and objective of providing protection for new inventions and discoveries.

In essence, the amendments I propose in Bill C-22 will create a climate favourable to new investment in research and development by giving patent holding pharmaceutical firms in Canada a guaranteed period of protection. These changes will also ensure consumer protection by creating a drug prices review board to monitor drug prices. The amendments will also allow the Government to review and alter the policy after a period of four years, and again in Parliament in the tenth year, to ensure the policy works to the benefit of all Canadians.

• (1510)

The general amendments to the Act not relating directly to pharmaceuticals seek to bring Canada's patent system into line with international practices, to speed the transfer of technological information and to simplify patenting procedures both for the applicant and for the Patent Office.

[*Translation*]

This package of amendments has been carefully designed to reward private initiative and to adjust investments to support Government efforts aimed at promoting sustained economic growth, job creation and the protection of Canadian consumers.

During the last few months, I have taken every opportunity to meet as many people as possible and to learn their views about this important subject. I have thus met with groups representing consumers and seniors citizens. I have also had lengthy discussions with generic drug companies, manufacturers, researchers, and members of the academic and scientific communities.

[*English*]

Because of the complexities of the issue many people have been asking questions. These questions touch on all aspects of the Bill. One of the questions is related to intellectual property and the protection of intellectual property rights in Canada. I would like to speak for a moment about the question of intellectual property and patents.

The principle that the creator, the inventor, has created something of value and has a right to develop, to own that thing and to have some benefit from it, is a centuries-old tradition. If we were to say, for example, that in order to benefit the consumer we will not recognize copyrights any more and we will allow anyone to publish any author's work in any way they choose, provided they pay the author a 4 per cent royalty, there would be justifiable outrage at the theft of that author's creation. That is what it would be viewed as. If someone invented a widget, a gadget, something of value and we said that it is perfectly all right for someone to copy that invention and to produce it provided they pay a 4 per cent royalty to the creator, we would be outraged. Yet that is exactly what we did in 1969 with regard to the patents on drugs. We violated a literally centuries-old principle which says that the creator, the inventor, has a right for some period of protection to what he has worked on, invented and developed. It is shocking that Canada should have done that in 1969.

I have been misspeaking myself somewhat in saying that Canada was the first country in the western world to do that. I apologize to Members of the House. We were the second country to do that. According to an article in *Canada Business* of September, 1986, the first country to treat drugs differently from other inventions was Italy, when Benito Mussolini abolished drug patents before the Second World War. However, Italy was forced to restore full patent protection in the 1970s after joining the European Economic Community.

It is an absolutely unchallengeable principle that if we are to have creation, invention and development, if we are to have that type of progress, then we have to provide the inventor, the developer, the creator, with the right to own exclusively that which he has created, at least for some period of time. When that policy was abolished in 1969, we did this country an enormous disservice.

I have been around the country talking to professors of pharmacology, biochemistry, microbiology and the like. They question the wisdom of a group of elected representatives who, in essence, would say: "But you are different. We will protect Pierre Burton's novels. We will protect the creations and patents of General Motors but you happen to be working in this area—" which, incidentally, is of very important significance to the health of Canadians—"you are on your own. We will not protect you. What you are doing you will be doing for altruistic reasons because there are no protections in our law". That is very short-sighted. It is an offence and one cannot justify that on the basis of "Ah, but the consumer is benefiting". If one uses that argument, then we should remove the laws against selling stolen goods because, surely, the vendor of stolen goods is benefiting the consumer. That can never be justification for the conscription of somebody's property.

Just 100 years ago this year Canada was one of the signators to the Paris Convention wherein, along with the rest of the industrialized world, we said we would recognize the inventions of each other. That was 100 years ago that we did that, and in 1969, in essence, we abandoned that fundamental principle.

The question of intellectual property and respect for it is in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. It is entirely possible that we might have been compelled by some future GATT agreement to make these changes in order to remain a member of GATT. Does it not make a lot more sense that we do it ourselves?

I maintain that the question of fundamental property rights, the respecting of patents, is in and of itself justification for restoring patent rights to Canadians. By itself that is enough reason to undertake this action. However, there are a great many more benefits to Canada as a result of restoring these patent rights.