that company are very glad it is there. A lot of people in my constituency would be delighted to see a second Michelin Tire plant, or they would be delighted to see Merck Frosst or one of the pharmaceutical companies that have made commitments of over \$500 billion in newer investment since the government announced that it was bringing in this legislation. We would love to see one of those plants in the South Shore of Nova Scotia. We would love to see those job opportunities created.

On this bogymen fear that my friends opposite have about multinational corporations, I would just like to say that we do not have and we would be delighted to have the investment and job opportunities that are created there.

What does Bill C-91 do? I have only two minutes left. There are more issues to be explored but I will come back to them at a future time.

• (1140)

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McCreath: I see we are having lots of debate. I know my hon. friend from Dartmouth opposite will probably want to talk a lot. I look forward to what he might have to say having listened to him for many hours the other day. I will continue my remarks at another time.

In the interim what I am saying is: let us try not to be partisan in this exercise. Let us try to balance the score and take a look at what the benefits are to Canadians as well as the potential cost: \$1 per year per Canadian I understand is the number, not some of the far-fetched numbers I have heard thrown out by some of the vested interests that have been used by my friends opposite to articulate their point of view. Let us look at the benefits to Canadians and what is the value.

I asked the Minister of Health for British Columbia when she appeared before the committee: "What is the value of a human life to the Government of British Columbia?" She did not seem to have an answer because she was too busy articulating the point of view of her party and the movement she represented.

If we are going to talk about cost, let us talk about the cost in pain. Let us talk about the cost in lives that may be saved or would be lost if the research is not done here. Let us talk about whether Canadians are going to participate in this important research or whether Canadians are simply going to be freeloaders as my friends opposite seem to suggest we should be.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I wish to put on the record my sincere appreciation for the work of my colleague from Surrey North. He has done an outstanding job in highlighting this issue on behalf of all Canadians.

I also want to say at the outset, since my time is quite brief in this debate, a couple of things that must be put on the record. I want to take this opportunity to do it.

First I want to quote from Edgar G. Davis, a former vice-president of Eli Lilly and Company, one of the multinationals my friends are talking about. Mr. Davis is now at the Kennedy Centre of Business and Government at Harvard University. He is quoted as saying about this particular piece of legislation: "It is a master stroke. It shows what an industry that has its act together can accomplish". He is referring to the fact that this will be enshrined in the North American free trade agreement.