

Government Orders

[Translation]

If the practice is to be changed and if the hon. member for Davenport wants to see it changed, I would urge him to press his case with the Standing Committee on Elections and Privileges. That committee has the power to inquire into the rules and practices of the House and can make recommendations to change the rules and practices as they think fit. The House can then determine whether or not such recommendations should be adopted. The hon. member may wish to consider this approach.

[English]

I regret that I am unable to find that the hon. member has a valid question of privilege.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I wish to inform the House that because of the minister's statement, the time allowed for Government Orders will be extended by 10 minutes beginning at one o'clock this afternoon.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PLANT BREEDERS' RIGHTS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of Agriculture) moved that Bill C-15, an act respecting plant breeders' rights, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise again to speak to this bill. Plant breeders' rights in Canada has received a lengthy and detailed study by the legislative committee. I understand that the committee has met at least 15 times, talked with representatives of 16 organizations, and received more than 100 written submissions. I believe that the committee has heard all of the significant arguments for and against the legislation.

It is important to note that the organizations which represent the vast majority of those who will be directly affected by plant breeders' rights support this bill. These

include the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, one of Canada's largest farm organizations, and the Canadian Horticultural Council. Several helpful suggestions were made and incorporated into the bill to improve this legislation which already enjoyed wide support. As a result, we feel that Bill C-15 is even more beneficial for Canada.

• (1130)

During second reading it was pointed out that this bill was drafted to conform to the international convention for the protection of new varieties of plants. As amended, the bill still conforms with the convention. Also, at second reading, reference was made to the 18 members of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. While our consideration of this bill continued, Poland has joined and I hope this bill will become law soon so that Canada may become the twentieth member of this union.

The committee hearings re-emphasized the anticipated benefits from this legislation. One important benefit is the stimulation of plant breeding efforts in the public sector which include Agriculture Canada and the universities. As we have heard, this is a high priority for crop and seed producers. It is also important that we encourage the private sector to invest in plant breeding. By allowing reasonable royalties we will give the private breeders incentive to invest in this kind of work.

The Canadian agriculture industry is also expected to benefit from this bill through improved access to foreign varieties. The producers of strawberry plants, seed potatoes and numerous other crops will also be able to choose from these many new varieties. In addition, this legislation will help Canada control the use of our new varieties abroad, generate royalties and increase export opportunities.

There were concerns expressed at the committee hearings that this legislation could have adverse effects. It was suggested that plant breeders' rights could encourage monopoly control of the seed industry and that it would remove or promote the use of chemicals in production, that it would have an adverse effect on the Third World and that it would open the door to patents on life.

I should like to respond to each of these points. As far as monopoly control is concerned, there is already provision in the Competition Act to prevent monopolies. Within the plant breeders' rights bill the compulsory