

*Patent Act*

they say that this is the case and we should succumb to this blackmail.

The previous speaker pointed out that many Canadians are covered by drug plans. Indeed they are. That is the result of legislation which was often pioneered by the CCF and the NDP over the opposition of Conservative Governments and the Conservative Party. They have always maintained that this is creeping socialism. People should be able to stand on their own feet and pay their own drug bills. Things like medicare and drug plans are creeping socialism. Traditionally, on the one hand, members of the Conservative Party have always opposed those progressive measures. They now stand in the House and say that most Canadians are covered by drug plans. We see Conservative Governments, both provincial and federal, attacking those very social programs. The Government attempted to deindex old age security. Just this afternoon the Government attacked the UIC benefits of those who retire.

• (1550)

The philosophy of the Conservative Party has been to attack government spending. However, the Government proposes cut-backs in social programs such as the drug plan. The Government proposes to force Canadians against the wall. It will force up the cost of drugs while removing the protection which Canadians have by cutting and attacking social programs across the country. Every Conservative provincial Government has attacked social programs. In attempting to cut government spending they attack the social programs.

The Government is putting the old and the sick into a vice. It is proposing legislation which will increase the cost of drugs while reducing the protection which Canadians have. That is the catch-22 situation into which the Tories invariably put the Canadian public. This is all done in the name of protecting private property, meaning patents for certain discoveries, intellectual property.

The Minister has often made comparisons to artists, writers, or inventors working in basements. He says that it is wrong for those inventions to be pirated. Philosophically I would agree with him. It is too bad that the Minister has ignored writers, authors and artists. We do not see any patent protection for them. However, he rushes to the aid of the multinationals. I have never considered companies and multinationals to be like individuals. They are not individuals working in basements and, at their own initiative, with imagination and diligence making discoveries.

Multinationals are very sophisticated and large international corporations have tremendous resources created through public policy and public expenditure. Many of the multinational corporations which will benefit from this legislation have become large through public programs. Our educational facilities, which trained the scientists, are publicly funded. To say that a pharmaceutical company has totally paid for its discoveries is false. It has been subsidized by a public education system which trained the scientists and researchers. Therefore, there is some public interest to be taken into

account. The multinational pharmaceutical corporations have not made these discoveries all on their own. The public has already subsidized them through the university system.

One wonders as well about the tax deductions which the corporations receive.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Did they ever get their money back!

**Mr. de Jong:** The Government proudly proclaims that these companies will invest more in the country. I am sure they will invest more, particularly with the tax regime which we have. They will have most of their research expenditures refunded through the tax system. Through lost tax revenues the public will be paying again.

**Mr. Benjamin:** It didn't cost them a nickel.

**Mr. de Jong:** The Minister has unabashedly said that we will have all this increased research and development. We may very well have it, but that depends on whether it is in the economic interest of multinationals to do the research here or elsewhere. I suspect that that will depend mainly upon the tax regime in place. If the tax regime will refund to multinationals the money spent on research and development, of course they will do the R and D here. Why would they do it in a country where they may not have their investment refunded through tax exemptions?

Since the cost of these discoveries is often borne by the public through the education and tax system, I maintain that the public has an interest in how the discoveries are used. I do not begrudge any organization or individual benefiting from a discovery. However, when is enough enough? If I discover a cure for cancer, should I be able to hold everyone in the world for ransom? I maintain that I should not and that no organization should be. I would expect a fair return for my effort, but it is morally wrong for an individual or a corporation to hold everyone for ransom for ten years.

The Government is introducing legislation which is not in the public interest but in the interest of a few large multinational corporations. We are being asked to swallow a bitter pill. It has been sweetened somewhat on the outside by the promise of increased research and more jobs in the country which, I hasten to add, will most probably be subsidized through our tax system. There are no written guarantees in this package. We are only offered some promise for sometime in the future.

This is a bad Bill. It is no wonder the Government wants to force it through Parliament as quickly as possible. I predict the Canadian people will not like this and that they will send the Government a very strong message that they will not accept it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I regret but the Hon. Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton—Charlotte):** Mr. Speaker, I support this Bill as I opposed the legislation of 1969 which created the situation in which Canada now finds itself. My