

*Government Orders*

the need for far more expensive treatments involving surgery or hospitalization.

Bill C-91 is good for Canada's seniors and it is good for all Canadians. It will keep the cost of patented medicines in line. It will encourage the search for new and more effective medicines. It will attract investment and create jobs in the knowledge-intensive industrial sector.

Bill C-91 is a balanced piece of legislation that will ensure that effective medicines remain available to all Canadians who need them. It therefore deserves the support of the members of this House and a speedy passage through Parliament.

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James):** Mr. Speaker, this government which has now been in power for eight years has reached many lows, but with Bill C-91 that is now before us, this government has reached, yes, yet again, another very, very low in its administration of this country in the last eight years.

Bill C-91 has been worsened by the government moving time allocation, a means of closure. Here we have an important bill that is going to affect our elderly people, our seniors, taxpayers, insurance plans of one kind or another in all the provinces of the country and yet this government has the unmitigated gall, the nerve to move closure after having only a few hours of debate. I consider this a shameful and dastardly act.

This kind of major legislation affects hundreds of thousands of people, especially the elderly and of course all taxpayers in the country, reaching millions of people. I really do not think that this government has the mandate to move this kind of legislation. It simply does not have the mandate. Here is a government that is now beginning its fifth year in office. We have a government that has been down in the polls at 15 per cent, 16 per cent and 17 per cent for more than two years and yet this government believes, or at least it is pretending to believe, that it has the right and the mandate to bring in and to impose this kind of legislation on Canadians and again imposing it on elderly people, some of whom are the most vulnerable in our country. I say that this government does not have the mandate to bring forward this kind of legislation. If it had any decency whatsoever it would hold back this kind of legislation until after the next election so that the people of Canada could offer some comment.

But, no. This government shows again its arrogance and the fact that it is totally and completely out of touch with the Canadian people. It also shows that these people who constitute the current government will do

anything to satisfy their big business friends, especially their big business friends from the United States. I know darn well that Canadians are not supporting them on this issue. Canadians do not support them.

It is the height of arrogance for the government to bring forward this kind of legislation so late in the day, when it is entering its fifth year. Instead of debating issues of this kind in the House, we should be out on the hustings in the midst of an election campaign.

Let us point out that we have model legislation that goes back over 20 years in this country, going back to the late 1960s. We have, under our compulsory licensing system, perhaps one of the most advanced forms of controlling prices of any country in the world and yet this government is prepared to tear that down.

We know, for example, that if we compare our prices of drugs with prices in the United States that we are enjoying a huge advantage. If you compare prices of brand name drugs in the United States with the prices of brand name drugs in Canada, we are talking savings on this side of the border in excess of 30 per cent. However, if you take into account our generic prices, if you compare brand name prices in the United States with prices of generic drugs in Canada, you are not talking savings on this side of the border of 30 per cent or 40 per cent or 50 per cent. You are now talking savings of 60 per cent. This government is prepared to throw that all away.

Let me remind you, Mr. Speaker, that the Eastman commission in 1983 showed that since the inception of compulsory licensing between the late 1960s and the early 1980s Canadian taxpayers, because of compulsory licensing, saved well over \$200 million. We are not talking 1990s prices, we are talking 1960s prices and 1970s prices. Canadians saved well over \$200 million. We are talking in the neighbourhood of a quarter of a billion dollars. That is what this government wants to throw away. I do not think Canadians want that thrown away at all, but this government does.

For a government to bring in this kind of legislation it has to have some credibility because it is taking a major step. People have to believe that the government is doing the right thing. The people of Canada will only believe if the government has some kind of track record. Sadly, this government has a terrible track record when it comes to keeping promises. It has talked for eight years about just getting government out of the way, leaving it to the big boys, leaving it to the marketplace. Out of that process, out of that neo-conservative economics, the