

the additional financial assistance mentioned earlier, this same committee, with the assistance of the UFFI centre, will consider obtaining additional financial assistance from other federal and provincial agencies and the private sector. These were the changes made to the regulations and announced on December 23, 1981. What has brought this matter before the House today is the very important agreement reached yesterday, on July 26, 1982, to go through all stages of this bill today and refer the legislation to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, which will look into the process used to approve the material, the question raised about the effects on health, and so on, as reported in yesterday's *Hansard* on page 19701. I feel this is very important. The public made representations, the members of the Quebec caucus then made certain recommendations, the announcement was made on December 23, 1981, and we now have this bill before the House and there is also the matter of the regulations. There are now and there will be following the study by the committee very important points to be considered by the victims. I feel that these victims, under the circumstances . . . of course, other sources of financial assistance are possible and this is what the committee will consider—but I think that at this stage, Mr. Speaker, this legislation meets the wishes of the victims themselves and of members on this side of the House. Because of this, Mr. Speaker, I shall have no hesitation in supporting this bill.

● (2020)

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in order to provide the House with the time available to go into what should be gone into in Committee of the Whole, and in view of the fact that the minister is here to answer the very important questions that are to be put to him, I suggest you put the question.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments that I would like to make before you put the question with regard to matters relating—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understood that there was unanimous consent to move to Committee of the Whole on this measure, and I think we should do so immediately.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) will be recognized if he wishes to have the floor.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, we will be moving to Committee of the Whole almost immediately, but first there are two or three matters that I want to raise. You know that I have not spoken at any point on this bill, neither previously nor publicly, Mr. Speaker. I think it is important, given that I have a number of constituents within my own personal constituency and within the area immediately adjacent to my constituency, as the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Scott) well

Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act

knows, who will be directly affected by the bill. I do not intend to take a long time. I never do, as you know. But I do want to put some matters to the minister that I consider are questions of principle, quite different from questions relating to the clauses. Clauses, important though they are, are not necessarily appropriate ways of dealing with the principles of the bill.

Let me first say to the minister that I must confess some degree of disappointment in the way this matter has been handled. I am not talking about the technical way of handling it but I am talking more about the way the government has approached the problem that has confronted so many people. Without restating the obvious, a large number of Canadians place a great deal of faith in the government, not necessarily in the government of the day, but in government in general. They believe that when the government says something is okay, it has good reason to say that. When the government puts its stamp of approval on a particular measure, it believes that that stamp of approval carries with it the full weight and commitment of the government.

I know a great number of people in Hamilton, and I have received communication from a great number of people from all across the country, who are vitally concerned that in spite of the fact the government encouraged them—and encourage is not too strong a word to use—to take advantage of the urea formaldehyde method of insulating their homes and in spite of the fact the government's stamp of approval appeared on the advertising and that government funding was available to assist them in this task, Canadians across the country were quite rightly led to believe that this was a safe and reasonable way to cut down on their heating costs, protect their families from the environment and to protect their homes.

The difficulty with all of this is that, probably inadvertently—I am prepared to concede that, although without having sufficient knowledge—the government did allow the situation we now have to develop. The government did not know there was a hazard attached to urea formaldehyde. The government, therefore, did not appreciate that the people who were being encouraged to take advantage of it were being encouraged to place their health in jeopardy. We can argue as to the correctness of that statement. Some people believe there is a health hazard, others dispute that. But certainly there is something wrong with the urea formaldehyde method of insulating homes.

The difficulty now arises that if a person cannot trust his government, and if a person cannot trust that the government stamp of approval is indeed worth something, then who can be trusted?

Mr. Lewis: Not you. We have tried that.

Mr. Deans: The hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) says not me. Of course, he is entitled to his opinion. There are those who trust him, there are those who do not. I do. I think the hon. member is a very trustworthy person.

Let me come back to my main point. People were encouraged, and in many ways they were financially