

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

effect, and they would have the possibility of very greatly increasing their production. It would not be in the interest of the farmers or the province to agree. In any case, I think it is an unpractical pipe dream. I hope the government will have second thoughts and withdraw the bill. If the hon. member wishes to ask me a question, I will be delighted to answer it.

**Mr. Gibson:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member castigated the government pretty solidly for being undemocratic in its approach to this problem. You seem to have overlooked the fact that clause 8 provides for a public hearing. The words of the clause are:

—broadening the authority of an existing agency to cover an additional farm product or farm products—

My question is, do you not consider that if you have an agency set up, the members of that agency can go to the people and ask them what their problems are and if they want an agency? Does he not consider that is a step in the right direction?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Harkness:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Before the hon. member replies I want to remind the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Gibson) that his question should be directed to the Chair. Also, I have some misgivings about discussing the individual clauses at this stage. Hon. members know at this point we ought to be discussing the content and the principle of the bill; we should not get involved in detailed consideration of the individual clauses of the bill. This having been said, I am sure the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness) should be permitted to reply to the question.

**Mr. Harkness:** I quite agree with Your Honour that we should be discussing the general principles and features of the bill. This is what I have been attempting to do. In connection with the hon. member's specific question, I consider clause 8 nothing more than camouflage designed to fool the farmers of this country into thinking that they are going to have some control with regard to the marketing of their products. The clause says "A public meeting may be held"; that is all. It does not matter what goes on at the public meeting. The government or the bureaucracy they have appointed can go ahead and do what they want anyway. The fact that a public meeting has been held means absolutely nothing.

[Mr. Harkness.]

**Mr. Gibson:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Gibson:** The hon. member said a public meeting may be held. The bill stresses that a public meeting should be held.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. That is hardly a point of order. Again we are discussing the details of the clause.

**Mr. Harkness:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I ask hon. members not to embark upon a detailed discussion of the individual clauses of the bill. Obviously, this is what the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth is now doing. I think we should limit our discussion to the question of the principle of this bill.

**Mr. Harkness:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is attempting to do a little nit-picking which has no connection whatever with the general purpose of the bill. Furthermore, as I said before, I think it makes no difference whether a public meeting is held so long as the government still has the power to go ahead and do what it wants, no matter what the feeling of the public meeting.

[Translation]

**Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak at great length on this bill and I shall endeavour to be as brief as possible.

First of all, I should like to say that I support the principle of Bill C-197, and I am even ready to state further that during my election campaign, I promised to my constituents that I would support the principle of the establishment of a National Farm Products Marketing Council and national marketing agencies, especially in respect of potatoes which is an area that concerns me most, since I represent a riding where they produce a lot of potatoes.

[English]

I do not question the sincerity of hon. members who direct questions to the minister and others on this side of the House as to why the government introduced a bill of this nature. They ask what the need is for such a bill. In answer to that, Mr. Speaker, I could quote headlines from fairly recent newspaper articles. I quote from the March 1, 1969, *Telegraph-Journal* published in Saint John, New