

call in the RCMP. Why is it that American lobbyists knew what was in the Minister's mind and what was in the legislation before the Consumer's Association of Canada knew?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, nobody knew what was in that Bill before it was presented to the House except for spokesmen for his Party and the New Democratic Party.

As I have indicated publicly, and discussed on many occasions, we have been consulting on the legislation since its draft was tabled last June. For example, I had consultations on September 5 with the National Pensioners & Senior Citizens Federation, the National Anti-Poverty Association, the Medical Reform Group. I had consultations on September 12 with the Consumer's Association of Canada. On October 14 I had consultations with the Canadian Drug Manufacturers' Association, and the Pharmaceutical Association of Canada. On October 31 I had consultations with Dr. Harry Eastman. My office has discussed it with many people. We have been trying to improve the Bill. We came up with some improvements. Somebody may have guessed that they—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: But nobody knew what was in the Bill. If, in fact, some officials leaked it, then we will deal with them.

[Translation]

STATEMENT MADE BY DR. HARRY EASTMAN—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Americans had a good estimate of the contents of the Bill. Last night, even the Minister said: "I'm not surprised people were informed." Those were the Minister's words. The trouble is that Americans, not Canadians, were aware of the Minister's intentions.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister whether he agrees with Dr. Harry Eastman, whom he appointed Chairman of the Patented and Medicine Prices Review Board, when he claims that the purpose of the legislation is to increase costs for the consumer.

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my office has been in contact with Dr. Eastman this morning. He is in agreement with me that both of us were misinterpreted and taken out of context by the CBC.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: Dr. Eastman agrees with me—obviously the Liberals do not want to hear the truth.

Dr. Eastman agrees with me that there is nothing in this legislation that will cause the rise in the price of a drug by one

cent: not old drugs, not new drugs, not pipeline drugs, not by one cent. Dr. Eastman agrees that he was misinterpreted and taken out of context by the CBC.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO DR. EASTMAN

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is a little hard to take it out of context when Dr. Eastman says this on CBC: "The answer is undoubtedly so. Indeed that's the purpose of changing the legislation". Now, how he can be taken out of context with his own words, I do not know.

Some Hon. Members: Where is the question?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I will read the question. Mr. Speaker, they want the question. "But the very man Harvie Andre has appointed to head the Drug Price Review Board said there is no doubt in his mind that prices for new drugs will be higher."

Some Hon. Members: Where is the question?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The answer is yes, that "is undoubtedly so. Indeed that's the purpose of changing the legislation".

Some Hon. Members: Where's the question?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): My question for the Minister is this. Does Dr. Eastman still have that job? Why does the Minister insist on denying that the purpose of the legislation was to please the Americans in the current free trade negotiations, and that the legislation will inevitably raise drug prices in this country, as Dr. Eastman said clearly last night?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I hope by now it will have come to the Leader of the Opposition's notice that what he stated there was editorial opinion by the reporter.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): They are the words.

Mr. Andre: Yes, Dr. Eastman is going to head up the Drug Price Review Board. The fact of the matter is that since 1969 every one of our partners in the western industrial world has been asking us to restore patent protection. The prices of drugs will not go up one cent as a result of this legislation. Help us get the legislation into committee, so I can show this to you and to everybody else who is interested.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!