

Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act

The Department of National Health and Welfare had then decided that a level of 0.1 was acceptable in homes, and it has stood by its decision. What was said in December 1981 was that if this test carried out at the request of the home owner showed a level of formaldehyde gas higher than 0.1 parts per million or if the home owner stated that a lower level was causing medical problems, a certified laboratory would make a complete test of the house. This second test included the analysis of air samples in the house itself and inside the walls and a humidity check inside the walls as well. The government paid for the tests which cost between \$400 and \$500, except that the home owners would have to pay \$100 themselves, which amount would, however, be reimbursed under the government financial assistance program. That was in December 1981.

At that time, the Canadian government was therefore offering to home owners a non-taxable grant of up to \$5,000, as I mentioned earlier. As for those whose houses, while insulated with UFFI, showed a level of formaldehyde gas lower than 0.1 parts per million, they also received financial assistance and technical advice if they could prove that a lower level was harmful to their health. The Department of National Health and Welfare was convinced that relatively few people would be affected by levels lower than 0.1 parts per million. This was therefore the situation when the Canadian government made its announcement on December 23. Let us now take a look at the technical aspects of the federal assistance program. I would like to do so before six o'clock to show the Canadian people what changes we have asked the Canadian government to make.

First, there was a universal free test. On request, home owners were to receive a dosimeter to test the level of formaldehyde gas. Second, a complete test was subsidized. If the level of gas shown by the free test was higher than 0.1, a second complete test was to be made. The government paid most of the cost of this test and the home owner's share was \$100, which amount would however be reimbursed later on. Third came technical advice. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation gave home owners technical advice about corrective action to be taken, and the level of financial assistance provided by the government would be based on such advice. Fourth was the matter of financial assistance. Subsidies were paid in cases where the level of formaldehyde gas was higher than 0.1 or when the home owner could produce medical evidence showing health problems related to UFFI at levels lower than 0.1. The amount of the assistance offered was \$5,000. The UFFI Centre authorized certain contractors, testing companies and laboratories to carry out the work. Seven, Mr. Speaker, after this corrective action, the government made technical and financial checks to ensure that the work had been thoroughly done and according to standards. This was a very important point, namely that the corrective action would actually be checked. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call it six o'clock. I can proceed at eight o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I assume that the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Dubois) would like to proceed this evening at eight o'clock. The Chair will therefore recognize the hon. member for Lotbinière at eight o'clock or shortly afterwards.

It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At 6 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When the House rose at six o'clock, the member for Lotbinière (Mr. Dubois) had the floor.

[English]

Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We in the official opposition have been waiting patiently throughout this afternoon, expecting Bill C-109 to move quickly out of second reading stage and into—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is making an argument, hardly a point of order.

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[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

DISPOSITION OF BILL C-124

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I have had consultations with the House leaders, and I think I know what the hon. member wants. Perhaps he will be satisfied once I have disposed of the following.

[English]

At this time I would like to have unanimous consent to tell the House the result of those talks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the minister to make a statement at this point?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: First of all, I wish to inform the House that notwithstanding consultations which took place among party representatives, we were unable to reach agreement under the provisions of Standing Order 75A or 75B in respect of the committee stage of Bill C-124, respecting compensation in the public sector of Canada. I therefore wish to give notice that, at a future sitting of the House, I shall propose a motion, pursuant to Standing Order 75C, to allocate one additional sitting day to the said stage of the said bill.

Such notice being given, Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, in a few moments as soon