

*Government Orders*

I must say that when this legislation was first proposed I heard some very simplistic suggestions. As with any complicated issue it is much easier to pick something out and terrorize people about the implications of it than to take the time to understand the depth and the full impact it might have. When I first saw this legislation I reacted the way I think a lot of Canadians are reacting to it. I was scared by the implications of it for drug prices in Canada.

Then I started to study the issue because I ended up on the committee. It was not a committee I chose to be on, but by circumstance I ended up being on it and it turned out to be a very informative experience. Having studied the information presented on both sides of the issue, I find the issue is in fact somewhat more complicated than is being presented by my hon. friends opposite or by their American expert.

It was kind of interesting that last week my friends opposite who seem to have xenophobic anti-Americanism at times brought in a consultant from the United States who could not have come in if it was not for the free trade agreement that allowed business across the border in that way. I thought it was kind of interesting that when they get in trouble they resort to Americans to back them up and support them, yet the last thing we should do is see an American dollar used to create a job for a Canadian; God forbid that this should happen. I digress.

I understand that shortly we are going to have another big PR game downstairs with a press conference. That is fine and dandy but let us talk about the real issue here and try to put a balanced picture on the table of what is involved.

What we have here is a conflict between two industries in Canada. One is the patented medicine industry, the industry that goes out and does the research and finds the drugs that save people a lot of pain and save lives. The other is the copycat industry that comes along and says: "We are going to cherry-pick your really successful things and without investing any of our money we are going to try to profiteer on that". That is basically there.

The upside for the consumer—and there is an upside for the consumer—is that generic companies can put the drugs out cheaper. There is a benefit for the consumer from those particular drugs that the patented medicine

companies have already created. That then becomes the issue.

My hon. friend opposite talks about free trade. This is not an issue about trade. This is an issue about the ownership of rights to creators: Do creators have a right to own that which they created and to have an opportunity not only to get a recompense for the time, the energy and the investment but to make sure they recoup the very considerable cost in investment involved?

I have heard a great deal from the opposition trying to turn this into an issue of multinationals versus Canadian companies. We have heard a great deal of talk about that. I have to ask the question: Does the person who is sick and whose life may be made immeasurably better by a drug that was developed by a multinational company that may be based in the United States or anywhere else ask whether or not that drug was developed in Canada? Do they say: "I am not going to take that drug even though it will save my life because it is a drug created by a multinational drug company and I would rather suffer pain or die than put up with taking drugs produced by a multinational"?

It seems to me that is quite a phoney issue. The issue we are concerned about is saving people's lives and saving people pain. That is really what this issue is all about.

We talk more about the whole issue of multinationals. The truth of the matter is that there are very successful Canadian patented medicine companies. We have not heard a lot about them from the opposition. Take a company like Quadra Logics based in Vancouver which is doing some very important cancer research. That is a Canadian company, that is a Canadian owned company.

Yes, there are multinationals. The big players in this industry are multinationals. That is the reality of the situation, but what are the jobs implications? We hear a lot from the opposition saying that the government should do something to create jobs. These patented medicine companies employ over 18,000 people in this country. By comparison, the generics which are dominated by two large companies employ about 2,500 people in this country. Interestingly enough, since Bill C-22 came in to place more new jobs have been created in this country in the patented medicine industry than exist in the entire generic industry.