

down to one vessel. This vessel will require some modifications. Inquiries are now being made to ascertain whether the owners of the vessel are prepared to make those modifications. If they will, I think we will make an arrangement. We should know before the end of the week.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

FARM PRODUCTS MARKETING AGENCIES BILL

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL MARKETING COUNCIL AND AGENCIES

The House resumed from Tuesday, May 19, consideration of the motion of Mr. Olson that Bill C-197, to establish the National Farm Products Marketing Council and to authorize the establishment of national marketing agencies for farm products, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Horner (p.6719).

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the amendment to this bill proposed by the hon. member for Crowfoot, (Mr. Horner). If the amendment is accepted by the House, it will restore to this bill some semblance of control by our producer groups, primary producers and agriculture in general.

Bill C-197, which is called the omnibus bill on agriculture, is of tremendous importance to the entire agricultural industry. It will affect nearly every segment of agriculture, if the provisions of the bill in their present form are implemented. I am concerned that the minister and members of the government have indicated in this House and to various major commodity groups that the opposition is conducting a filibuster with regard to this bill; that we are preventing the bill going to committee where the amendments can be considered, and that it is our intent to talk out the bill so that it will not become legislation. This is unfortunate indeed. These things have been said only for personal political gain on the part of an individual member, or because of a gross lack of knowledge of parliamentary procedure.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, I am not only disturbed but angered that such tactics should be employed in connection with a matter which affects the livelihood of thousands of families engaged in

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill the agricultural business. These are nothing but cheap, contemptible parliamentary tactics.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: Let me deal with this accusation of filibustering which hon. members opposite have made. This bill was introduced in the House on March 17. Today is June 10. The government has absolute authority when it comes to bringing business before the House. It can do so whenever it chooses. Responsibility for doing so rests with the government alone. During this time, the minister says, the measure was brought before the House on seven different occasions, on none of which could the government get the bill through second reading stage.

Let me deal with this allegation. On the first occasion the bill was introduced, no debate was permissible. On the second occasion, it was introduced about half an hour before the end of the sitting, so we discussed it for only half an hour. Subsequently, over a period of weeks the government allowed the bill to be discussed in fits and starts. At no time was the opposition allowed to discuss it for more than 3¼ hours. If my arithmetic is correct, in the period of almost three months during which the measure was brought before the House from time to time, opposition members have been allowed to contribute approximately 12 hours, in total, to the debate, compared with the days and days spent on the omnibus Criminal Code bill dealing with abortion and other matters in which the opposition contributed 17 hours over a nine-week period.

The government talks about a filibuster. On one occasion members of this government filibustered for 26 solid days on the estimates. Now they talk about 12 hours! During those 12 hours we were dealing with a measure which affects 10,000 farm organizations and commodity groups, and 120 marketing agencies. For 12 hours we were dealing with a bill which contains 30 clauses. This works out to something like three minutes a clause—and I would point out that the time I have mentioned was taken up by all three opposition parties. Members opposite call this a filibuster. It is the grossest misrepresentation they have ever tried to put across to these commodity groups.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: The government told them it intended to press forward with this legislation as quickly as possible, but that the opposition