

Government Orders

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I have been almost two years in this Parliament. It is Port Moody—Coquitlam. That was the last—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry. You are sitting so close to the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway. I just noticed the hon. member. He is kind of far away. You are blending in with the concrete.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I tried to be slightly radical for this place and actually put on a spring suit to look a little different than the normal blue serge of all the males in this House. But, it never works.

Some hon. members: Shame!

An hon. member: When you speak, you should stand up.

Mr. Waddell: I am standing up, Mr. Speaker.

I have just a couple of remarks to make. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, when he spoke on behalf of the government on the amendment presented by my friend, the hon. member for Mackenzie—who is a real expert in agriculture—was giving the real reasons why plant breeders' rights do not really work for a small country like Canada. When he used the words "planned marketing"—to plan your marketing for the long term—I think of monopoly. Those are words that sometimes lead to a monopoly. To give the people the right to plan their marketing means to give them a monopoly and so they are set for a period.

The parliamentary secretary talked about taking away privileges with this amendment if it was passed. It seems to me that the amendment is giving privileges. The privileges do not exist now so the amendment is giving privileges. It is the bill that is taking away the privileges.

I also thought of the patent drug bill as an analogy. I am not an expert in plant breeders' rights, and I am sure hon. members will say: "Well, that is obvious when I hear him speak". I am not an expert. I am from an urban riding and this is a difficult subject, but I am interested in it from an international law point of view.

I recall when the government brought in the bill which deals with drug patents to give privileges and monopolies so they could plan and market for the long term. These words echo that debate. And what happened? Prices went up. There was no real new research in Canada. I

believe that there is outside control and other companies are taking over some of our Canadian companies.

• (1630)

One has to approach the problem of harmonization in the international world, the new international economic order. We are a shrinking world. A Canadian, Marshall McLuhan, said 25 years ago that we are more and more a global village. We are now, as the government will no doubt argue, and there is a lot of truth to it, a global village economically as well. So we have to harmonize the world economy. I suppose that does make some sense. It makes some sense to have an international order that runs better that way.

The problem with it is who controls it. Who has the monopoly? Who has those privileges? That concerns me again with the plant breeders' rights notion that we freeze things in the world and we take away, especially from the Third World, their resources, their genetic resources in this case, and we use those resources. The rich, largely big business people in the first world, our world, get to control those resources of the poorer people in the developing world. That concerns me.

I have mentioned the monopoly aspects. That is part of this whole internationalization. Licensing a life form also concerns me. I do not believe this has been done in Canada. It leads to all sorts of interesting legal questions that are being debated now in our modern world. Can you own a human being? Can you own a gene? Those are the issues.

This amendment basically says you can have plant breeders' rights, monopoly rights if you like, privilege, orderly marketing for a long period, but do not do it to our food, continue the public breeding program for our food which, it seems to me, has worked for a smaller country like Canada. That is what gives me great concern about plant breeders' rights and that is what leads me to support the amendment offered by the New Democratic Party, my party, and the hon. member for Mackenzie.

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my intervention will be brief. The member for Port Moody—Coquitlam mentioned the drug patent legislation. I think it is important that we point out to the House and to Canadians that if we are using the analogy