

Patent Act

and primarily seniors, the ill and the disabled. We feel that this is an immoral piece of legislation that must be opposed at all costs.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, again it is Friday. It is always a pleasure to speak in the House of Commons on a Friday. I think it is a particular pleasure to speak on a piece of legislation which is so clearly related to the commitment this Government made in the last election campaign.

We won the last general election because it finally became clear to Canadians that the NDP-Liberal alliance was producing public policy that was penalizing millions of Canadians with unemployment and little hope for the future. It became clear that we needed a massive change in public policy if we were to be able to employ Canadians and allow them to participate fully in society.

One of the areas in which Canada is not well served is its commitment to research and development. If we want to be real world traders, we must be in the forefront of research, of the development of that research and of the manufacturing of the products that are developed.

It is indeed interesting to remember that in 1969, the Liberal Government brought in changes to the Patent Act that enabled non-inventors to steal the inventions of inventors. Here we are 17 years later with a million and a half or a million and quarter unemployed Canadians because the world community and Canadians generally began to lose faith in this country. Canadians began to lose faith that they had the means, the wherewithal, the talent and the drive to invent and to create.

Canadians have been inventing and creating, but they have been doing so in the United States, in Europe and in Australia. Why have they been doing it there? One of the root causes for that is the badly designed and inappropriate Patent Act.

It is particularly embarrassing for me to stand in a Chamber, which is supposedly full of wise people selected by the voters of Canada, and have to listen to the drivel and the inane childishness of the Opposition in reaction to a fundamental piece of legislation designed to restore Canada to economic health. Members of the Opposition seek re-election on false premises and on the backs of a million and a half unemployed Canadians. Every time we bring in a piece of legislation designed to create jobs and a future for the young people of Canada, we are exposed to childish tactics, opposition and inane arguments. It has happened again. In 1979, the NDP and the Liberals threw a Government out of office for bringing in the fairest Budget to the poor people in a decade. They threw the Government out of the House for being fair to poor people.

● (1640)

An Hon. Member: We didn't throw them out. The people threw them out.

Mr. Hawkes: They threw a Government out of office that was creating jobs at the rate of 33,000 a month. Why did they do this? Because they want public policy that keeps people in bondage. They want to hand out the cheque to the unemployed at their local meeting. We do not seek to hand out unemployment cheques at local meetings. We seek an opportunity to meet eyeball to eyeball with those people who are fully employed, fully participating, and can look you in the eye and shake your hand, not hold out their hand for a hand-out. We need public policy that creates growth in this country. The heart of those types of policies relates to getting rid of obstacles like FIRA, and getting out in the community and trying to seek trade arrangements that enhance growth and jobs.

We have not even seen in this Chamber any proposal for arrangements that the Americans and the Canadians have agreed to. Yet the funding mechanism for the NDP Party is putting ads in local newspapers that state we should be afraid of it. Nobody has seen it, but we should be afraid of it. "Do not look at it as an opportunity system to create jobs and opportunities. Just be afraid because we tell you to."

There was a report in the House on Wednesday which was a thick, 500-page report. One or two hours after it was received, and nobody could have read it, it was being condemned by the Opposition as having no value and no opportunity system within it for the really poor of this country, the people who really need the help to get back on their feet and become productive and employed. Condemn it without reading it. Condemn the trade arrangements without reading them. Condemn patent protection, which lies at the heart of the development of this nation. It is a tragedy when somebody living in this country invents a drug or a new product and in the dark of the night they have to sneak across the border to patent it to avoid having it stolen. The jobs which flow from that invention flow into the American economy, the French economy, and the British economy.

It is absolutely insane and opposition Members have some gall to stand up and say that it is going to cost you more money. Generic competition, and competition of any type, tends to produce lower prices. That happens in Canada. For seven drugs out of one hundred it happens, the price goes down. But for 93 drugs out of 100 there is no generic equivalent.

Mr. Benjamin: The four years haven't run out yet.

Mr. Hawkes: Can anybody in good conscience on that side of the House stand up in the House and tell us on which of those 93 out of 100 drugs we are being ripped off? They do not know, because we do not have a price review mechanism today. They do not trust the drug companies, yet they defend a system which allows 93 out of 100 drugs to be put in the market-place without competition and without price review.

Mr. Benjamin: Hogwash!