

Those same interested parties will also notice when they read the answer that the Leader of the Government in the Senate said it is by no means clear that the board's study was accurate — the very board that we were told would keep prices down. I take it he is questioning the validity, the effectiveness and the correctness of a study by the very board that we were told would be the one which, effectively, would keep prices down.

The *Globe and Mail* article quotes the study of this very board as stating that the number of cases in which Canada had the highest prices in the world was 42. We were second highest in the world on 35 drugs.

In passing Bill C-91, was the government trying to bring these numbers even higher?

**Senator Murray:** Honourable senators, I am sorry; perhaps I did not understand the question. I was bemused by the reference to the world. I do not know whether my honourable friend is talking about all the countries in the world, or the six other countries that he referred to in his first question.

The legislation in question had to do with compulsory licensing. I think if the honourable senator will investigate, he will find that none of those countries have compulsory licensing.

**Senator Frith:** I think if the honourable senator so investigates, he will not find that at all.

Will the Leader of the Government table in the Senate a copy of the report by his beloved review board which is referred to in the *Globe and Mail*?

**Senator Murray:** I think it was a study commissioned by my beloved review board, to use the honourable senator's terminology. Again, I will send an inquiry forward to Mr. Bouchard on that matter.

**Senator Gigantès:** It is not nice being caught lying, is it?

**Senator Murray:** I beg your pardon?

**Senator Lynch-Staunton:** Retract!

**Senator Frith:** To focus the —

**Senator Murray:** I rise on a point of order, honourable senators.

**Senator Gigantès:** If the honourable Leader of the Government thinks I was calling him a liar, then I apologize.

**Senator Frith:** If I am not mistaken, Your Honour, the rules imposed on this place by the government provide that no point of order can be raised at this point.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** A point of order would have to be raised during Routine Proceedings.

**Senator Frith:** Honourable senators, I wish to refer to the article to which the Leader of the Government himself referred and ask him a question about that. He referred to the senator from Arkansas, Senator Pryor, and a letter that the senator wrote to U.S. trade representative Mickey Kantor. This shifts the focus away from the report of the board and on to NAFTA.

In that letter, the senator states:

I am concerned that these international trade agreements may tie our hands in using pharmaceutical patent as a mechanism to contain drugs costs...

Note that he says "to contain drug costs", honourable senators. Apparently, he has asked American trade representatives to review the proposed North American trade deal to ensure it does not hurt the American health care system.

He notes that one study has estimated that the changes to Canada's patent laws could increase drug costs to the provinces, insurance companies and consumers by \$4 billion over the next 10 years. There is then the following quotation from his letter:

It is my understanding that the U.S. trade representative in the previous (Bush) administration exerted significant pressure on the Canadian government to abandon their system of compulsory pharmaceutical patent licensing...This system has served the Canadian citizens extremely well...

Unfortunately, that is in the past tense.

**Hon. Efstathios William Barootes:** How can you make that statement and then contend that Canada's drug prices are out of line with the prices of seven other countries that did not have compulsory licensing; then quote compulsory licensing as the Bible in terms of the success of price control? Either it was or it was not. You cannot win both sides of the argument.

**Senator Thériault:** When it existed it was successful, until your government destroyed it.

**Senator Frith:** It is not a matter of argument, sir; it is a matter of fact. There is no question of argument at all. You have not heard the question.

**Senator Barootes:** All because compulsory licensing, in your opinion, did not control prices.