

*Government Orders*

licensing will be available so that producers of basic food will have available varieties at reasonable prices.

Another condition that the Federation of Agriculture had as a requirement of its support was a sunset clause after 5 or 10 years. This is not particularly radical. It is the kind of thing we see in the Canadian Bank Act. We have given the banks an extreme privilege to run the banking system in our country with very little supervision. They have very near monopoly control of the financial institutions. In return this House, and this and all future and past governments, have reviewed the act and privileges granted to financial institutions every 10 years. One of the reviews is to be done this year for the past decade.

• (1200)

Third, the privilege proposed for seed development companies is very similar in that it is a monopoly kind of power granted for up to 17 years. The CFA is well within its rights to suggest that a sunset clause be included so that after 10 years a full review of the activities of seed companies under this act could be conducted by the House of Commons and the Senate and a decision made as to whether to continue those powers, to restrict them, or perhaps to extend them. It was turned down by the government, yet it was one of the requirements of the CFA on its conditional acceptance of Bill C-15.

The fourth condition supported for plant breeders' rights, provided there will be proper examination under the provisions of the Competition Act, is to look at mergers and acquisitions to determine what effect the mergers would have on competition in the seeds industry. We did not get a response to that. What we got was a letter from the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to the Department of Agriculture which indicated that they would have an interest in that sort of thing and an apparent agreement that the Department of Agriculture would keep them informed to the best of its ability as to mergers and expansion in the seed industry.

The final condition the CFA placed on conditional support for Bill C-15 was that it wanted a clear expansion of public research into plant breeding programs which would result in an increase in publicly bred varieties available to farmers and in the number of person years and amount of financing in those programs.

This legislation contains no such guarantee. We have no such guarantee required from this minister or any future minister of agriculture, or this government or any future government.

The public breeding program of this country has been extremely useful and helpful in keeping Canadian farmers competitive. In fact, it was the public plant breeding system that made western Canadian agriculture competitive at the turn of the century. It was the central breeding program of the Department of Agriculture at its station in Ottawa that produced the wheat varieties which permitted Canada to become competitive on a quality and quantity basis in world markets.

It is the same public breeding program, through the Department of Agriculture and through assistance from various universities, that keeps us competitive and ahead of the game. I would point out something that I raised in the House a few months ago to show that we are competitive.

In trials in North Dakota, publicly bred varieties from Canada topped all of the test trials. The private plant breeding companies from the United States and Europe could not, and did not, produce varieties that could compete effectively against our own. We will not see a huge improvement to the Canadian plant breeding industry as a result of this legislation. What we will see is some breeders of plants who propagate material either as registered seed growers or as horticulturalists having easier access, they think and hope, to some European and American varieties. I think that contract law would have looked after that quite well and I regret that the government has caved in to international pressure, a form of hijacking by international seed corporations, to propose this law when the existing law protected the producers, the farmers, and consumers much better than this one will.

**Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member who just spoke that he was referring to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. At report stage I read into the record a letter to the Minister of Agriculture dated April 23. I am quoting from the letter again: "We should point out that many of the caveats which our organization has had with respect to plant breeders' rights have already been addressed directly in the bill by the committee amendments or by