

*Patent Act*

drugs for 10 years. The Bill allows a drug firm, probably from the United States, to come to Canada with its new drug and have an exclusive monopoly right for a decade. In other words, no Canadian company can attempt to offer a reasonably competitive drug on the market.

I am dumbfounded by the fact the Government is prepared to give a foreign drug company a monopoly in Canada for 10 years. I believe it goes against every principle of fairness and honesty. However, I suppose many Canadians will ask whether one expects honesty and fairness and above-board treatment in light of the Government's record.

I appeal to my hon. colleagues in the Government to indicate why they support a proposal that would allow a foreign drug company to come to Canada with a new drug and have exclusive rights which would bar Canadian competition for a decade. Are they not in favour of competition? Are they afraid of generic drug companies in Canada?

I have sat patiently for hours waiting for a member of the Government to stand in his or her place and explain why he or she is opposed to competition in the drug industry which, as everyone knows, would keep prices low.

There are two alternatives to maintaining low prices. Prices can be regulated, as they are in the utilities by the appropriate board which decides on a fair price for such things as natural gas and electricity. Second, there is competition in the market-place so that competing firms theoretically hold prices down. It is only in cases of cartels or combines that prices increase.

This legislation gives exclusive rights to a single company to charge whatever it wants. According to this legislation there will be no competition for ten years. Any sensible business person who is motivated by maximizing profits for shareholders will increase prices as much as could be borne in all consciousness.

While Motion No. 12 does not deal with that problem specifically, the fact is that generic companies now have 153 applications before the Government to compete with brand name drugs. Canadian companies, through their own research process, have developed duplicate drugs and wish to initiate competition in the market-place against foreign drug companies. The Government is indicating that it will prevent these 153 applications by Canadian companies from continuing and will not allow them to compete in the market-place for at least seven years. What kind of government is that? What kind of Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will not allow Canadian companies, that have developed their own generic drugs through their own scientific research and development, to bring their drugs on the market for seven years? The Government wants to give exclusive monopoly rights to a foreign drug company. I must have this incorrectly, Mr. Speaker. I must not understand this point in the Bill.

• (1630)

**An Hon. Member:** That is right.

**Mr. Riis:** Hon. Members opposite say that is right. I beg them to stand in their place and explain to me where I am wrong. I challenge every single Conservative in the House of Commons right now to stand up and point out where I am wrong. I challenge them to tell me why the Government is giving exclusive rights in a monopoly situation to foreign drug companies and not allowing competition in the market-place here in Canada.

Members from Alberta ranted and raved—and in many cases, I would say, for good reason—because of retroactive legislation in the petroleum industry. The federal Government moved in retroactively and said it was taking ownership rights on those wells. Those Hon. Members ranted and raved, essentially for good reason. Retroactivity in terms of legislation is not good. Why then are those same Hon. Members sitting on their hands? Why are they sitting passively by? Why are they mute? Why do they not say a single thing in defence of this? I say directly to the Hon. Member from Saskatoon that there are 153 different drugs which have been researched and are now waiting to be put on the market to compete with foreign drugs. But the Government says it will not allow that. It will not permit competition. I ask, why is the Government afraid of competition? What has it got against competition? What is it afraid of in terms of an open, free market-place? Why does it perpetuate monopoly? Why does it perpetuate exclusivity?

What we are appealing for is some free enterprise in the drug system. What we are appealing for is free enterprise in the market-place when it comes to prescription drugs. Here we have the spectacle of Conservatives sitting silently all around us in the House of Commons imposing their will on the small generic drug companies by not allowing them to compete in the future. They will not allow these companies to put 153 drugs on the market. I am perplexed. I do not understand why the Government is doing this. I am going to take my seat, although my time is not quite up yet, in the hopes that my friends opposite will use this opportunity to stand in their place and answer the questions I have raised. Why retroactivity? Why are they giving exclusive rights to foreign drug companies? Why are they not allowing the 153 applications by generic companies on brand-name drugs to be introduced now as opposed to waiting for seven years, thus allowing the foreign drug companies to take hold of the market, making it impossible for competition to occur?

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in my place today and support this motion which was put forward by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow). This Parliament has already gone through an exercise once, and I am talking about the fall of 1985, in understanding the impact of government policy on Canada's poorest and least advantaged citizens. I speak primarily of the poor, the elderly, seniors, and in particular, women seniors. It is inconceivable to me that Parliament finds it necessary yet again to deal with yet another measure proposed by the Government because it is bound and chained