

Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act

weeks ago. What was the answer? I have not yet heard. I wrote again last week and said, "Give me the answer; it is a simple question. If the answer is no, and a home owner with UFFI who removes the insulation cannot apply for another CHIP grant, tell me so that I can relay that information to my constituent." I appreciate that this is a very small issue in terms of the total issue, but appreciate the frustration of a home owner who asked his Member of Parliament what he quite accurately considered to be a simple, straightforward question, and weeks go by without any answer whatsoever.

I would like to refer to the testing procedures. Immediately upon the application forms becoming available for this latest testing, those in my riding who had not directly received the application form from the department were supplied with the form by me through the home owners' group, the HUFFI group. Applications, to my direct knowledge, were completed and mailed immediately upon their being available. This was weeks if not months ago. The home owners have heard nothing.

● (1620)

Put yourself, Mr. Speaker, in the position of the home owner who completed an application form weeks and weeks ago and there has been no action. We wonder why there is anger and militancy among the members of these groups! It is the most expected reaction in the world. Naturally, they not only blame the government but blame their Member of Parliament. It is my responsibility to deal with that.

What am I to say to a constituent to whom I supplied the application form and who I know completed it and sent it in in an expeditious way? That home owner sits at home surrounded by UFFI and receives no response to his application. It is absolutely unacceptable and inexcusable that the mechanics did not exist, and maybe still do not exist, for dealing expeditiously and efficiently with those applications.

I said my intervention in this debate would not be long, but I want to deal with what I expect to be a firm commitment from someone speaking on behalf of the government before the end of this second reading debate regarding the regulations which will be the main vehicle for the implementation of Bill C-109.

We have every right on behalf of our constituents who are the victims of this disaster to be able to inform them before the end of second reading and before this matter goes to committee that these will be the regulations under which the legislation will be implemented. I do not know whether a backbencher or a parliamentary secretary will participate from the Liberal side, but I feel not only justified but perfectly reasonable in insisting that we know what these regulations are before we move into committee stage.

If that commitment cannot be made on behalf of the minister, then I have serious reservations as to the efficacy of those committee hearings. Is it the proposal of the government that witnesses representing these home owners' groups come to Ottawa to appear before the committee to discuss this legislation and that parliamentarians on the committee will discuss

clause by clause the provisions of this bill without any knowledge whatsoever of the regulations? In terms of this legislation, that is absolutely absurd. One cannot study at committee stage the provisions of this legislation without knowing specifically the regulations. I plead with the government on behalf of home owners everywhere who have UFFI installed to let this House know this afternoon or this evening what these regulations will be.

In conclusion, I want to repeat that if this is the government's total response to a problem that it created, underwrote and issued grants on, a problem of which it is the author, that is not good enough. Second, I want absolute assurance that the department is adequately staffed to deal efficiently, effectively and expeditiously with the applications and to respond. Finally, it is absolutely essential that parliamentarians and witnesses who appear before the committee know the exact content of the regulations before the commencement of committee study of this legislation.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member has a certain amount of time left. I wonder whether he would entertain a single question?

Mr. Jarvis: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, there is a very vital issue missing in the bill before the House and the debate in public. As the hon. member very ably pointed out in his presentation, we are considering a bill which must go before the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs. That committee has been given a very rough and rocky time by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet). I see that the critic in the opposition party is nodding his head. There has been a question about the procedure and the agenda before the committee.

The hon. member knows very well that if we allow this bill to go to that committee, two arguments will prevail. I am sure he will agree that they would be prepared to shut down that committee by bringing in some form of closure and failing to permit adequate study.

There is another aspect of the question—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order. I thought the hon. member had risen to ask a question. We will entertain a question.

Mr. Skelly: There are some serious considerations as to why we are not prepared to bring this bill forward quickly. One consideration is that the Conservative Party has put absolutely nothing on the record for the home owners. They say there is too much UFFI and it is the fault of the Liberals. Is there a point at which we are going to get the Conservative Party to put something constructive on the record as to what they would do for the home owners should they ever become the government? It is basically a put up or shut up position at this point.

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the first question was.