

*Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act*

At this point there seem to be two doctors in Canada who are willing to back the government's policy on urea formaldehyde. One of those doctors is the member for Hamilton West and the other is Dr. Newhouse, who is also from Hamilton. The hon. member for Hamilton West admitted that he is a Liberal politician and he very categorically stated that no politician should make medical statements under any circumstances. The government has been unwilling to retain the other doctor, Dr. Newhouse, who was willing to back the Liberal government's decision, in order to have his supposed expert opinion put on the record. Consequently, I suggest that we must question the credibility of the statements by the previous speaker.

While I have only a few examples, I note that there are a number of people who have taken a very deep interest in this particular problem and have staked their reputations as doctors to say that there is a problem with the use of urea formaldehyde as insulation. Some of these people include Dr. Albert Nantel from Laval University in Quebec City, and Dr. Kinlock, the city health officer in Vancouver. These doctors have been willing to put the facts in front of Canadians and state their belief that urea formaldehyde is a substance which can adversely affect people's health.

Over the years in Canada Canadians have come to depend on and, to some extent, trust the government to provide an environment where Canadians can make good use of the resources we have. Canadians have come to expect the government to make an effort to provide a standard of living which will enable us to meet our needs and enjoy the comforts of our society. For instance, we have learned that medicare should be and is available and is something that we expect the government to make available to us. It has been suggested recently that the government is gradually withdrawing from this field but most people still believe it is a responsibility of the government. We have also learned to trust the government to provide us with the kind of medical attention that will improve our health.

Therefore, it comes as a shock to have the government recommend an insulation, such as urea formaldehyde, which does anything but improve the state of our health. In this case, the government has created an environment which has made people ill instead of better.

Another expected function of the government has been to provide the opportunity for people to earn enough money to put food on the table. The government has not been very successful in this area either. We have 1.3 million unemployed, or a real unemployment level of almost two million. It is difficult to feed your family when you are unemployed, Mr. Speaker.

Heating a home in Canada is essential. This used to be a minor expense but during the last few years the government has turned it into a major expense, particularly for those people on low incomes or those who are unemployed.

This brings us to the subject of shelter. Canadians have come to consider housing as a right and something which they can expect to acquire during their life. Canadians take good care of their homes because they expect to have them for a lifetime.

The whole idea of Canadians owning their own homes is being undermined by the inability of the government to solve the housing problem. It is being undermined in other ways as well, because the interest rates which home owners are required to pay on mortgages have increased to the extent where many are having difficulty paying them. These people may be the same home owners who have urea formaldehyde within their walls and are trying to get rid of it.

• (1610)

The government has created by its policies a situation in which the rate of inflation is making it impossible for prospective home owners to buy houses. The cost of building has risen so high that many people who could have expected to own a home a number of years ago can no longer do so. Besides that, the costs of maintenance, heating and lighting have gone up to the point at which much more than 25 per cent or 30 per cent of a person's income is spent for shelter, which is not acceptable.

Through the years, people who have bought houses have planned to take care of them, to pay for them, to make them their own. We, as legislators, were sent here to help them do that. Instead, by recommending urea formaldehyde foam insulation and then refusing to do anything about its removal, we are helping them to foul their nests so they can no longer live in them.

There was a time and, I suppose, the time is still here to some extent, when people trusted the government, but that trust in government has been eroded over the last number of years. That trust was built up over generations. If the government said that something could or should be done, we accepted that that was probably correct. After all, those in the House of Commons thought about it, and the final result was supposed to be acceptable to the people of Canada. This government has been tearing down that trust. The treatment of those people with urea formaldehyde foam insulation in their homes is just one more case of the government misleading and then mistreating people.

The problem involving urea formaldehyde foam insulation has gone through a number of phases which have led us to the position we are in today. We started out with an acceptance of the substance by the people of Canada because the government had recommended it and we trusted the government. We therefore decided that urea formaldehyde foam was a good insulator and would be used. Those of us in the country who used urea formaldehyde foam insulation were ignorant of the substance, although some people began to think that there was some reason for complaint. During the first phase there were just a few complaints. During the second phase there were a number of complaints and eventually there was a flood of complaints. However, these people faced a negative reaction from the government, from real estate people and, to some extent, even from the medical profession. People who were bothered by urea formaldehyde foam insulation went to the