

*Government Orders*

In the last few years, the people in the United States have been demanding a health system more like the one we have in Canada. It has now reached the point at which President-elect Clinton in his election campaign felt it necessary and appropriate to promise them an improved health insurance system partly to cover the \$35 million people in the United States who have no health coverage whatsoever. More people than the population of Canada go without any medical health protection in the United States because of the rule of corporations like Eli Lilly and the other drug companies.

If the corporations can kill the generic drug industry in Canada and further undermine Canada's health system, they may be able to block President-elect Clinton from legislating a decent health system for the American people. I hope the Canadian people will stand up, first for ourselves, and defend our present health system and the generic drug system against Bill C-91. I hope we will defend it against the North American free trade agreement which would like to lock us into Bill C-91 for ever and ever in the future.

Second, if we do that, we will be helping the American people to gain the very same benefit.

**Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants):** Mr. Speaker, in the short 10 minutes that we have under this procedure to speak, I want to talk about Bill C-91 in two aspects. I think these are the two basic issues.

One is the perversion of Parliament that this whole process involves and the second issue is obviously the substance of the bill.

Having been a member for a few years who still does believe, sometimes I wonder about the efficiency, the efficacy or the supremacy of Parliament. This bill, Bill C-91, is a contradiction to everything that Parliament involves.

Bill C-91 was introduced on June 23 of this year, the day we adjourned for the summer. We all know that we were very involved in constitutional discussions. There were also free trade discussions, NAFTA discussions, but the preoccupation of the country was definitely shifting to the Constitution and that is the day this bill came in.

Then the debate started on second reading on September 17, 1992, when we came back after the summer when the focus was very much on the Constitution because that is the session that passed the referendum bill.

• (1250)

I want these things on the record because I cannot understand any member opposite and/or certainly opposition members who do believe that Parliament does have a part to play in certain fundamental issues who can agree with the short timeframe and the jackboot allocation of time and closure that was involved with this bill. The debate started on September 17. It started at 10.25 in the morning and went until 12.15, an hour and 50 minutes for that first day. Then we had the referendum and the House adjourned. Then October 26 came and the House came back after the referendum and that is when second reading debate continued, on November 16 when the debate started at 3.35 in the afternoon and went to six o'clock, a total of two hours and 25 minutes. Then closure came in, so the debate was going to be cut off the next day. It started on November 17 at 10.20 in the morning, went to two o'clock in the afternoon, for a total of three hours and 40 minutes, and then the resuming period of the afternoon, before the hammer of closure fell, it went from 3.20 p.m. to 4.45 p.m.

There were three days, parts of three days, for a total of eight hours and 40 minutes on a bill affecting the very health of Canada and Canadians. Anyone on the opposite side who pretends that this was Parliament at its best does not understand the whole essence of Parliament.

As I listened to some of the government speakers today talking about the merits of the bill, I can understand some members' talking about the pluses of this bill because there is definitely a very real argument on intellectual property and the fact that an inventor should be able to keep his invention. If you are a book writer you are supposed to have your copyright or if you are a painter you are supposed to have certain rights on that painting. That is fine for many of these areas where patent law applies across the board.

When you are talking about the health of Canadians, and something fundamental like drugs, you have to have the balance between the private interests of the developer and the public interest of the people you are supposed to serve. It pains me to say that the preoccupation of jobs, jobs, jobs that we have heard across the way has put in the back seat people, people, people and the health of the people that the government is supposed to represent.