

Supposing our standard of living were the most desirable and the best in the world, if our cost of living is the highest, there will still remain, because of the present financial system which serves the interests of the monopolies of high finance, too many poor people for us to be satisfied.

Therefore, we must use all the means at our disposal to lower the selling and the retail cost. At the present time, two things are drawing my attention, Mr. Speaker. The first one concerns the need to have drugs to get cured and even to save our lives. Indeed, it is no longer possible to do without drugs today, and research is conducted in order to improve the quality and the safety of these products. The second one, which I think derives from the first, concerns the ability to pay for these drugs which are absolutely necessary for our well-being, to get cured and to restore us to health. So, to get cured we must use drugs; then we have the problem of being able to pay for these drugs.

Here is the paradox of our society. We can be ill one day or another, but our financial system does not allow us this luxury, since the majority of Canadians have not the financial means to be ill and to get cured. Once again, we have to face a financial and economic problem, no matter how we look at it.

Mr. Speaker, considering our monetary system and due to the fact that the Canadian government has entrusted the chartered banks with its administrative powers rather than the Bank of Canada which belongs to the Canadian people and which, in our estimation, should regulate the purchasing power of Canadians, most of our citizens cannot afford the luxury of being sick or buying drugs.

The bill now under discussion is intended to promote more competition between the drug manufacturers and distributors. Therefore, it is intended, through an increased and healthy competition, to lower prices and to diminish a monopoly being exerted on people through prices which are evidently abusive. As a result of this competition, the government is aiming at the decentralization of the price levels now under the control of a handful of manufacturers and retailers. In our opinion, this is a commendable measure because we, of the Ralliement Cr ditiste, are opposed to any kind of monopoly, especially those of a financial nature.

We, of the Ralliement Cr ditiste, are in favour of the progress of private enterprise, small or large. We, of the Ralliement Cr ditiste, are also the proponents of free enterprise which, more than any other system,

Patent Act—Trade Marks Act

encourages greater security and freedom whatever the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), who has communistic leanings, may say.

Mr. Speaker, free enterprise must be encouraged. Hence, this is an occasion for us to welcome this bill which is intended to bring about more competition among imported products. This is commendable because it might help—I say “might”—the Canadian consumer pay a little less for the drugs he needs.

I want the minister to listen to what we are saying to him. This bill, like others of the same kind, is nothing but a poultice on a wooden leg because it is not increasing the purchasing power of Canadians which they essentially and basically need, by all means, to buy drugs.

Mr. Speaker, far from helping the Canadian consumer by increasing his purchasing power, the present government is doing no more than the previous governments, including the Progressive Conservatives who did not bring about any changes either; both parties are the same, two different side of the same coin; only the colour changes. Such governments, which we have put up with for too long, are levying taxes from the taxpayers in every way through unintelligent methods: voluntary taxes, non-voluntary taxes, direct taxes, indirect taxes, admitted taxes, unadmitted taxes, circumstantial taxes, social development taxes and social backwardness taxes. Mr. Speaker, these annoyances result in an economic regress which affects our productivity and our prosperity. They are causing, from month to month, from year to year, from one government to the next, economic regress instead of economic progress because people have less and less purchasing power. They are increasingly tied up with debts, credit and higher interest rates to which the present government applies the blind eye.

Those are the main remarks I wanted to make. As long as this is not understood, Mr. Speaker, we will not realize in what position are our people, those born in debt, living in debt, sick in debt, dying in debt and buried in a coffin bought on credit.

This system is working the wrong way; it does not settle anything because it is choking more and more the little people for the benefit of the rich people.

• (11:50 a.m.)

We support the present legislation not because we think it will settle the whole