is open to a very wide interpretation. For instance, the formulation of vitamin preparations with some rare trace metals in them can allow for such differences that although they might not be injurious to health and might have the same effect on many patients, they might have no effect whatsoever on some patients. In such cases both the physician and the patient might be under the false impression that two similar trade mark drugs were the same.

May I remind the minister that the success of this bill in lowering the price of drugs will depend on the number of drugs that will be transferred out of the established pharmaceutical houses to copy houses. It will also depend to a large extent on the assurance of physicians that the tests carried out by the Food and Drug Directorate as to the safety of drugs are sound. In the final analysis it is the physician who is always responsible for the effect of drugs on his patients. The Food and Drug Directorate cannot assume the responsibility in any specific case; they can only generalize and say that they have done what they can to ensure the safety of drugs.

According to the information we received in the committee, any drug manufactured in a foreign country will have a label on its package containing information regarding the place of manufacture of the drug. However, I should like to point out that neither the physician who prescribes the drug nor the patient who receives it will have knowledge of this. Again, I should like to point out that confidence on the part of physicians and patients in the safety and effectiveness of drugs is most important.

I urge the minister to accept this amendment as I feel it is most important that when a physician prescribes a drug by its trade mark name—and approximately 85 per cent of drugs are so prescribed—the patient who receives it will be assured that the drug does not differ from any other drug with the same trade mark regardless of its place of manufacture. I point out to the minister that this amendment will apply to only a few products and therefore should not have any great effect on the price of drugs. It is a measure to ensure greater safety, and it is based on information which we received in the committee.

I am quite certain that the present director of the Food and Drug Directorate will interpret the clause in the bill before us very narrowly and that there will probably be no hazard to health as a result. However, he will not be in that position forever, and the definition of a hazard to health is open to a very wide interpretation. I venture to say that ten people speaking as experts concerning one particular chemical can have ten different viewpoints.

I urge the minister to consider at least narrowing the definition if he thinks he cannot accept the amendment. If in time experience shows us that it can be widened, we would then have the resulting benefit. I do not think a sufficient number of drugs would be involved to affect the price of drugs in general, and the trade in these drugs would not be great. This amendment, if accepted, would give an assurance to those people who prescribe drugs that the Food and Drug Directorate is doing all it can to ascertain that products with the same trade marks are of equal efficacy regardless of their place of manufacture.

**Mr. Basford:** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this amendment is to change "substantial variation" to "any variation". If this amendment were enacted, it might completely nullify the effect of the proposed section 49A of the act. It would mean that extremely minor variations would result in the section being totally inapplicable, and in this way the amendment would deny the protection of the section for the importer of trade mark drugs. This would have a frustrating influence on price competition and would impair the effects of the bill.

I share the hon. member's concern for safety, but I am advised by the Food and Drug Directorate that the proposed amendment is unnecessary from the standpoint of safety. Minor variations can take place, such as the addition of small amounts of colour to a trade mark drug, with no hazards to health. In any case where a variation may amount to a significant hazard to health the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro), under a provision in the bill which I propose, can issue a certificate removing the protection afforded under this clause. Under clause 5 of the bill he has full power to control the importation of any drug, particularly of dosage drugs. As a result of the amendment proposed by the hon. member there would be a temptation to create minor differences. The existing proliferation of dosage forms already creates difficulties which would be compounded by the creation of these minor differences. This would cause additional confusion in the drug market, which is already confusing