

Adjournment Debate

want action now. They want jobs now. They do not want something that will be dragged out in the courts for six or eight months. They want their jobs to be preserved now and they want a decision now. That is why the union is supporting the Government's steps to get this matter settled. They want to wipe out that uncertainty so that they can get back to work.

There has been no flip-flopping on the part of the Government. We are fighting this thing right down the line. The speech made by the Hon. Member today demonstrated his total lack of knowledge of the issues and all the options available. If he took some time to be briefed on exactly what the issues are and on the down sides and up sides of all the options, he would not have made some of the outlandish statements he made today.

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY—REQUEST THAT COST IMPACT STUDIES BE RELEASED. (B) REQUEST THAT MINISTER PROMISE TO RELEASE STUDIES

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, my comments today arise from the interchange that occurred between me and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre) on November 19, 1986. In attempting to defend his position on pharmaceuticals, the Minister refused to release certain studies that had been prepared by the Government at that time.

I suppose there are four things that I want to put strongly on the record with reference to the answer provided me by the Minister and with reference to the entire policy of the Government in this area. First, I must say that I just came from spending a weekend in my home constituency of Windsor. While I was there, senior citizens presented to me hundreds of petitions indicating their complete disagreement with the policy that they saw would cost them money because of higher prices in the future.

I read an interesting piece in *The Ottawa Citizen* this morning written by a man whose views I usually do not take that seriously. Michael Walker, the head of the Fraser Institute, a very right-wing research institute, indicated that in his view, the Government was making a serious mistake in not admitting that there would be price increases. Anyone who has any sense of logic or any economic background or training will recognize that when the patent system is changed so as to give privileges to foreign companies, it is bound to push up prices as a result.

All we have to do to understand what will likely happen to the industry as a result of this legislation is to look not that far back to 1969 when there was no legislation in force of the kind that is in force now. We will see that all of the pipe-dreams and pie in the sky about which the Government talks of great new investments and research and development and the building of a great new drug industry here in Canada will be seen for what they actually are.

• (1820)

It is a mirage which has no possibility of being attained. In fact, at that time we had three studies take place, because our drug prices in Canada were the highest in the developed countries of the world. Finally, we were able to bring in a new approach which gave the generic manufacturers a chance to compete; not a chance to steal the product of a company, but a chance to compete by paying a 4 per cent royalty to the company involved. When that happened, lo and behold what all of us predicted would take place did in fact take place. The prices of generic drugs and, more important, the prices of non-generic drugs in this country came down dramatically.

That is what this whole issue is about. We believe that the studies that the Government has undertaken under the Privy Council Office will in fact demonstrate that precisely. That is why we have asked the Government to put those studies on the public record. We have continually received a stonewalling from the Minister. It tells me that those studies do demonstrate our position, that prices will rise, that a great many people will be hurt, and that we will not get the benefits that the Government says we will.

I ask yet again, for the sake of the openness, which this Government professed to believe in when it first came into office, that those studies be released, and that we have a chance to talk in committee and in the House on the basis of the solid information which we expect and hope will be contained within those Privy Council studies.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, the amendments to the Patent Act, as contained in Bill C-22, represent the efforts of this Government to increase the level of pharmaceutical research and development in Canada and create more jobs for Canadians. With this legislation, which the opposition is attempting to delay using a variety of tactics much to the detriment of Canadians, the Government is taking another step towards the promotion of sustained economic growth and job creation while providing for the protection of Canadian consumers.

[*English*]

Some Hon. Members opposite have repeatedly demanded that cost studies relative to the amendments be made public. The Minister has repeatedly offered to discuss such estimates when the Bill is in legislative committee. As the Minister stated before the House, we have second reading and then committee study. The purpose of committee study is to analyse and deal with the necessary details of policy and legislation. Surely Hon. Members opposite are aware of this, yet they continue avoiding the very thing that they ask for.