

It has become increasingly clear to others in the world that our system of drug price control works, our drug price control system has worked, and we certainly have every indication of that.

A study done by the U.S., one half of the 200 drugs studied, indicates significant drug prices being less at the wholesale level in Canada versus the United States. I can attest to that. I attended a meeting in the United States when congressman Bonior was putting on a seminar a few months ago and that was related in that meeting. They were surprised at the price of wholesale drugs in the United States versus the price in Canada. Certainly that was an important part of their discussion on that day when they talked about medicare and looking at ways of providing better medical care to their people in the United States. Clearly the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board is doing a good job.

The third issue of 1987 was the supposed disappearance of the generic manufacturers sector in Canada. It was all going to disappear. It is amazing, it did not disappear as was claimed by the critics in 1987. The results have been quite the contrary. The industry is growing, it has grown and has had twice the growth since 1987.

We can say quite correctly that the critics have been wrong on all three counts. As my dad always said, the best measure of what will happen is what has happened in the past and certainly the criticisms of the critics have not been proven on any point.

Bill C-91 is a prime example of good comprehensive government policy that effectively strikes a balance protecting the interests of consumers while stimulating the growth of a knowledge based, high technology industry here in Canada. We know we can compete internationally and this bill deserves the support of Parliament and of the people of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on Bill C-91. I am against this bill because I think that it will have three harmful effects for all Canadians.

First, I think that this bill will raise drug prices. Second, I think that it will hit older people especially. When I say older people, I will soon be 50 and I am talking about people 50 and older. You do not need to be a golden ager to know that drug prices are now out of control. With this Bill C-91, it will be a real juggle, if we

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go by what the *New York Times* wrote, and the reason I mention this newspaper is that I find it to be fairly independent in this debate. It is neither NDP nor Conservative nor Liberal; it is not even a Canadian paper. It is published outside Canada and it wrote that according to independent studies, this bill will cost us about \$508 million more a year. This will have a second effect that will hurt all of Canada in that our health system will be more threatened because the provinces will have to delist some drugs or require more and more beneficiaries to pay part of the cost of medication.

• (1340)

We in Quebec have seen what happens when drug prices go up and druggists charge prescription fees. In Quebec we now have a user fee of \$2 for every prescription filled. The minister said earlier that it was only 2 per cent more. Drugs will only cost us 2 per cent more if Bill C-91 is passed. But in Quebec we already pay more when the druggist charges \$2 for every prescription.

A headline of an article in *Le Devoir* that I will quote reads: "Deterred by the user fee—the \$2 charge—seniors cut their drug consumption too much". Because they have to pay \$2 more, people are already deciding to do without their drugs. That is only \$2, but now we are talking about 2 per cent.

I ask my colleague from Winnipeg South to really listen to the people in his riding. Let him go to the various activities of seniors' groups in his riding and I am sure that he will see that they are against this Bill C-91. If you do not want to hear your constituents, listen to your family, talk with your mother, your father and the older people in your family and you will realize, as the good colleague and good politician that you are, that drug prices are already unreasonable today. The system we have in the various provinces is already pushed to the limit in that they are looking more and more to see what service can be cut, what drug can be cut, what amount Canadians can be required to pay in order to balance the budget.

I certainly do not want to get into a war of figures because the government has figures showing that it will not cost that much and many jobs will be created. On the other hand, we are told that they are low-paying jobs, like those for cleaning staff in the various drug companies. One can always claim that it will do no harm, but, Mr. Speaker, I quoted you a figure that came not from the Liberals or the New Democrats or the Conservatives and not even from the Canadian government but from