

Government Orders

[Translation]

PATENT ACT AMENDMENT ACT, 1992

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-91, an act to amend the Patent Act, to amend another act in consequence thereof and to provide for other related matters, as reported with an amendment by a legislative committee, and of Motions Nos. 1 and 2.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): When the debate was suspended at two o'clock, we were considering Motions Nos. 1 and 2. The hon. member for Gatineau—La Lièvre had the floor and he has up to three minutes left.

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, when I was interrupted before the vote, I had asked for permission to table briefs from the Quebec federation of golden age clubs in the House. Do I have unanimous consent to table them?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Does the House agree to let the hon. member present his motion for tabling?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): There is not unanimous consent. I again give the floor to the hon. member.

Mr. Assad: Mr. Speaker, they were simply statements from the Quebec federation of golden age clubs on Bill C-91. There was nothing radical in them. They just summarized the situation. Anyway, this shows the government's completely negative attitude.

With the little time remaining to me, I would ask organizations like the Quebec consumers' association and the Quebec association of golden age clubs to be vigilant in the coming months.

• (1550)

After the testimonies heard in committee, we are convinced that Canadians will have to pay very high prices for pharmaceutical products. Therefore, it is in the interest of the various associations to check the increases, because in a few months, as you know, there will be an uproar when they find out about the jump in prices. It is important that they keep track of these

increases. They will have confirmation that the testimonies heard in committee were true and very justified.

In concluding, I hope that these organizations, throughout Quebec and Canada, will be very vigilant. In a little while, the situation could be very different in this House and we will then have an opportunity to correct the flaws contained in Bill C-91.

[English]

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, earlier today the member for Ontario who chaired the legislative committee on Bill C-91 stated that he was approached by some members who wanted to appear before the committee. I was one of the members who wanted to appear. However, because of the extended gridlock discussions by the opposition members of Parliament and other witnesses we were precluded from the opportunity to appear.

One of the main points I want to make today is that although I agree with the main thrust of Bill C-91, I do believe we have been too harsh on the generic drug firms, particularly in so far as the retroactivity conditions are concerned.

As I said, I agree with the thrust of Bill C-91. We are doing it for a number of reasons such as more investments, more jobs, more research and we do have to get on with it now. There is some \$500 million at stake for new investment opportunities. I do want to say that the track record of the international companies has been favourable. We can look back to Bill C-22 with some great success, particularly on price controls where the average increase was 2.9 per cent a year, well below the CPI of 4.4 per cent.

Next, the cost issue must be kept in perspective. Of drugs consumed in Canada, 80 per cent are not affected by Bill C-91. Bill C-91 affects three per cent of the total health care costs in Canada.

Another aspect of this is how some seniors have been concerned about this through some of the information they have received. I want to state that seniors are covered by drug plans in all provinces. Under current provincial plans at least 71 per cent of seniors will not pay one penny more as a result of Bill C-91. Of the remaining 29 per cent, three quarters or more of their drug bill is covered by the provincial plans. More