

Plant Breeders' Rights

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Regina—Lumsden (Mr. Benjamin) has the floor.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I was particularly anxious when I had the floor that the Hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Halliday), the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Belsher) and the Hon. Member for Lethbridge—Foothills (Mr. Thatcher) were here because I wanted to ask them a couple of questions about this Bill.

However, I am glad to see there are a couple of Hon. Members here who proclaim that they are Christians, who believe in a philosophy that they are their brother's keeper, who believe in the parable of the good Samaritan. They believe in the teachings of Christ.

I have not been known in my 21 years here to make speeches regarding religion. However, I want to submit to you tonight, after listening to all these Christians, bible thumpers, some of them born again, who support this legislation that it seems to me they have more than given hypocrisy a good name.

I find it difficult to question and really do not want to question the sincerity of the beliefs of my hon. friends and colleagues in the House, but with this legislation they do no more than increase man's exploitation of man. I do not give a tinker's damn how many other countries have gone this route of royalties on food.

• (2400)

I don't give a tinker's damn how many are socialist, capitalist, communist, or whatever. By the way, there are only 17 out of 160 nations in the world which would go along with this. There are a lot of Conservatives, a lot of so-called Liberals in the Canadian context, and even a few who claim to be NDP. I do not care what those other countries are doing. This is another case in which this country could set an example for the rest of the world, particularly our fellow men and women in the underdeveloped and poorer nations of this world who will pay dearly, not to mention how much our own food producers will pay.

We in the NDP recognize that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with making a reasonable profit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Benjamin: Where were you in 1937? That is what the CCF said. You couldn't have been a day over 60 then.

There is a difference, Mr. Speaker, between a reasonable profit and sheer, crass exploitation of people.

The reason I mentioned the Hon. Members for Oxford, Fraser Valley East, and Lethbridge Foothills is that I have received letters from them over the last number of years inviting me to prayer breakfasts. Don't any of you Tories ever invite me again to a prayer breakfast. Don't any of you do your praying in the morning at a breakfast and then pass legislation that flies in the face of the things that you pray for. The nerve. How dare you? It is bad enough to be a hypocrite but to flaunt it in the law of the land is a low not even reached by the Liberals, and they were the ones who started all this.

My new hon. friend from Thunder Bay—Nipigon was not here when the Liberals tried to put this through, and oh did they work at it. You should have heard those Christians on the other side. Some of the faces I see now, which look just as ugly as mine, were here then; some were not.

The Hon. Member for Lethbridge—Foothills had the unmitigated gall to mention Marquis wheat tonight. Who perfected Marquis wheat which saved wheat producers not only in Canada but in many other countries of the world for decades? It was Dr. Saunders.

Either listen or leave. I am trying to talk about the contribution of our country and the development of food production for the last 125 years.

Dr. Saunders developed Marquis wheat. Where did he develop it? It wasn't at the Kraft food company, it wasn't at Libby's, and it wasn't at any other corporation. It was at the Experimental Farms in Ottawa and Saskatoon, public operations. Dr. Saunders never asked for and never collected a royalty, neither did the Government of Canada or the Government of Saskatchewan.

The latest developments in canola came out of the Government experimental station in Saskatoon and the University of Saskatoon. That plant development is now