

Adjournment Motion

There are dozens of drugs that are not available here, and because of that we have second class care.

I am not discussing those drugs that are available. I also support generic drugs, because as a pharmacist we have all the drugs and will have more and more generics on the Canadian market.

What I am discussing is simply that we do not have certain drugs and we will not be having them for years to come. This is something I do not want.

Mr. Isabelle: Mr. Speaker, I must tell the Minister that I simply do not think that anyone can prevent any drug from any country from entering Canada except that, as my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) points out, it has to meet the food and drugs legislation standards. This may take several years in some cases, but the mere fact that no basic research is done in Canada does not justify barring new drug entries into this country.

All I am saying is that from a commercial standpoint the drug industry is highly specialized, it is unlike other industries because it is always doing business with sick people and patients, its customers.

Mr. Speaker, this is why if ever you experience problems with a drug I hope you will get in touch with food and drug officials to give them its name just so Canadians will benefit from these extraordinary drugs you are talking about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. The time for questions and comments has expired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 66, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for Laurier (Mr. Berger)—Science and technology—(a) National Research Council—Abolition of 200 positions in April—Government position. (b) Government funding; the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson)—Banks and banking—(a) Estey Commission report—Non-publication of uninsured depositors' names. (b) Inquiry concerning possible interim reports; the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow)—Pharmaceutical industry—Statement attributed to United States negotiator. (b) Consumer Association's position.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PATENT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andre that Bill C-22, an Act to amend the Patent Act and to provide for certain matters in relation thereto, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee; and the amendment of Mrs. Killens (p.1378).

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us today, Bill C-22, a Bill that will amend the Patent Act, is an example of one of the more shoddy ways the Government has bowed down to pressure from American corporations by putting the interests of multinational corporations ahead of the interests of Canadians. This is occurring in an area which is extremely important. All people will need access to drugs at some time in their lives. Our population is aging and will require the increased use of drugs. Yet the Government is introducing and trying to push through legislation which will result in rather substantial increases in the cost of drugs.

● (1620)

Let us look at how we got ourselves into this situation. In recent years, Canadians have seen a diminution in the price of drugs as a result of very specific legislation. Canadians are very upset at the thought that those advantages will soon be lost if this legislation is passed.

In the bad old days when there was no competition from generic drugs, drug prices in Canada were enormously high. In the 1960s, the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission in 1963, the Hall Royal Commission on Health Services in 1964, and the Harley Special Committee of the House of Commons on Drug Costs and Prices in 1967 all investigated the pharmaceutical industry in Canada. These three major inquiries agreed that drug prices were too high and that government action was required to bring them down and to stimulate price competition.

The Hall Commission concluded that Canadian drug prices were among the highest in any industrialized nation in the world. All three inquiries felt that it was the foreign-based multinational drug companies that were dominating the Canadian drug industry and using their 17-year patent periods to set prices which were too high.

The Restrictive Trade Practices Commission recommended complete abolition of drug patents, a very strong remedy indeed. The Hall Commission and the Harley Committee recommended a compromise policy designed to stimulate price competition while maintaining the principle of patent protection but a reduced patent protection allowing companies that wished to import and sell generic equivalents of patented brand names to do so upon receipt of a compulsory licence and the payment of a royalty. This compromise was indeed