

*Plant Breeders' Rights*

Government listens. Those are the groups on which this Government focuses its attention. That is who it listens and responds to, as opposed to experts and people in the field who are devoting their lives to this problem. That is what is wrong with this Bill.

Members opposite tonight with respect to plant breeders' rights, were saying that this will be a benefit to farmers and producers. It is already happening in other countries where plant breeders' rights has been established. Seed corporations who have patented their particular seed and who have the protection—and in this case it is going to be 18 years—are lobbying governments to say that farmers should not have the right to retain seed.

It is expected that in certain countries there will be the introduction of laws to demand that if farmers retain seed they should pay a royalty to the companies. Is that benefiting farmers? Is that a government which is doing what it can for the small producer? Is that a government which is devoted to maintaining agriculture and a rural structure? I do not think so. That is a government that is passing legislation that is simply going to concentrate the wealth of this nation into fewer and fewer hands. That is the difficulty that I have with this Bill.

The idea is fine, but it needs massive amendments. This is a government which is setting a dangerous and potentially destructive course for this country. The potential profits in this area are mind-boggling. There are millions and millions and millions of dollars to be made in this area. The potential benefits are there as well.

However, when a small group of corporations have a monopoly, they dictate what sort of production will be happening in the rural areas of this country. Contrary to Members' saying, "don't worry, don't worry", if this Bill is allowed to pass unamended, unchanged, it is going to be destructive to the family farms in this country. It is going to be destructive to rural Canada.

Members opposite talked before about when the Drug Patent Act was passed there would be jobs created in research and development, but they have not material-

ized in this country. They are not going to materialize under plant breeders' rights either.

These companies are in the business of making a profit. We cannot blame a company for being in the business of making a profit. Its shareholders appoint directors to work each year to make the company a profit. If those directors do not make that company a profit, those directors should be fired. That is how the system works and it is fair. There is nothing wrong with making a profit.

This Government should not be passing legislation which is simply giving the agri-business corporations of this world a licence to print money which is going to put a lot of dollars in their pockets and going to show a lot of increased revenue for those corporations. It is going to simply spell one more expense. It is going to mean one more expense for family farmers and one more in which they are being controlled. This is a government which talks about free enterprise. This is not free enterprise. When this materializes down the road, these corporations will have a say in what people plant, when they plant it and how they should plant it. That is the problem with this Bill.

These corporations are not trying to develop a plant which is resistant to various insects and other problems which exist in fields and in crops. Rather than developing a pest resistant variety, they are focusing on gene transfer for pesticide resistance because that is where the money is. If they can develop a crop variety and show that it produces well and convince producers to buy it, they will do that.

What will happen is that as varieties disappear, as they inevitably will, then producers will be forced to follow the tune that these agri-business companies maintain. That is the conclusion of the conference. That is the conclusion of experts who are concerned with this area.

This is a Bill which is only at second reading, thank goodness. I certainly hope that in committee we can effect some changes to the Bill and come back to this House with some recommendations so that it provides some protection for the producers of this land that does not give everything to agri-business and does not cave in to agri-business.

I and my colleagues will be working very hard to see that this Bill is either defeated, or if not defeated, that it is presented to this House in a fashion which reflects and represents and is responsive to the needs of average