

countries that I have just listed in recognizing the rights of plant breeders.

**Mr. Milliken:** I was talking about 18 years, not 18 countries.

**Mr. McDermid:** Mr. Speaker, I have just a brief comment to make following on the remarks of my colleague from Kingston and the Islands. I want to let him know that I have dealt with a couple of seed companies. Dominion Seed House of Canada was in my riding. I have now turned that over to my friend from Halton—Peel. Oseco Seeds in my particular city has been lobbying for this particular Bill for a considerable time.

One of the things I wanted the Hon. Member to know is that a great number of the seeds that we use at Oseco Seeds in Brampton come from the West. As a matter of fact, the West is a great supplier of seeds and does help the economy right across the country.

This is a very important Bill not only for the rural parts of our community but for those plant breeders, those who create new forms of plants which not only help feed but help beautify the country. I want to add my support for the Bill and congratulate my colleague for some brilliant remarks.

**Mr. Althouse:** Mr. Speaker, in closing his remarks the Hon. Member for Macleod (Mr. Hughes) said that he thought that we needed plant breeders' rights because it would speed up development of plants and the progress that plant breeding can take. Yet a moment ago I heard him defending the right of the plant breeder under this particular law to have a monopoly over that variety for 18 years.

We have had the experience in this country of not having plant breeders' rights. I cannot think of a wheat variety that has ever lasted 18 years. I cannot think of an oat variety that has lasted for 18 years.

Why is he proposing to be behind a piece of legislation which on the surface seems to be intent upon delaying the move from one variety to the next by imposing this 18-year monopoly power over the control of the variety?

We have had varieties go out of fashion and be supplanted by better varieties in less than four or five years under the current system.

### *Plant Breeders' Rights*

**Mr. Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raised a couple of points. One is the suggestion that I was calling for this kind of a change because it would speed up the development of plant varieties. I think he has perhaps twisted that. What I was saying was that it would develop, strengthen and create more research and development in the country, not necessarily speed it up. We all know that when it comes to any particular research program, it takes a long, long time. It takes a good variety to last 18 years. There are varieties, such as Thatcher which has been around since 1935. There are some varieties that have lasted for an extended period of time. This program does not stop people from developing and using other varieties. All it does is ensure that there are royalties collected for up to 18 years which allows the researchers to regain the investment that they have made in the initial program.

• (1650)

I believe that that is the essence of the debate today. The essence of this whole matter is that there are tremendous up front costs in research and development in this field. It takes a long time to develop any variety. It takes a lot of money, energy and commitment. It is only fair to ensure that those people have some prospect of recouping some of that investment in time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Supplementary question. The Hon. Member for Mackenzie.

**Mr. Althouse:** Mr. Speaker, if that was the intention, as the Hon. Member has said, of this legislation to permit other breeders to use the patented variety, why does the legislation not provide a complete automatic licensing provision, instead of being written as it is, to automatic licensing at the discretion of the registrar? I would feel much more inclined to believe the Hon. Member's description of the legislation if the legislation did not provide the registrar with the discretion to limit who can get the new variety in spite of being willing to pay the licensing fee.

**Mr. Hughes:** Just a quick response to that, Mr. Speaker. The Commissioner clearly would deal with any sorts of questions like this. I am sure that my hon. colleague will want to raise these sorts of questions in committee and we will have the opportunity to discuss them at further length.