

*Plant Breeders' Rights*

property. Of all technologies this life derived technology must remain in the hands of the people.

This is a conclusion of a conference of scientists from around the world, scientists including people from Canada. In fact, the Government would have received a report from this conference. This Government has chosen to ignore these experts and individuals who devote their lives to science. This Bill codifies what the Hammarskjold seminar feared most.

We should be looking at plant breeders' rights and biotechnology, but we should be very careful about how that development proceeds. The Government has ignored that conference, those conclusions of world experts as it has ignored other experts in the world. If the goal of science is to serve humanity, then let science serve humanity.

Many countries are dealing with this problem. Members opposite spoke of this much earlier. They spoke of numerous countries, including the United States which has a tremendous influence and effect on Canada. The United States not only allows plant breeders' rights but also plant patents, plant cell culture, and engineered organisms.

The Americans have taken a step ahead of us. The United States considers a lack of patent protection to be an unfair trading practice. That was brought up at the GATT negotiations. Canada has been under pressure from the United States about the subject. The United States has demanded that Canada adopt similar laws to the United States for pharmaceuticals and plant varieties. You can see in the recent past that this Government caved in to U.S. demands on pharmaceuticals.

We had a nation that for 20 years had some of the cheapest drugs in the world. This benefited Canadians, but Canada passed a law providing protection for drug corporations.

**Mr. Soetens:** And it created all kinds of jobs.

**Mr. Laporte:** The Government promised that this type of legislation would create research and development and hundreds of jobs.

**Mr. Soetens:** Thousands.

**Mr. Laporte:** These jobs simply have not materialized.

**Mr. Soetens:** Come up to Ontario and I will point them out to you.

**Mr. Laporte:** The Government is now caving in to the pressure of the United States Government on plant breeders' rights. Mark my words, this is the beginning. Certainly there will be pressure from the United States to have treaties not just for plant breeders' rights but for animal breeders' rights. That would be the next stage. Perhaps legislation will be introduced next year or in the next session.

We want to improve the quality of life and have a better community, but this Bill does not provide the protection needed to guarantee the decent quality of life Canadians deserve and have come to expect.

Canadians attended the Hammarskjold seminar. Reports were presented to the Government which indicated that plant breeders' rights promised to increase production and reduce costs, but the conclusions of experts, not politicians, of people who work in that field and devote their life to it, said that that was not likely to be the case. They concluded that it will aggravate genetic erosion and likely to increase the dependence of farmers. It will further concentrate the power of transnational agri-business. In other words, there will be a concentration of power into fewer and fewer hands at the ultimate expense of producers.

There is more. Certainly plants go into producing a large number of drugs that are utilized in the pharmaceutical business today.

• (0030)

That is why it is not uncommon to have a company which is involved not only in pharmaceutical drugs or chemicals but also in seed production. This Bill simply allows them to further concentrate that monopoly which they are developing.

In health, Mr. Speaker, the drug companies will say that they will provide more effective diagnostic tools and new ways to prevent disease. The Hammarskjold Conference concluded differently. These experts and these people who devoted their lives to this type of work—and not politicians—have concluded that the pharmaceutical industry more likely will focus upon the most profitable opportunities and divert attention from basic health requirements. In other words, the bottom line. These are experts who have reported to government and who have lobbied governments. There is one tragic flaw and one tragic problem that these experts do not have. They do not have a lot of money. They do not have the power that the dollar bill brings when we are talking to people like Cargill and Shell Oil and other companies, like the Eli Lilly Company. Those are the companies to which this