

represent home owners in various provinces. We are looking forward to their input and their co-operation in finding proper solutions for home owners affected by the product.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing in favour of the government in this regard: at least it is bringing in a bill. I should like to deal with a problem which has certainly developed in my constituency and I am sure it has developed in the constituencies of other members. It concerns the government's involvement in approving UFFI, having it approved government assistance, government supervision and licensing of contractors, and so on. However, first of all I should like to indicate that essentially the bill allows the minister to make regulations with respect to urea formaldehyde foam insulation and appropriates \$55 million from the consolidated revenue fund for the period ending December 31, 1982.

The rest of the bill deals with the regulations, although the bill does provide that someone who receives money under the bill, if that in fact is the case, is not prohibited from suing the Crown. But nowhere can I find in the bill any provision for a \$5,000 payment or indeed payment of any amount of money to anyone. In that respect, Mr. Clark Lowry, director of the UFFI Information Centre, was interviewed on radio by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on February 9, 1982. He was asked by the interviewer how one qualified for \$5,000. Mr. Lowry said that first of all home owners make an application and then the centre sends out two air metres to their homes which are used to measure the formaldehyde level. If we go through Mr. Lowry's interview, we are left with no answers or suggestions that indicate that the director of the UFFI information Centre knew what was going on with respect to the real problem which affects people.

What is the problem? Let me deal with the matter in a chronological fashion. This material, despite objections by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and other real concerns of the Department of National Health and Welfare, was approved by CMHC for the Canadian Home Insulation Program in September, 1977. Until that time no one had given a seal of approval to the use of urea formaldehyde foam insulation in Canada. Prior to that time people may have used the foam at their own risk. They may have insulation with the material. In fact, many people did insulate with the material. But in September of 1977, this government, despite advice to the contrary, despite real concerns expressed by its own departments, approved the material under the CHIP program. In a sense, that program was a something-for-nothing program. Those who went along with the CHIP program received up to \$350 for materials and \$150 toward labour for installing insulation in their homes. That program still exists. The advantage of urea formaldehyde foam was that it could be pumped into the extension walls of a house without upsetting the decor, it could be done relatively quickly and, in fact, could encase the entire outside perimeter of the building. If properly installed, this type of insulation firms up and works wonders in

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terms of protecting people from the cold. It does reduce the heating bills, at least in some cases.

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There has been some concern expressed that urea formaldehyde foam is not the best type of insulation. Clearly, there are other types which are better, but for a great number of home owners, this urea formaldehyde foam, approved by the government, the installation of which was partly financed by the government, represented a marvellous way to insulate their homes cheaply, quickly and cleanly.

A great number of people insulated their homes with this foam, given the effect of the grant program, the certification program, and the whole series of people who got into the business of installing this foam, going around and knocking on doors. After the spring of 1978, if one's home was constructed prior to 1961, with \$500 one could carry out almost the entire job of insulating a home, involving very little of one's own money. Of course, salesmen went around. Indeed, they still go around selling insulation. But they particularly went around selling this type of insulation because it was a no-fuss, no-muss job and the government paid for it.

I point out that the government had information and advice from the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources expressing concern prior to authorizing the use of this foam, but Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation went ahead and approved the product. So when one asks about the government's responsibility to people, there should be no doubt. This was a product which the government approved and which it paid home owners to put in their homes. The government cannot back away from that problem. It created a situation where people relied on the foam and, indeed, it paid people to rely on it. People relied on it and have been damaged.

The first question is, what are the real health and physical damage problems? Let me read from the government's booklet produced by the National Research Council, dated April, 1981. On page three it states:

Exposure to formaldehyde can cause eye, nose and throat irritation, coughing and asthma-like symptoms, headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and nose bleeds. The severity of the reaction depends on the formaldehyde concentration, the duration of exposure and the sensitivity of the individual. Although there may be no reaction to a single exposure, repeated or long-term exposure may increase an individual's sensitivity to the gas. When sensitized, a person may suffer serious reactions at very low concentrations.

There is a health problem with the material. But there is no question about the fact that most persons in my constituency who are faced with the problem of this urea formaldehyde foam product in their homes complain of no health problem. However, in the same booklet, the government goes on to state:

UFFI deteriorates continuously at a moderate to rapid rate so it has a short life compared with other building materials. The rate of deterioration depends on the conditions to which it is exposed.

Then the government goes on:

Deterioration of the foam leads to breakage of the cell walls and shrinkage of the insulation decreasing the foam's ability to resist heat and air flow. Formaldehyde gas is released and may be carried into the living space by air infiltration and, at a slower rate, can diffuse through the wall materials—