

Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, when appearing before the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, made a presentation in which he stated:

As promised when I appeared before your committee on Tuesday, May 11, 1982, you will find enclosed copies of the telex messages which I sent on December 9, 1981, to my provincial counterparts concerning the Urea Formaldehyde Foam Insulation Victims' Assistance Program.

● (1710)

The message dated May 20 was a telex addressed to all the provincial ministers responsible for housing and consumer protection. The particular telex Addressed to Quebec Minister of Housing and Consumer Protection Guy Tardif, referred to a meeting that had taken place in September in Quebec City; through this telex, the content of which I will spare you, the Minister was seeking the provinces' co-operation. When asked whether he had received replies, the minister said that unfortunately he had received none at all. I therefore urge all hon. members of the House, because there are not so many provinces with Liberal governments in Canada, to prevail upon the governments that have the same political philosophy or affiliation as their own to declare a state of national disaster and provide the victims with a certain amount of money to which the \$5,000 may be added. The idea would be to co-operate fully, and not to blame the government for this or that. I suggest that the government was responsible in its decisions. And in connection with provincial co-operation I should like to refer to the case of the City of Laval. I quote:

UFFI: Laval offering home-owners a 20 per cent reduction of their assessment.

This is an article that appeared in the *Le Devoir* on March 30, 1982.

The City of Laval feels that UFFI houses on its territory have lost an average of one-fifth of their commercial value. *Le Devoir* heard yesterday that 408 houses have been fully reviewed and that their respective owners should receive a new assessment within the next few days.

According to our information, the ratepayer would be left with three possible choices:

If he agrees with the reduction proposed by the city, he would have ten days to let them know. The Laval Assessment Service would then advise the Quebec Land Assessment Review Board (BREF) of the change;

If he feels entitled to further reduction, he should turn down the City's proposal and make personally an application to the BREF before May 1. In this case, he would have to contend with the City's Assessment Service which would defend its new assessment;

And, finally, if the owner preferred to keep his previous assessment which did not take into account the presence of UFFI, he would need only to turn down the city's offer.

This, Mr. Speaker, is a very good illustration of the whole issue. The City of Laval, the second largest city in the province of Quebec, is willing to co-operate with us on this program. How is it that the provincial government chose to ignore the telex the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs had sent on December 9? This is the problem we shall have to solve together. Although I do not intend to pursue this point any

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further, Mr. Speaker, I should like to mention that the department has provided more than \$120,000 to several organizations, so that they may keep the government up-to-date on further developments and advise it on the most scientific and practical ways to help these victims, either through National Research Council Canada, the Department of National Health and Welfare, or the recently formed advisory committee to the government, so that no improperly researched decision may cause further harm. This is why, Mr. Speaker, as a member of this House who has lived through these problems together with other UFFI victims in his own region and who is aware of their impact on them, I feel I am entitled to rejoice at the prospect that relief measures are on their way. I saw crumbling brick walls, houses which were considerably damaged and I agree that in some cases \$5,000 is not enough.

I think that the legislation will be passed today for the benefit of all victims and I am pleased that an order of reference to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs has been made by the House. I mentioned that the minister who provided under Bill C-109 some \$110 million for the victims of UFFI was flexible and that we would not proceed under the legislation but rather through regulation. Once again to reflect that flexibility, the government has decided and this in response to the member for Prince Albert who suggested that once the bill was passed everything would be over, to make an order of reference and I quote:

That the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs be empowered to consider urea formaldehyde foam insulation including:

And the first point is as follows:

1. The process used to approve the material for use in Canadian homes;
2. The question raised on the health effects and the nature of the research being conducted or contemplated on these questions;
3. The questions raised on remedial action and the nature of the research being conducted or considered;
4. The question of the number of homes affected, specifically attempting to identify the reasons for the discrepancy between the number of homes estimated and the number registered;
5. The question of use of the foam in schools, public buildings and rental accommodation and recommendations on possible courses of action where remedial action is required;
6. The identification of home owner groups with special needs and recommendations on how these special needs could be met;
7. The report of the Hazardous Products Board of Review on the aforementioned matters.

I specifically mentioned that committee in my preliminary comments.

8. Any changes or additions to the regulations deemed advisable with regard to the aforementioned matters.

That the committee be instructed to report on the aforementioned matters no later than December 1, 1982;

Mr. Speaker, I have the duty and honour to chair that committee. I have already got in touch with a spokesman for each opposition party in order to hold a first meeting next Thursday to be followed on Tuesday next by a meeting of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Organization which