

Adjournment Debate

during the summer of 1982 because UFFI victims can no longer wait. It is unfortunate that the federal and provincial governments are not considering more seriously and with greater sympathy the problems faced by UFFI victims. Mr. Speaker, the minister has tabled Bill C-109 entitled: an act to provide for payments to persons in respect of dwellings insulated with urea formaldehyde foam insulation. Speaking of assistance, Section 3 of the bill says, and I quote:

On application to the minister by a person who provides evidence in the form and manner prescribed by the regulations that he is, pursuant to the regulations, qualified to receive a payment in respect of a dwelling insulated with urea formaldehyde foam insulation, the minister may, subject to the regulations, make a payment to the person of an amount not exceeding such amount as is prescribed by the regulations.

As my time is almost up, Mr. Speaker, I should like to advise the House that I intend to participate in the debate on second reading of this bill in order to defend the interests of the people I represent here in this House, the victims of urea formaldehyde foam insulation, and especially those who are in a precarious financial situation.

● (2205)

[English]

Mr. Gary F. McCauley (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in response to the obviously genuine concern of the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Cyr) for home owners who are experiencing severe problems as a result of UFFI, let me deal in more depth with the questions he raises.

With regard to the minister's ongoing representations to the provinces for increased assistance to UFFI victims, the prospects for success seem no brighter now than they did in June of 1980. At that time, during the Saskatoon federal-provincial conference of consumer ministers, the minister was seeking to have them assume their legitimate responsibility for the training or licensing of companies installing insulation. Having received no response by the time of the 1981 conference in Quebec City, he felt obliged to repeat his request, adding the reminder about the responsibility of the provinces to ensure the competence of insulation installers. Most merely took the comment under advisement.

In the wake of the government's decision in December, 1980, to issue a temporary ban on urea formaldehyde foam insulation under the provisions of the Hazardous Products Act, some provincial legislatures began establishing programs to enable their UFFI home owners to have their homes tested for excessive concentrations of urea formaldehyde gas. It was a belated acknowledgement of moral responsibility, a hiccup of concern, which was hastily cured with word of the development of a federal testing program in the fall of 1981.

Today, virtually every province has abandoned any process of easing concerns of its population through testing. The federal government has been left to shoulder the logistics of this load while the provinces snipe from the sidelines. In spite of these two examples of provincial indifference, on the one hand refusing to ensure installers of UFFI were competent

and, on the other, starting a testing program and then abandoning it, we shall continue to press for more provincial assistance to home owners.

As the hon. member for Gaspé is aware, I am sure, the federal government has not been idle while the provinces run for cover. The establishment of the UFFI information and co-ordination centre in June of last year served to focus the efforts and expertise of all federal government departments and agencies concerned with the urea formaldehyde foam insulation problem. The \$110 million assistance program for UFFI home owners launched in December of 1981 was accompanied by a national advertising campaign urging these Canadians to register for it.

The federal government is offering free screening tests to all concerned UFFI home owners across Canada to determine the levels of formaldehyde gas in their dwellings. Where remedial action is indicated, homeowners are offered full-scale testing and free technical advice and are eligible for non-taxable financial assistance up to \$5,000. In addition, we know that many of the difficulties with UFFI have been caused by improper installation. In order to ensure that remedial measures are properly carried out, training will be provided to contractors and individual home owners. Moreover, to ensure a high standard of accuracy in testing and laboratory work, a special registration program for private firms is being implemented.

Finally, to respond to the hon. member's question about using CMHC's residential rehabilitation assistance program, I would reiterate the minister's previous statement that the \$110 million program already in place is far superior.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM—ALSANDS PROJECT—TAX AND ROYALTY STRUCTURES

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, on April 29 I questioned the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) about the delay and subsequent demise of the Alsands project in Fort McMurray. I specifically asked the minister whether he had offered or agreed to reduce his massive tax grab, the petroleum and gas revenue tax which is drying up the cash flow of the companies and leaving them with insufficient funds to service the debt incurred from their investment in a massive, \$13 billion project of this nature in northern Alberta.

● (2210)

The disaster of Friday will go down in history as one of the blackest days in this country. The initiative of the Canadian people has been killed. That is the effect it has had right across the country. Continually in this House today when the minister was being questioned on his reaction to the delay, ceasing, shelving and indeed killing of the Alsands, we saw him skirt around it. It did not matter to him. He said, "We have all sorts of projects we will be working on over the next year". It never ceases to amaze me how the Minister of Energy, Mines and