

*Plant Breeders' Rights*

tal to the funding provided by the Government of Canada for agriculture and crop research.

The Government's commitment to privatization is so all-pervasive that there is no saying that the Government will not privatize their own laboratories. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is a great admirer of Mrs. Thatcher in Great Britain. Britain has privatized government laboratories. One can read in the press today that the Government is planning to privatize PetroCan. You and I, Mr. Speaker, were here in 1979 with the former Tory administration when they went through the throes of discussing and deciding whether or not they would privatize PetroCanada. We cannot help but experience a feeling of *déjà vu* having seen that 10 years ago and seeing it again now. We should make sure this legislation does not lead to the Government privatizing those big government laboratories which have been so beneficial to Canadian agriculture.

The Minister spoke this morning about the plans for additional seed banks in Smithfield to ensure the preservation of germplasm. I am pleased to hear that. There is a need for not only a national seed bank for preservation of genetic material but regional seed banks as well. I hope that is the implication in his announcement today, that there would not only be a national seed bank for the preservation of germplasm but regional seed banks as well. It is important to do this on a regional basis. In this country, we do not really have one country in terms of agriculture. We have several countries. We have several very different agricultural economies from the regions of Atlantic Canada to Ontario or Quebec, to the Prairies and to B.C. We want to preserve the health of all of them and ensure that the seed banks and germplasm mechanisms are maintained for every region, not just on a national basis.

I spoke before about the Patent Act and the chemical industry, how it is certainly not guaranteed that we would have full, massive research going on in this country. The one concern which has been expressed by various groups, including the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and others, is the price of seeds and the problems of monopolies. It is an ongoing concern that not only that will we not get the research here in Canada but that the research will be done elsewhere, that some super varieties will come into the country and that there will

develop monopolistic situation. That is of great concern. The Deputy Prime Minister did not spell out in much detail today how the whole problem of monopolies would be avoided. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture has produced a brief on the topic in which they have said that there must be provision to protect producers against excessive monopolistic pricing of privately developed varieties. Perhaps some kind of mechanism which could be put in place by the advisory committee to this Act would be useful in that regard. We do not have very strong anti-combines legislation in this country and that problem of monopoly control is very real.

• (1200)

In the report done by Agriculture Canada during the period 1975 to 1982 it lists some 15 seed companies that were bought out across the country. Some are not necessarily involved in seed production or research, but the names of the purchasers are very familiar. There are companies such as Ciba-Geigy Canada Ltd., Pfizer Chemicals, Northrup King & Co., Ciba-Geigy Seeds Ltd., Dekalb Agriculture Research, Inc., Canadian Industries Ltd., Cargill Grain Co. Ltd., and Continental Grain Co. They are all large multinational corporations buying out Canadian seed companies. The danger of monopolies and concentration of corporate control over this industry is very apparent.

This list is several years old and we have to upgrade it to see if the whole system is moving toward a very few companies, many of which probably will be doing their major research in the United States. If that is the case, how can we be assured that we will have any advantage, especially if the company is guaranteed an 18-year period in which there can be no compulsory licensing for Canadian producers.

The other danger expressed by some groups that are concerned with this legislation is not only that there is corporate concentration into a very few hands, but that the multinational corporations will develop seeds which are compatible to their fertilizers and chemicals. In that manner there is not only a corporate concentration, but individual companies that develop top flight seed that is compatible with their fertilizers and chemicals. This is not only corporate concentration, but concentration within one individual company.