

I just give that as one example. Another example talks about the success of the generic drug companies. It was mentioned by one of the persons during the committee process that the generic drug industry, this industry that would be suffering tremendously under the old Bill C-22 or I guess the current Bill C-22, which established the original compulsory licensing and patent legislation, had grown by some 180 per cent over the last four years. We would have liked to delve into that a little further so that we can understand the future.

Finally, I should point out that I thought it was appropriate that maybe there should be some amendments to the legislation. When we got to that day when we were to make the amendments, there was a member there who was prepared to speak to some of the amendments that I thought were appropriate based on my review of the legislation. Unfortunately he as well was denied the opportunity to speak because of the way the opposition decided to stop on one clause for an entire day to ask questions.

That concludes my comments. I will be back on third reading and I will give all kinds of good reasons why I think this bill should go forward. Today I wanted to talk simply about the process of those people opposite.

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that having heard about that process I have nothing but sympathy for the people who were sitting on that committee and those who were watching TV.

I think it is very important that we get back to the meat of this bill and the effects that it will have on Canada; effects not just on drug prices, which are bad enough, or on the undermining of our medicare system, which is terrible, but also there is no doubt in our minds that it will have an effect eventually on Canadian sovereignty.

Bill C-91 means the end of compulsory licensing of prescription drugs under the Patent Act. It means the end of the Canadian generic drug industry. It also establishes permanent control by foreign multinationals with the entrenchment of protections under the NAFTA agreement.

I think it is important, before talking about the specifics of the bill and the future implications, to go back a little bit in history. My colleagues who were here at the time will recall what had happened in the early

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1980s. Generic drug manufacturing was allowed, companies were allowed to copy brand names drugs during that period and the price of drugs to consumers and to provincial medicare plans was reasonable.

This system increased competition and it reduced prices of patented drugs. There were studies done in Ontario in 1986 which proved this.

It also reduced medical costs for provincial governments which provide pharmaceutical plans as part of their medicare coverage, and I think particularly of the three provinces that have universal pharma-care programs which were introduced by past NDP governments. Access to cheaper generic drugs is especially important for seniors, for persons with chronic illnesses and for society in general.

During that period not only were savings significant but a significant Canadian drug industry was created. This did not last long. Nefarious capitalistic evil forces were at work. We found the brand name industry began to organize and to react. They wanted a monopoly under their control where they could raise prices and control the industry.

Multinational drug companies had parent companies located in the United States which also meant the undermining of Canadian industries. They started a very strong lobby. It was no surprise to us that the former consumer affairs minister of the Liberal administration in the early 1980s was hired by the pharmaceutical industry to lobby for it, to lobby for a strong monopoly for brand name drug companies.

By 1986 we had Bill C-22. This was bad enough but the bill we are talking about today, Bill C-91, adds a whole new dimension which will entrench and enshrine pharmaceutical or drug patent protection under the NAFTA.

We have found that Conservatives began to cave in even though public opinion was very strong in 1985-1986 against this kind of giveaway monopoly to pharmaceutical companies. However, Bill C-22 was introduced in 1986. The minister of consumer affairs in that Conservative government, I recall very clearly, denied there was any connection with the U.S.-Canada free trade deal that was being negotiated at the time. They deceived the public in this respect because documents now show that there certainly was a connection.