

are wasting our time or somehow abusing Parliament under the new proposals.

The final point I want to make is that the reason I think the new rules are important is that they will permit the laws of Canada to be changed at a rate which will keep the nation up to date, modern and in full competition with other countries that are changing their laws much more quickly.

The reality is we are behind because over the past few years we have wasted so much time in this country debating bills in this House and delaying change. I want to give some examples.

In the area of intellectual property a question arose when some drug companies started to charge too much around the world for drugs. Different countries responded in different ways. Every country except Canada responded with a price review board so they could force these drug companies to justify their increases. Canada took away their patent rights and so no research and development was ever done in this country. If a drug company wanted to develop a new drug, it would not be developed in Canada. It would be developed in Germany, the United States, Britain, or Switzerland because there would be patent protection.

We made that change. The opposition parties both opposed it.

Plant breeders rights legislation existed in every other country of the world.

**Mr. Milliken:** That's rubbish.

**Mr. Thacker:** Well, not every country, but the major ones. Not in this country. I remember when Mr. Whelan introduced that bill for the Liberals. A large number of us in the Conservative opposition were prepared to vote for it, but the NDP and the church groups in that case were so effective in their opposition that they were able to block that bill for 15 years. We finally got it through but our researchers are 15 years behind these other countries in developing new crop varieties. That means our money goes off-shore to get new varieties rather than our own scientists developing them here.

The point is that the rules permitted the opposition to block that bill for 15 years. I think that was unfortunate and a mistake.

I must concede that both opposition parties learned their lesson when we came to the Integrated Circuit Topography Act, which was under intellectual property.

### *Government Orders*

That bill went through with all parties agreeing to it because we finally got the point across that we had 25 companies in this country designing and building microchips, but they had no patent protection. Therefore they were going to close down and go off-shore. All three parties agreed to rectify that and so we are moving ahead.

We are behind on aboriginal rights, on constitutional change, on the issue of transportation, and on agriculture. It goes back to the rules of the House, and in my view it is not in the best interests of the country or even in the best interests of the opposition parties. I can remember being in opposition when the Liberal government proposed the National Energy Program and proposed all sorts of other bills. We opposed those bills with a passion. In the case of the National Energy Program, we delayed it for a year.

**Mr. Milliken:** You took away our right to oppose it.

**Mr. Thacker:** Yes, you are absolutely right. I do not think that was correct. I do not think that was proper and I did not agree with it at that time because my view was that if these bills are so bad for the Canadian public then what we should do in opposition is to want the government to pass them quickly, get them out and get those bills laws so that they are oppressing our people.

**Mr. Brewin:** That is a terrible argument.

**Mr. Thacker:** I think that is a very good argument. I would like to hear my friend from Victoria put the opposite. Mr. Speaker, I just want them to hear my point. If the bills are so bad, surely the role of the opposition is to stand up, to identify, "we think this is a mistake, that is a mistake". It goes to a legislative committee. "We think it could be changed here and here and here." In my experience, the government will accept many of those changes, but, if it does not, the bill becomes the law. If it is as bad as the opposition says, then it is going to be hurting Canadians. When we get to the next election, every one of those hurts will be brought to its attention. They will be able to judge the government and throw them out.

I think what would have happened is we delayed a lot of bills, whereas had they come in sooner or if the new rules were in place where committee members had input much earlier, the bills that come before the House would not be as defective as they are now where the bills come primarily out of the bureaucracy, out of the special interest groups who are proposing change without having