

*Order Paper Questions*

assurance that your Honourable House will therefore provide a remedy. They humbly declare that the monopoly position granted innovative pharmaceutical companies will prevent competition from less expensive generic drugs, thus leading to an increase in the price of drugs for the Canadian consumer and severely restricting the ability of many people to purchase the drugs they need, that the proposed amendments to the Patent Act will have a direct impact on all Canadians not covered by public or private drug plans, that the Government's proposal will increase the already high cost of provincial health insurance schemes and that the proposed changes to the Patent Act are one more example of the Canadian Government's concessions to the United States in the free trade negotiations, without regard for the well-being of the average consumer. Wherefor the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject these proposals which will increase the price of drugs for Canadians.

[English]

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and duty to present two petitions to the House. The first petition is signed by some 300 citizens of the queen city of the plains, Regina. The petitioners, all of whom are residents of Canada, present a grievance common to them. The petitioners state that the federal Government's proposals to change the Patent Act relating to prescription drugs will increase drug prices for Canadian consumers and will severely restrict the ability of average Canadians to buy necessary prescription drugs, and that the proposals of the federal Government will result in higher costs for provincial Government drug plans. Therefore, the petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject these proposals which will increase prescription drug prices for Canadians.

## TRANSPORTATION—ECONOMIC REGULATORY REFORM

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition signed by residents of Calgary, Alberta, another fine city which is next to Regina. The petitioners state that in their opinion, transportation is a natural monopoly without economic regulation and that economic regulatory reform or deregulation of the dimensions proposed by the Government in Bill C-18 will create unnecessary chaos in the transportation industry leading to unacceptable reductions in safety standards as well as deterioration in quality, type and frequency of service. Therefore, the petitioners pray and call upon Parliament to have the Government withdraw Bill C-18 and retain public convenience and necessity as a fundamental factor in the development of transportation policy.

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[Translation]

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

**Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, question No. 47 will be answered today.

[Text]

## GRANT TO BAIE VERTE MINES INC.

Question No. 47—**Mr. Kaplan:**

Did the Government make a grant of \$19,200,000 to Baie Verte Mines Inc., as a method of permitting it to repay debts due to the Crown and, if so, for what reason did the Government use this method rather than simply forgiving the debt?

**Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion):** While the grant has not yet been provided, it is the Government's intention to provide \$19,200,000 to Baie Verte Mines Inc. as a method of permitting it to repay debts due to the Crown. This grant item is included in Supplementary Estimates "A" 1986-1987 and parliamentary approval of the payment will be sought in Appropriation Act No. 3, 1986-87.

This method is being used as there is no mechanism through which the debt can be directly forgiven. While the Financial Administration Act does provide for the forgiveness of debts, the appropriate provisions of the Act apply only to Crown corporations. Given this situation, the provision of a grant was deemed to be the appropriate course of action.

It should be noted that the existing situation whereby debts of Crown corporations may be directly forgiven but debts of individuals or privately held corporations may not, was considered to be inappropriate by the Senate National Finance Committee. In its report on Supplementary Estimates (C) laid before Parliament for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1986 the Committee stated that:

The Committee believes that under the principle of equity, individuals and private corporations should have the same rights as Crown corporations with regard to write off or forgiveness of debts and that the Government should consider such a change when the Financial Administration Act (FAA) comes under legislative review.

In a subsequent appearance before the Committee (April 23, 1986) the President of the Treasury Board noted that "—the suggestion makes a lot of sense and I plan to review the issue fully. I have instructed my officials to look into this matter and to develop recommendations for the consideration of the Government when the FAA next comes under legislative review."

[Translation]

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The question enumerated by the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions stand?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.