

never practised commercial law, where a signing officer has refused to sign a document which the board of directors has decided to sign, and then there has been a confrontation. It may happen in all businesses, but the person who has the signing power—

Mr. Baldwin: Like the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Lewis: That is right—does not have in a corporation the kind of power that is given in subclause 2 of this bill. My suggestion is not at all brilliant; it is taken from the practice in many corporations, associations and organizations, where you have the financial control without the czarist power proposed in this bill.

The Chairman: I might point out to the committee that in the interests of procedure the debate at this point should be strictly relevant to the amendment. If there is to be discussion on the amendment, I would certainly be prepared to hear it, but if not I will put the question.

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that the amendment, as it now reads, might perhaps be indeed a quite normal and efficient legislation or internal rule for a quite normal, efficient and above all normally disciplined society, in short, for an already existing company that would abide by the rules followed by companies. I do not know these rules any better than my hon. friend from York South (Mr. Lewis), but I agree with his definition of them.

But here we have something quite different. I think that by cancelling subsection (2), as proposed by the hon. member for York South, we risk putting the Company in a still more serious situation than the present one, because one can foresee—I do hope it does not happen but one must nevertheless think about it—that before the new measures intended to transform completely the structure of the Company are applied, the present council will not view with any particular liking the actions taken by the financial comptroller, who is to be appointed under this act. For example, the following absurd situation could occur, where the council and the Company would sign a contract with a third party and where the comptroller would be compelled to refuse his signature, even though the contract in question would be considered legal. This could lead to legal action either against the Company itself and the council, or against the comptroller himself.

Food and Drugs Act

I believe in fact that the powers of the comptroller and his authority to prevent in the future, and for a very brief period, the Company from venturing into further absurd undertakings will have the following effect: before assuming its share of the responsibilities and providing the money required for any project, the council will know that it must obtain the signature of the comptroller.

I therefore submit, Mr. Speaker, that this amendment would render the comptroller's function practically ineffective or, at any rate, would reduce it to a dangerous extent.

[English]

The Chairman: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the minister. It is five o'clock and private members' hour is upon us.

Progress reported.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles)—Pensions; the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather)—Immigration; the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams)—Taxation.

• (5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being five o'clock the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, public bills.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

AMENDMENT RESPECTING LISTING OF INGREDIENTS ON PRODUCTS

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo) moved that Bill C-17, to amend the Food and Drugs Act (listing of ingredients), be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Carried.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the said motion be adopted?