

Agricultural Policies

Mr. Nowlan: I say that if the minister has the guts of his convictions—or if he has any convictions, because he may not have any guts—and brings that bill to the House he may be rather surprised at what happens to it. We may get it into committee. Bring it here so we can talk about it. It has not been here since May 19. I can understand the Minister without Portfolio because he does not know any better, but the minister was very experienced in procedural debates when he spoke for the Social Credit Party. He is now seated on the treasury bench, so when he tells this House that he is sincere in saying there has been a filibuster on Bill C-197, I say that remark is as hollow as his policies on agriculture.

We have been in this House 138 days since last fall and have spent a total of 17 hours on Bill C-197, which I think is the most important bill affecting agriculture to come before any Parliament that I have been in. The minister has more experience than I have. I wonder if he would answer this question, Mr. Speaker. Has there been any more important bill on agriculture than Bill C-197?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, to stay within the rules of this House I have to ask the hon. member a question. I cannot reply to his questions during this period so I should like to inquire if he is now prepared to give an undertaking that his party will pass the bill if we bring it out again, because we have had it out seven different days already.

Mr. McBride: Answer the question.

Mr. Nowlan: The hon. member for Lanark and Renfrew is good at talking from his seat, where his brains are. If he would get to his feet we might find that he has no brains. In answering the minister, who did not answer my question, I would say when the bill comes back I do not want to participate again in the debate. I do not know what other members of my party will do. For the last few days we have been asking you to get the bill back to committee. I ask the minister if he knows of any more important bill than Bill C-197. If he does and can answer that question—

Mr. Olson: I agree.

Mr. Nowlan: It is the most important bill on agriculture?

Mr. Olson: It is very important. We only bring in important measures.

[Mr. Olson.]

Mr. Nowlan: I would point out, further, that if it is one of the most important and in 17 hours in this chamber over a nine-week period—the minister talked about nine days, but on one of those nine days there was a half-hour debate and the minister knows it, and let us not get into these canards of the Prime Minister—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired. Does the House give unanimous consent to the hon. member to continue?

Some hon. Members: No.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): There is not unanimous consent.

An hon. Member: It hurts.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) has raised the question of the definition of "filibuster." He is right that I have not been in this House long enough to have witnessed some of the classic filibusters that have taken place, but I have been here long enough to hear a great deal of nonsense spoken by members opposite. I have also been here long enough to recognize, when hon. members opposite speak hour after hour on the same matter, repeating the same words, that they are accomplishing nothing except delaying the passage of legislation and delaying the business of this House.

Mr. Aiken: Is that your idea of democracy? Is that your idea of debate?

Mr. Lang: It is passing strange, Mr. Speaker, that we can see a situation where spokesmen for all parties express their support of the principle of the bill, which is the issue on second reading if I understand procedure correctly, and then they speak on and on and on instead of allowing the bill to go to committee where it can be dealt with clause by clause.

Mr. Danforth: We have had experience with some of your material.

Mr. Lang: I have heard questions this afternoon about where farmers stand on this bill. I should like to bring to the attention of hon. members a release from the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture of May 12 in connection with Bill C-197.