

*Government Orders*

The bill essentially makes amendments to five different statutes all dealing with various aspects of intellectual property. Patents, which protect the embodiment of ideas of a functional nature, are governed by the Patent Act. Copyright, which protects the expression of ideas, is governed by the Copyright Act. Trade marks, which protect symbols and distinguished goods and services in the marketplace, are regulated by the Trade-marks Act. Industrial designs, which relate pretty much to ornamentation applied to an article, are governed by the Industrial Design Act.

An interesting new field is called topographies. As a new MP I remember asking: What is this bill on topographies? What are we talking about? I was thinking of territory, topography on a map. That is not what it means at all. My friends, here we are dealing with the computer age. We are dealing with microchips. This is called topographies, or the contents of a microchip. That is actually regulated by—and here is that word again—the Integrated Circuit Topography Act. If that word is seen in the newspaper, they are talking about microchips.

• (1655)

All that is what Bill S-17 is concerned with. It is important to highlight that this bill was not sneaked in. Although it has been very hastily presented to us, it was not sneaked in. This bill was not bull-dozed. The bill has had extensive consultation and hearings with different consumer groups. Actually, the Canadian Bar Association was one of the players as well.

The bill has been involved in a great deal of consultation. All we are asking as members of Parliament is that the consultation continue in committee so that we can understand the full intent of this legislation before we adopt it.

The amendments to the Copyright Act are primarily of an administrative nature. For example, it eliminates the requirement that entries in the copyright register be personally signed by the registrar of copyright or by the commissioner of patents. That sounds to me to be a fair housekeeping measure.

Dealing with the Industrial Design Act the bill allows the applicant to designate somebody else, an assignee to file an application in their own name. You can designate someone to make an application. Once again that seems to be a fairly inoffensive part of the bill.

With respect to the Integrated Circuit Topography Act this would extend protection to us and countries which are reciprocating with Canada. That is just common sense to me.

I have some serious misgivings when it comes to the biotech part of this bill where we are dealing with new organisms. I am not quite sure that it cannot be described in writing. As a writer myself I would like to know why we would be going against the recent ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada which said it had to be in writing in order for it to be valid when application was made for a patent.

I understand the biological sample can be deposited and that would be the example. That would be your so-called application part of the affidavit, but I am not quite sure that in and of itself would suffice. There should be some attempt to write what went into that biological sample, why it is so unique and why there should be a patent on it.

Dealing with this whole question of biogenetic engineering, I am very much concerned that we are actually homogenizing life forms. We are homogenizing plants. We are homogenizing animals. If you read the papers, it appears we are creating a new strain of pig so that we can have parts for transplants.

I am concerned that this is something that is going to receive a great deal of scrutiny by the churches and by people with religious beliefs who do not believe we should be involved in this. He who controls the patents for seeds, animals and livestock, what does that do for the agricultural sector where farmers with the ability wish to buy these animals and seeds without having to deal with a monopoly of a company? It may be a pharmaceutical company or some other company which has a patent on that particular livestock or that particular seed. I am wondering about that. That question has to be answered in committee.

Finally when talking about biogenetics and talking about creating new organisms we are really talking about getting a patent on life. To claim a patent on a life form is a direct and total denial of that person above looking down upon us who is the ultimate individual, I believe, to have that right. We have to look at the whole question of what creation means and whether we can actually seek a patent on creating new life forms.