

Government Orders

consumer who is particularly interested in having the very absolute latest rose and tulip.

There was an effort in the committee to separate those kinds of needs from the food needs of the agricultural industry because there is some hazard in permitting food crops to become subject to a monopoly or patent right under this type of legislation. We are already seeing a tendency to monopolies in the seeds industry and this simply allows large multinational corporations to extract larger and larger profits from the industry.

The CFA provided as one of its conditions that Bill C-15 must continue to exempt farm-saved seed from royalty payments. It is crucial to farmers that this exemption be retained so that they will have secure access to an alternate source of low-cost seed. There was no change to the way the legislation is written. As I recall, it is left to the discretion of the commissioner who administers the bill, but what creates some concern was reiterated by the farmers' union in their brief, and that is seed costs at the farm. They note that there has to be some choice permitted to farmers to use their own farm-saved seed.

I point out two instances where other countries' experience gives them some reason for a certain amount of alarm. In Great Britain, for instance, we were told that such farm-saved seed is exempt as long as it is cleaned on the farm. However, if the cleaning at the farm level is done by a portable seed-cleaning plant—which are used in this country as well—there would have to be another payment of royalties for the cleaning of the particular variety of seed even though it was produced on the farm and was going to be reused on the farm.

There was some hesitancy on the part of farmers to get started in this particular process, knowing that once begun, Great Britain began to put further conditions on their farmers.

I point out that as we move to the goods and services tax, grain cleaning charges for custom use will be something on which we will have to pay GST. There will be bookkeeping done. It will be very easy to monitor those items so the administrative framework for permitting the companies to collect royalties on farm reused seed will be there.

As well, I point out a quotation from Dr. Hans Leenders, the Secretary General of the International Seed Trade Federation based in Switzerland, who in a

speech in May of 1986, quoted in *Seedman's Digest* a U.S. publication, stated that he was taking the point of view of a seed developer, being a third generation owner of a seed business.

He was pointing out the need by the seed trade to be able to collect royalties on seeds that were grown on the farm and were going to be reseeded on the farm. This is part of what he had to say:

As a matter of fact the freedom to do in one's own house/company is not absolute. Clandestine alcohol, fire arms, drugs production even for one's own need and quite some other things are in most countries prohibited.

Plant reproductive material has increasingly become a technical product in which money has been invested. Even though it has been a tradition in most countries that a farmer can save seed from his own crop, it is under the changing circumstances not equitable that farmers can use this seed and grow a commercial crop out of it without payment of a royalty.

I think it is fairly clear where the international seeds industry is trying to carry us. While this legislation and this commissioner tell us there is no intention of permitting royalties on seeds that are grown on the farm and reused on the farm, the seeds industry is pushing beyond that.

I submit and remind you that it was the seeds industry that pushed Canada and the Department of Agriculture into adopting a plant breeders' rights mode in the past 15 years and are succeeding here today.

This should not in any way be construed to be the final step. It is only the very first of many steps that the seed industry has in mind to take Canada's legal system and its ability to extract royalties and profits from the \$400 million worth of seeds that are used in this country.

I said I was going to be going through some of the conditions that the CFA laid down. I pointed out that the first one was that seed saved by farmers must continue to be exempt from royalty payments.

The second condition was that the bill also make provision for compulsory licensing, with the objective of ensuring that a protected variety is made available to the public at reasonable prices. That reasonable price protection is left completely to the judgment of the commissioner. There is no protection in this legislation other than the good judgment of the current and future commissioners, so that can change at any time at the whim of the commissioner and the sitting minister of agriculture. There is no guarantee that compulsory