

*Plant Breeders' Rights*

I am not sure how often this occurs, but there certainly is a great deal of concern by those who have looked at this legislation in other countries. It is clear that the committee would want to take cognizance of that, examine it, and see how great a danger it is and what provisions there are in the legislation to prevent that type of concentration from taking place.

Those are some of the concerns that we have with this legislation. It probably has some benefits. However, we want to be sure that those benefits will accrue to individual Canadian farmers. We want to be sure that public research is not jeopardized by this legislation. We want to ensure that government royalties that are developed by Canadian laboratories are ploughed back into research and are incremental to the type of funding which is already provided by the Government of Canada to our research facilities across the country.

If the price of seeds rises, we want to ensure that there will be additional benefit and not only place a burden and monopoly control on the production of seeds. We have already seen what happened with farm chemicals. We paid a big price in this country with no real research taking place under the Patent Act. That is different legislation, but the principle is very similar.

I have already mentioned the danger of seed, chemical, and fertilizer combinations taking place. Those are concerns that we have with the legislation. We are in favour of more private research in the country. We think that is desirable. At the present time the research carried out in the country is highly related to the provincial and federal Governments, but mainly the federal Government, and to university research.

There is a need for more private research. However, we do not want to see this legislation lead to a cut-back in federal government research. We do not think that research can be duplicated by the private sector. We do not want to see the federal government research deal with small or regional problems. We want to see it maintained. We do not want to see the private sector hiring away our top federal government research scientists.

Maintenance of federal government research will ensure that there is a critical mass of researchers together who will develop new and better varieties of seeds. There is a good example in Saskatoon where there

are many disciplines working in various fields of agricultural research who are generating very effective research results. As a result of this legislation, we do not want to see government research downgraded or privatized as a result of this move by the Government of Canada.

We are also concerned about the 18-year exclusivity rights to royalties and the possibility that companies would be given that full period of time, especially the multinational corporations that come into Canada with seeds from other countries, and would maintain that right during that period of time with no real benefits to us. That happened in the whole chemical industry.

We did not hear much from the Deputy Prime Minister this morning about corporate concentration or monopoly control of pricing and the production of seeds. We are concerned about that and will be looking at what provisions there are in this legislation when it is dealt with in committee. We do not want to see government laboratories and research facilities downgraded.

Those are our concerns with the legislation. We want to see them addressed in committee when the Bill goes to committee.

• (1210)

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to debate a Bill at second reading, the purpose of which is to introduce the concept of plant breeders' rights. This is an idea for which legislation has been tabled in the House in various forms over the last nine years but has never been debated until now. The purpose of second reading is to debate the principle of a Bill. The question I wish to address today in keeping with that parliamentary tradition is the broad one of the principles being proposed by the Government in this legislation.

This Bill has a wide ranging effect on the population of Canada and the world. It has an effect on the development of the Third World because the Third World is largely the source of many of the plant genetic material we use in the developed world. There are north-south development issues to be raised, including not only the question of the flow of technological property but the funding between north and south. There is the broad question of who should control biotechnology and how it can be controlled, which this legislation begins to address.