

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### PATENT ACT—TRADE MARKS ACT EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO GRANT LICENCES

The house resumed from Monday, January 20, consideration of the motion of Mr. Basford for the second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs of Bill C-102, to amend the Patent Act, the Trade Marks Act and the Food and Drugs Act.

● (2:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to elaborate briefly on the statement I started on yesterday.

Though we agree that this legislation will have an antimonopolistic effect, we want to emphasize that it does not go far enough; it is merely a poultice. To the small taxpayer, it will feel like a light tranquilizer. At first, he will believe the price of drugs has suddenly gone down only to discover in the end that big business in the drug industry has managed once more to by-pass the law and maintain the extravagant prices we know at present.

It is a shame to take advantage of the unhappy circumstances of disease to make profits. Therefore the government should be afraid to compel all the people responsible for producing and consuming food and drugs to act fairly and above-board. Retail prices should be relevant to cost prices. The true cost of drugs should not be altered. An end should be put to the collusion that is prevalent between doctors and pharmacists.

And, above all, doctors should stop their practice of selling to their patients the drugs offered free by drug manufacturers.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we should seriously consider, endowing the citizen with a greater buying power so that he may freely obtain whatever is essential to the maintenance of his health.

A healthy people within a healthy government, that would be the ambition of any Créditiste administration.

[*English*]

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this bill with mixed feelings about its provisions. At the outset may I say I agree with the remarks of my colleagues who spoke earlier in this

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debate and with the feelings of a large number of people outside the house. The bill is in effect a faltering and insufficient step in the right direction. I think that most, if not all, hon. members agree there is a need for legislation of this kind. The need for a bill of this kind is very apparent. In the manufacture, distribution, promotion and particularly the cost of drugs we have a classic example of the failure of so-called private or free enterprise. I say there has been a failure in the sense that these companies have failed the people of this country but have succeeded in their own purely selfish aims. They have succeeded in their goal of making a profit but they have failed miserably to provide service at low cost to the sick of Canada.

My opinion that there is immorality on the part of enterprises of this kind is, I think, shared by some. Any enterprise that engages in making a profit out of the misfortunes of others is basically immoral. For the benefit of one hon. member on the opposite side of the house who rose to dispute with me about profits on an earlier occasion, let me say categorically that this is one instance where profits should be prohibited because they are immoral. Profit-making or the receiving of a reasonable return on investment is a privilege in our society, not a right. I believe that these companies in the so-called free enterprise drug industry have so outrageously abused this privilege that they now deserve the condemnation of the public and the intervention, supervision and control of the government.

Much has been said about foreign drug companies. On the one hand a great deal has been said by the so-called Canadian drug industry, particularly during a fear campaign some years ago, to the effect that there is something bad about foreign drugs. There was a great fear campaign about safety, control and so forth. My fears are not the same as some of those expressed by proponents of the pharmaceutical industry. Mine are more related to the international take-over and control of the Canadian industry.

The *Toronto Globe and Mail* of August 13 last, after examining one of Canada's totally Canadian owned and independent drug manufacturers—compared with other drug industries it is one of the smallest in Canada—pointed out that in the past decade the following has happened to Canadian drug companies: Charles E. Frosst Company of Montreal has been taken over by Merck Co. Inc., New Jersey, Elliott-Marion Co. Ltd. of Montreal by American Home Products, Ayerst-McKenna and Harrison of Montreal by