

Patent Act

Minister ought not to be riled up. He ought not to be riled up about the fact that the other place is using constitutional protocol and has decided that it has to send the Bill back to the House of Commons with some suggestions for amendments. Instead of dumping on the other place, it seems to me that they should be extremely upset by some of the things which these multinational drug companies have threatened. In other words, what I am accusing them of is blackmail.

Out of *The Financial Post* of October 26 I see a headline entitled, "Drugmakers put plans on hold, Research shelved until Government patent bill becomes law". The article states that the multinational drug companies in Canada have responded to the stalling of the Government's new patent law with one voice. It states, "Until the Bill goes through, the industry's new research and development plans are on the back burner". "The expansion is dependant on Bill C-22", said John Zabriski, President of Merck Frosst Canada Inc. "We made that perfectly clear when we announced the research plans", he said. "We will not go ahead until the bill is passed". Talk about threats from an unelected group.

What is the Minister talking about? He dumps on the other place. He says they were not elected to anything and they are threatening the House of Commons that was duly elected. What are the drug companies doing? What are they doing but threatening Parliament? That is a strike by capital. We had a strike by labour the other day in the Post Office. You know what we promptly did after eight days, we brought a Bill into this House to put the labour back to work. I have not seen the Government acting with the same gumption and the same backbone and the same courage when it comes to the multinational drug companies. It just crumbles. Members of the Government just shiver in their boots and shake because they know full well that the Party funds will get cut off. I think it is shameful that the Government and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who is appointed to protect the interests of consumers in this country, have put a greater emphasis on protecting the corporate part of his portfolio than on the consumer part.

I want to say that it is equally shameful, shameful and dastardly, that when the drug companies, the multinational drug companies, reach into the very entrails of the Liberal Party and pluck a former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and make that person their lobbyist, to come and do a job on Liberal Senators and Members of Parliament, well, that is obviously the height of it.

I see the same thing happening with a former Minister of Defence who was hired by the Government of France to lobby for obtaining contracts for nuclear submarines from Canada. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, we need honesty in Government. We have not seen the lobby legislation come through yet, even though it has been promised for over two years now. Talking about threats and incestuous relationships, we have an example of them before us in Bill C-22.

We also see the fact that charges have been made that Bill C-22 was the *quid pro quo* for free trade. I know that they

protest too much about that. But everybody in Washington knows that that was the *quid pro quo*, that this was part of the deregulative process along with privatization that makes free trade possible in the United States as seen by the Government.

• (1850)

I sincerely hope that the Bill gets hung up in the whole process and is eventually quashed, because I would like to meet the Tories on an electoral platform in a general election to talk about the issue of drug prices and their effects on consumers, and about their anti-consumer attitude tied into their giveaway of the country under the free trade agreement.

I say that the Bill ought to go back to the other place. I hope that the Senate sends it back and that it goes back and forth, back and forth. I also hope that we have an election before it becomes law.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, it was very interesting to hear the eloquent remarks of the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). As always, he was able to dramatize the sordid behaviour of the Government.

Let us look at the record of the Government. The Government promised that the Auto Pact would not be on the table. It promised that it would not tamper with social programs. It has made promise after promise and broke them. If that Government promises that there will be more research as a result of this legislation, would anybody believe it? If the Government promises that as a result of Bill C-22 there will be no increase in drug prices, would anybody in the country believe it? If the Government said that the sun was going to rise tomorrow, would it not put the fear of God in everyone that the world was going to be put into perpetual darkness?

Therefore, is it not necessary on the basis of that record to have some security when the Government makes a promise? A promise is a very frightening thing from this Government. Does it not also make sense for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre) to accept the Senate amendments which would implement the promises made by the Minister in respect of the Bill?

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that atmosphere which has been created by the Government and on the appropriateness of the Government conceding to the Senate in this instance for its own survival.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I would not trust the Government to negotiate anything at all.

It is not so much that I am outraged by the fact that the Tories tell me that certain things are to happen which they will not put in the Bill and I have to go on blind faith. That is disturbing in itself, but what is even more disturbing is that they think that the people of Canada believe them. They believe the multinational drug companies that have told them that they will make certain research and development investments in Canada. Our history is strewn with corporations that have made promises on the basis of getting grants.