

Oral Questions

[Translation]

The minister is probably aware of the lay-offs announced last month by General Motors in Sainte-Thérèse and Oshawa and by B.F. Goodrich in Shawinigan. My question is as follows. How can the minister justify abandoning the plan to expand the role of the Foreign Investment Review Agency, which would ensure that the presence of these foreign companies would be of substantial benefit to Canada, when those same companies are now laying off workers in this country for the benefit of their operations outside Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I challenge my hon. colleague to show me where I said specifically that we had gone back on our promises on the FIRA issue. It was certainly not in my speech, which affirmed the government's support for the FIRA process and its objectives. The government confirmed in the economic development document that we were supporting this process. However, my hon. friend was barking up the wrong tree, as usual.

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[English]

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**UREA FORMALDEHYDE FOAM INSULATION—AMOUNT OF COMPENSATORY GRANTS**

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I should simply like to set the record straight. Some of us think more of Paul Martin than that.

My question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and concerns the some 100,000 Canadians who are affected now by urea formaldehyde foam insulation in their homes. The minister has announced that the Government of Canada, having accepted far too late its moral obligation, is prepared to make a grant available to some 10 per cent of the people affected by UFFI. But he will not tell us how much the grant will be, and he refuses to say when he will tell us how much that grant will be. This House has had the experience with the Minister of Transport of having major decisions that hurt Canadians, announced as soon as Members of Parliament had left this Hill. I want to know from the minister responsible for the UFFI crisis why he refuses to tell the House of Commons and interested Canadians exactly what will be available in terms of grants to Canadians affected by UFFI. If he is not prepared to give us that information before Christmas, will he give a firm date by which Canadians will know how much they will receive or whether they will simply be left out in the cold by this government?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition had been here yesterday, he would have had the answers to his

questions. If he would take the trouble to read *Hansard*, he would see my answer to the hon. member for St. John's East.

● (1430)

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL TO BE MADE TO PROVINCES

Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, yesterday the minister refused to answer questions concerning a problem that directly affects 100,000 Canadians from coast to coast, and he now has an obligation to answer the House. He told us that he wanted to pay a certain amount to a certain number of people, but he has refused to give us any specific information and, once again, he is blaming the provinces. I want to have this specific information, because 30 per cent of the home owners who are affected by UFFI are home owners in the minister's own province. I would like to know, first of all, why the minister is refusing to give us any details, and second, if it is a matter of negotiations with the provinces, whether the minister can inform the House today which concrete proposal the federal government wishes to make to the provinces?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition had done his homework, he would know that 80,000 homes, and not the 100,000 he keeps mentioning, are involved. I already pointed out to the member for St. John's East yesterday that the number was 80,000 and not 100,000. I fail to understand why the Leader of the Opposition insists on quoting the wrong figures. When the right hon. member was Prime Minister, though not for long, he was fond of saying that it was important to consult with the provinces. I wonder if his memory is failing him. Yesterday, I announced in the House that I wanted to consult the provinces and the private sector before announcing the details of the government's program. He could at least have the decency to let me consult with the provinces first.

[English]

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): The minister indicated yesterday that he will make a measly, inadequate grant available to a small group of Canadians who are affected by UFFI. He is so ashamed of the amount of the grant that he refuses to make it known here while Parliament can put questions to him. That is what he said yesterday, and that is his reason for refusing to tell affected Canadians and this Parliament the exact amount of the grant which will be made available to those people who have been suffering too long, who cannot sell their homes, and whose health is endangered. He will not tell us about the grants. He is trying to hide that from Parliament. Perhaps, because he has admitted that there is a health hazard for individuals other than those who will receive the grant, he will tell the House of Commons, breaking his practice of secrecy, what criteria his government intends to use in determining which Canadians will receive