

at reasonable levels. They have not caused a strain on Canadian taxpayers.

There is no necessity to have outside interests and bureaucrats come in to control these agencies which are quite capable of policing their own industry. All that is necessary is that there be the same type of control across Canada. I believe in national marketing boards.

**Mr. Olson:** That is what the bill is all about.

**Mr. Bigg:** It is not.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Fortin:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. The hon. member for Lotbinière on a point of order.

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you to take a count of hon. members because I do not think we have a quorum.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** I will ask the Clerk to take a count immediately.

*And on the count being made, 21 members were declared to be present.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** The hon. member for Pembina (Mr. Bigg).

**Mr. Bigg:** Mr. Speaker, I trust that the fact that we have a bare quorum is no reflection upon the seriousness of the situation. This is a very important bill. The minister just said that what this bill is all about is the setting up of national marketing boards. This I understand well. What I am concerned about is that I do not see any provision in this bill which would allow the farming industry to retain or increase its control over its own affairs. If this council were to be set up along the lines of our provincial marketing boards, at least 50 per cent of my criticism would evaporate.

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question? I should like him to refer to certain clauses of the bill which indicate that the main purpose of this bill, in its initial stages at least, is to co-ordinate the efforts of the provincial marketing boards.

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

**Mr. Bigg:** I am very happy to see that every effort will be made to co-ordinate the already existing and efficient provincial marketing boards. It is the latter stages of the plan I am concerned about. I am worried about what I call the blank cheque that is being given and the fact that within the bill itself I do not see any indication that the farmers will be in charge of their marketing affairs all the way through. There are knowledgeable, capable farmers all across Canada. They are capable of handling every stage mentioned in this bill. I am not at all satisfied that once the blank cheque is issued, the administration will fill in a reasonable amount. This has not been the experience of people with Bureaucrats in the past. The powers, as I read them, would appear to be sweeping. It would appear that the council is to have certain powers in situations in which it is not satisfied that marketing is being done in an efficient manner. I see nothing to indicate that if the council were not satisfied with the way poultry was being marketed, that that marketing system would not be swept aside. There would appear to be no safeguard here whatsoever.

**Mr. Olson:** If the farmers are not satisfied, the marketing program will not be put into effect.

**Mr. Bigg:** The farmers are not writing this legislation; we are. A great many farmers in my district, through numerous letters and dialogue, ask me what this legislation means. I have to say the same as I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I see this legislation as a blank cheque or as a bill giving unlimited powers to the administration to do exactly what it wants in respect of the whole of agriculture. There is nothing in this bill to allay those fears. I am sure the affable Minister of Agriculture will do all he can to ensure that there will be suitable farmers on this board from the various provinces from British Columbia to Newfoundland. No doubt every effort will be made in this regard, but the farmers whom I have met are not happy about the lack of assurance that this will be the situation. It would be very simple to write into the bill the assurance that the farmers themselves will have an opportunity to call their own meetings. I say they should be given the power to call their own meetings, at least in the first instance and to be fully represented on the Council with power to elect the executive officers.

I am sure the minister will say the administration will act only where it is considered to