

*Patent Act*

debate with some interest. The technique that will be advanced by the Opposition will be, I am sure, reminiscent of an American politician of some distinction in the early part of this century. I know the Opposition does not like to be identified with American politics, so I do not understand why they adopt American political principles so often. However, the principle we have seen demonstrated in this House over the course of this debate has been to tell it long, tell it often, and sooner or later people will begin to believe it. That is the politics of the early twentieth century.

I have a lot of faith that modern-day Canadians will see through the political agenda of the Opposition and support our Bill because it is good for Canada, good for the health of Canadians, good for research, and good for our young scientists. It will save the consumer money.

● (1230)

The Opposition continually says that this will hurt senior citizens. They know they are not telling the truth because senior citizens are covered by drug plans. It is simply a falsehood to keep repeating that. However, the Opposition believes in the dictum, say it loudly, say it often, and eventually it will be believed. It is the "big lie" technique which they keep repeating.

As the Decima poll showed, Canadians are too sophisticated to fall for that propaganda technique.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond and comment with regard to Bill C-22. In particular, I want to address some of the matters the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre) attempted to raise in his speech. The certain facts he has given and situations which he has raised today are totally incomplete.

There are three comments I want to make with regard to the process through which this Bill has gone. On April 15, 1987, the Minister put his time allocation motion to the House and said, as reported at page 5202 of *Hansard*:

There were 82 hours of study in the committee, hardly a quick passing glimpse. Sixty-five hours were spent hearing witnesses.

He went on to say:

Mr. Speaker, 46 different groups were witnesses before the committee . . .

He continued:

Since the 1984 election there has never been a piece of legislation which has had more discussion in Parliament, outside of Parliament, and in various domains across the country than this piece of legislation. If there is anyone in this House who can suggest that they have not had an opportunity to examine this legislation, that they have not heard about it from the people concerned and received their reactions, they must have been living in some sort of cocoon.

Those comments by the Minister are rather unfortunate but, indeed, very typical of the Minister and Conservative Members who sat on the committee examining Bill C-22.

There were many witnesses for the precise reasons given by the Minister himself. The substance of this Bill is important

for Canadians, and for the pharmaceutical sector. It is also important for provincial Governments that will have to pay the lion's share of costs, which taxpayers will ultimately pay. For those reasons, numerous witnesses from across the country wanted to appear before the committee.

Opposition Members in the committee attempted, without success, to deal intelligently and reasonably with members of the Conservative Party. If memory serves me correctly, we were told as a result of a resolution that was passed that only 45 minutes would be given to each witness. We responded by saying that that was not sufficient time since many of the groups, including national organizations, would spend 20 to 25 minutes presenting written briefs. That would only allow 20 minutes for questioning. That is not really sufficient time for a thorough examination of briefs that groups of Canadians had gone to the trouble of preparing, certainly not enough time in order that legislators have an opportunity to examine and thoroughly question the substance of their briefs.

I recall suggesting to government Members of the committee that perhaps we should wait to see how many briefs would be presented and then determine how much time would be required to examine them. Government Members simply indicated that the committee would sit on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. While I accept the role of the majority in the House of Commons, surely one would have thought that due to our minority there would have been some civility and understanding of the demands that are made on the Opposition in terms of committees and their responsibilities in the House and their constituencies.

We were then confronted with a motion that was put forward in the committee by the Conservative Members of Parliament when opposition Members were not present. With some 15 minutes left in the meeting, they adopted a motion whereby they unilaterally decided to cut debate off at the committee stage. It is another example of interference in the process in order to put in place restrictions on opposition Members and those who may be opposed to the substance of the Bill. The restrictions were such that it was very difficult for those groups to present their views before Canada's highest court, the House of Commons. That is the sort of spirit that government Members created in the committee.

Every opposition suggestion, no matter how reasonable, was either voted down or not adhered to by government Members. Yet they wonder why only 11 amendments were introduced at the committee stage. It would not have been possible to receive a thorough examination of a substantive amendment.

The amendments that were put in committee were basically technical or consequential amendments that would not have shook the Government, rocked the House of Commons or upset the President of the United States. Yet the Government rejected all of those amendments, with the exception of one.