

Patent Act

courageous critics the American population has produced in our time, Ralph Nader, a man who has devoted his life to exposing corporate rip-offs, a man who has often visited Canada and probably knows a great deal about Canada. On a point like this, perhaps he knows better than the Minister does.

Certainly it seems as if the Minister does not know what he is talking about when he says that Ralph Nader is wrong because he does not know that we have health insurance in Canada. It appears that the Minister thinks that the cost of health care in Canada is paid somehow or other by manna from heaven, that it does not have to be paid for by the people, and that the corporations can inflate the cost of prescription drugs and get away with it. The Minister seems to be saying it is okay because it will be charged against provincial Governments. If the Minister really does not know where the money comes from, he ought to learn, but I think he probably does know. I think he is hoping that the people of the country do not know where it comes from.

In fact, drug plans and health plans will be priced higher than Governments are willing to pay and Governments like the one in British Columbia will advocate setting up a two tier system of health, a poor system for most people and a rich system for the rich people. That will be one of the results of this drug legislation.

Mr. Manly: Mr. Speaker, last night there were committee hearings looking at the free trade deal between Canada and the United States, this deal the present Government is trying to sell to the Canadian people as a pig-in-a-poke. The committee itself does not even have the full text of the agreement. Nevertheless, the committee heard from Mitchell Sharp, who is well known to the Canadian people as someone who himself has advocated free trade. He looked at the details that are available on this agreement and said that he cannot support it because he sees this as being an unconscionable loss of Canadian sovereignty to the United States. He says that it will result in—

Mr. Siddon: Is not he a Liberal?

Mr. Manly: He says it will result in a great—

Mr. Siddon: The Liberals all say the same thing.

Mr. Manly: He is a Liberal. Sometimes the Liberals are not quite sure what they are saying, whether they are in favour of something or not. It is something like the Progressive Conservative Party. We recall that just before the last election, during the leadership campaign, Progressive Conservatives were all saying, "Oh, no, we would not want to have free trade because if the Canadian mouse got into bed with the American elephant and it rolled over, what kind of a pizza would that make?"

The Liberals have the same problem as the Conservatives sometimes. They do not always say the same things from one time to the next. Nevertheless, what Mitchell Sharp said, and I would like to have the opinion of my hon. colleague on this,

was that this free trade deal would put a great deal of pressure on Canada to ensure that our laws are brought into conformity with the laws of the United States and that our social policies and practices will be brought into conformity with those of the United States. Is this not already happening with Bill C-22?

Here in Canada, there has been legislation that has been beneficial to the Canadian people as a whole, but now, in order to curry favour with the United States and to ensure that this free trade agreement will be accepted, we have gone ahead and accepted changes to our drug patent legislation that are inimical to the interests of the Canadian people. I would like my hon. colleague to comment on this statement by Mitchell Sharp.

• (1640)

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, apparently what Mitchell Sharp was referring to was the fact that the main attack by the U.S. on the Canadian economy is around the question of subsidies. They want to interpret as subsidies what Canadians have struggled for and produced as social legislation, things such as health care, unemployment insurance, regional equalization and so on. The Americans want to accuse us of using those things as subsidies for anything we may export, whether it be softwood lumber, fish, or steel. They will use the same argument against the health care system if we even try to increase benefits in order to pay for the extortionate drug charges the Government will force on people. The U.S. will say that is a subsidy and your products will be excluded from the U.S. because the Government is paying for the health care costs forced on Canadians by this legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On debate, the Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands (Mr. Manly).

Mr. Manly: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that we would be considering putting the question on this important issue at the present time. Just on a point of order, I certainly do not think the House was ready for the question. The Hon. Member for Vancouver East—

Mr. McDermid: She was not even in the House when he called the question.

Mr. Manly: —is prepared to speak, and just on a point of order, I do not think we are ready for the question.

Some Hon. Members: Question!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) on debate.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The bus was a wee bit slow. I apologize.