

Patent Act has created an unfavourable environment for investment by the pharmaceutical industry.

Patents are essential to protect the immense costs necessary in R and D investment in this industry. It takes an average of \$80 million to \$100 million, and ten to 12 years to bring a single new product from the laboratory conception to the market and to establish a market for the product.

Since a resolution of the compulsory licence issue could change the perception of the pharmaceutical industries concerning the investment climate in Canada, I suggest that the Government should strongly consider repealing Section 41 of the Patent Act.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

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## GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROPOSED BORROWING AUTHORITY BILL

**Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** Madam Speaker, one month to the day from the time that the Government passed the largest and least justified borrowing Bill in our history, we have been put on notice to expect yet another. That Bill was for \$19 billion, a sum larger than the total of all Government expenditures a scant dozen years before. Of that sum, \$14 billion was specific borrowing authority for the fiscal year 1983-84.

Granted that this is a period of heavy cash outflows due to income tax refunds, we are, however, informed that cash balances are up by about \$2 billion over last year.

What, then, is the Government playing at? Is it merely trying to get so much borrowing authority under its belt now that, regardless of how badly it further mismanages the economy it will not have to come back to this House until after the next election? Or are our wildest fears coming true? Are the nation's finances so wildly out of control that they are beyond the managerial capabilities of the Government?

In the name of God, I say to the Government, no. It must not ask us, as the elected representatives of the people, to give it more authority until it has adequately justified that request, not in terms of its own narrow political interest, but in that of the public whom we on this side and the Government represent.

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## BANKS AND BANKING

### CREDIT CARD USER FEES

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Madam Speaker, once again Canadian banks are putting the screws on thousands of consumers who hold credit cards. They are introducing a transaction fee and an annual service charge.

## Oral Questions

While the banks refuse to release their profit figures on credit card operations, they are charging in excess of 20 per cent interest on outstanding balances already, despite the recent significant drop in interest rates. As well, they charge all merchants an average fee of 3 per cent to 5 per cent on all credit card transactions, which is absorbed by everybody, cash customers as well as credit card customers.

• (1115)

At a time when bank profits are already extraordinarily high, this additional charge for the use of credit cards is totally unfounded. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) should insist that the Inspector General of banks require full public disclosure of all profit and loss statements of the banks before allowing this consumer rip-off to continue.

As one Canadian who has had a bank credit card for several years, I have finally had enough. I am now taking the step, which many consumers have already taken, of cutting up my credit card to show my protest against this blatant revenue grab by the fat cat Canadian banking community. Enough is enough.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Madam Speaker:** May I remind the Hon. Member he is not allowed to proceed with any displays or dramatics in the House. I have pointed this out to him several times. It seems that he takes a long time to understand exactly what it means.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### AGRICULTURE

#### REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT REDUCE TAX ON FARM FUELS

**Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette):** Madam Speaker, we have just witnessed another Member of the NDP cutting up in the House.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mayer:** I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture which has to do with farm finances this spring, to which I hope I will get a substantive answer. The Minister will be aware that there are many farmers facing financial difficulties, particularly at this time when they are getting ready to put their crops in the ground. One of the problems is that of obtaining financing to buy fertilizer, to buy fuel, to buy seed. It is well known that a large portion of the amount of costs associated with farm fuels is federal tax. First, is the Minister of Agriculture in favour of reducing the portion of federal tax