

We know that 85 per cent of the Canadian people are covered by pharmacare plans, whether public or private, and that 95 per cent of senior citizens don't have to pay for their drugs, so what are they worried about? Why are they trying to scare the population?

The New Democratic Party launched a campaign even before the Bill was tabled in the House, in the beginning of November. They sent cards to fill out all over Canada, some sort of petition. Why everywhere in Canada but in Quebec? They are afraid of Quebec, but why? Because senior citizens in Quebec, and especially the Quebec *Fédération de l'âge d'or*, know that this Bill will improve the quality of health care. Because the New Democratic Party knew that the National Assembly, on two occasions and unanimously, passed a motion asking the Federal Government to change this Act as it applies to pharmaceutical patents.

I have here remarks made by Hon. Members of the Opposition during a debate which started in 1982, at a time when the Liberal Party had decided to amend the Patent Act as far as drugs where concerned. The Hon. André Ouellet said then and I quote:

● (1530)

[English]

"Mr. Ouellet says the goal of that law would be a balanced system which encourages the industry to invest, do research and create jobs, but on the other hand provides drugs for consumers at reasonable prices".

[Translation]

The Liberal health critic, the Hon. Member for Sudbury (Mr. Frith), said in 1985:

[English]

"Higher prices might be justified if they led to more drug research in Canada. The proposed price increase should have a minor impact on consumers".

[Translation]

We are not worried about that price increase because, for the first time in Canada, we are going to have a price review and control board. But at that time, the Liberals who had not even considered setting up that board, were not worried about a slight price increase because they said it might be worth paying a little more for drugs to allow for research and job creation in Canada.

Here is another statement, Mr. Speaker, by the Hon. Member for Hull—Aylmer (Mr. Isabelle), a doctor, who says:

[English]

"Our researchers could not work in their own country and Canada could not create the jobs normally related to research work".

[Translation]

If we did not go ahead with that bill or follow-up on the Eastman Report.

Time Allocation

I have got more, even from the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker. Here is what the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) said, I believe, after the closing or a transfer of the employees of a multinational in his constituency:

[English]

"The transfer will mean the lay-off of some 300 employees, many of them full-time researchers at the lab.

[Translation]

—he was asking a question—

[English]

"I would like to know from the Ministry what action the Government is going to take to make sure we can do this pharmaceutical research in our own country."

[Translation]

Then all those Hon. Members from both parties, especially since 1982, urged that the Government proceed with that legislation because they had seen the results of the erosion of the protection for large drug companies which may have been necessary in 1969. What happened? Drug companies left the country, the multinationals did not come in, we lost hundreds of thousands of jobs, our health quality suffered and that is the situation we have today.

We should therefore provide that protection for the drug industry as soon as we can, as we read in the editorials . . . I believe that not one day goes by without someone writing, speaking or telling the Government: Hurry, hurry! Here is what *Le Droit* said on November 19: "It was high time. The Mulroney Government has taken a courageous step in introducing a bill to give back to drug industries investing in research the ownership right which was taken away from them by the former Liberal administration". The same columnist writes elsewhere: "Our research scientists are calling for help. Canada has lost close to 2,800 highly-skilled jobs. With respect to the drug research sector, we now amount to nothing more than a banana republic, an Eastern country. Our scientists are perfectly justified to call for help, for the situation is appalling".

It is therefore urgent, Mr. Speaker, that we proceed with this legislation. Opposition Members have been criticizing us and asking us to provide documents and more information. That is what we shall be doing in committee. Let us go ahead with it as soon as possible.

That is where this should be done. We have already had quite a long debate on second reading, and another debate today on this motion, so let's go to committee. I believe we will also be having hearings or meetings across the country so that Canadians, including researchers, young scientists and consumers will all have a chance to ask questions.