

Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act

Where the cavity containing the foam has not dried properly after installation, fungus may grow on the foam or on other materials in the cavity. Fungus spores can be carried into the living space by air infiltration.

That is what the government states concerning the material. What do hon. members think the public would say if the government or the National Research Council said that that is what is wrong with property which is insulated with urea formaldehyde 1770;-1 foam? Well, we know. No one here, not even the minister himself, would buy a house insulated with urea formaldehyde foam, no matter what the level of formaldehyde readings, no matter what tests are taken by those who read the meters. What we have, in effect, is a situation where a relatively small portion of the population has homes badly insulated with urea formaldehyde foam in their homes, where the foam is degenerating, where health is affected, where certain sensitive people are seriously affected by nose bleeds and the rest. But everyone else is destroyed. Why are they destroyed? It is because their homes are totally, completely and absolutely unmarketable.

The parliamentary secretary says that we have created a hype, that there is a big news hype on this matter. I ask the parliamentary secretary, who created the hype? A moment ago I read from the material issued by the National Research Council dated April, 1981. Having read that, were I to be faced with the possibility of buying a home insulated with urea formaldehyde foam, I would not buy one. Mr. Speaker, you would not buy one. Of course you would not, because you know the material will disintegrate, the fungus will grow and the formaldehyde will seep into the wood and wall building materials. If you are sensitive and you are exposed to the insulation over a period of time, you could become supersensitive and could be affected by coughing, asthma-like symptoms, headaches, dizziness, nausea, nose bleeds and gosh knows what. So the parliamentary secretary and, I suppose, the minister, say there is a hype. Of course there is a hype. The minister and his department created the hype. Instead of sensibly finding that there was a problem with some of the installations, that the insulation affected some people and some people were ultra-sensitive to the foam, the minister went ahead and completely banned the foam. He turned it over to the National Research Council. They created more hype. The minister says it is not all that bad, that it has not upset most people and that these people have saved money on heat. If they have a high enough level of formaldehyde, they will receive a couple of testing machines. If that does not work, they may be entitled to a grant of up to \$5,000.

• (1740)

That is not an answer. The real problem is that between 80,000 and 100,000 people relied on this government and its grant program. They were told this was an improved material and they had it installed in their homes by approved building contractors licensed by the government to instal the material.

When these people try to sell their homes, they find they are not worth anything. I suspect all members have had people with this foam insulation problem visit their constituency offices. The first visit I received was very shortly after the

temporary ban in December, 1979. Then the permanent ban came about.

A constituent, Mr. Stewart, has a century-old home on Clarkson Road. It is a beautiful two-storey brick home built about 1850. Mr. Stewart is retired. That home represents his basic asset. He did not take a nickel of government money. However, he did go to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to get the details on the material. He was told how good it was and who were the licensed contractors. He is not the kind of person who takes money from the Government of Canada. He does not believe in grants. He said he did not need welfare, that he would pay it himself. How his century home is completely unsaleable.

Another constituent spoke to me last Friday. His home is on Martley Drive. I chatted with him. He told me that his home was insulated with urea formaldehyde foam. He is retired and wants to sell his home. He and his wife go to Florida in the winter, and he cannot afford to keep his home in Lorne Park. He needs to release the money from his investment for retirement. His pension is not growing. We all know what inflation is. He had a real estate agent visit his home. He was told that if the lot was vacant it would be worth \$85,000, but since he had a pile of bricks with UFFI in it, it was only worth \$80,000. The agent said it would cost that much to get rid of the house. What a thing to tell a retired man on pension. That home represents his life's savings. It is worth less than if it were a vacant lot.

This man does not have a home. What he has is totally unsaleable. It is a health hazard. It will cost \$5,000 to get rid of that health hazard. He could get \$85,000 or \$80,000 for his lot the way it is and the buyer would have to get rid of the health hazard.

In the government they say it is a hype. The hype has gone across Canada. It has destroyed the savings of thousands and thousands of people. A bill setting aside \$55 million and providing testing units is not a proper response. It is not the response we demand from this government. The government should bring in a program whereby all affected homes will benefit from some remedial action and then be certified as health-safe.

Mr. Ouellet: That is exactly our program.

Mr. Blenkarn: I am glad the minister interjected. If he will certify Mr. Stewart's home as safe and give him the Good Housekeeping seal of approval so that he can say to the agent from A. E. LePage that he has a Government of Canada guarantee, and if there are any effects from the urea formaldehyde, the government will look after the losses, he will be doing something. If that is what the minister will do, we will be 100 per cent for it. That is all he has to do.

Mr. Ouellet: You should read the documentation. It is all explained.

Mr. Blenkarn: I have a file full of documentation from the minister. I receive his press releases every day, his compilation