

Oral Questions

in the Northwest Territories who feel seriously affected by this decision, during the month of May, probably about the middle of May.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the minister took three minutes not to answer the question. Will he now, after telling us about all the deliberations the government will undertake, assure the House and the native people who live in that part of our land and who had their expectations legitimately raised by the positive support given to the Berger recommendations by the majority of Canadians all over this land, that the government will not proceed with that pipeline until those claims are settled?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Madam Speaker, I cannot give the hon. member that type of assurance because the matter has not yet gone to the government for a decision. I am sure the hon. member does not expect me to make a unilateral decision before the government has had a chance to be seized of the question.

As far as the land claims are concerned, we have appointed a negotiator to negotiate land claims settlements and, of course, the possibility exists, after the consultations come to a conclusion, that land claims may not be affected by this particular development at all. I think at least the opportunity should be explored to determine whether or not that is a fact.

● (1430)

REQUEST FOR GUARANTEE OF CLAIMS SETTLEMENT

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of someone who can speak for the government, that is, the Prime Minister. I hope he can speak for the government.

Given the importance of this issue and the past positions indicated by the government in previous debates, which tended to give support to the moral claims of our people in that part of our land, will the Prime Minister offer his assurances to the House and, to use an old phrase, will he give an ironclad guarantee which will stand up, that before we proceed with this pipeline the legitimate moral claims of our native people will be met in terms of a land settlement?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, when we appointed the Berger commission it was because we wanted to have many independent sources of information on this matter. We have that now. The matter has been before the country for several years, now, and I understand that the matter of the claims has made progress. As the minister said, it is in progress now. But we do not know when it will be settled.

I agree with the minister completely, we cannot just make an open ended statement of the kind that the Leader of the New Democratic Party requests. We will certainly attempt to pursue negotiations and bring them to a conclusion as soon as possible. I do not think we could undertake to wait forever. That should be clear.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERIES OF COMMONWEALTH SPEAKERS

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the presence in our galleries of the Speakers of the Commonwealth countries who are attending the Sixth Commonwealth Speakers' Conference, which Canada has the honour to host.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

TESTING OF UREA FORMALDEHYDE BY CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for housing and CMHC. At a press conference this morning the Minister of National Health and Welfare stated that the government was a victim of a lack of knowledge with regard to urea formaldehyde foam insulation. Surely CMHC must have done some testing on the product before approving its use under the Canadian Home Insulation Program. I would like to ask the minister responsible for housing whether CMHC was also the victim of a lack of knowledge? What testing was done by CMHC before unleashing this product on Canadian home owners?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, has already addressed the allegation with regard to the word "victimizing", and I refer the hon. member to her answer on that point.

In so far as CMHC and testing is concerned, when the temporary ban was announced, of course CMHC no longer permitted or encouraged the use of UFFI in the Canadian Home Insulation Program. In so far as the tests up to that time are concerned, I think the minister indicated as well, and most people know, that the issue was one which was not settled and that on the basis of the information in that study, a temporary ban has been adopted by this government. I think I can add little more than that, except that the evidence at this point indicates to the government that it ought not to permit the use of this material.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I would submit that the evidence indicates that CMHC ought not to have approved the use of this material. The Minister of National Health and Welfare stated that the government had no plans to compensate those people having problems with UFFI in their homes. The government's CHIP acceptance number gave this product credibility. Does the minister and his department not feel a sense of responsibility to Canadian home owners who have put this product into their homes, aided and abetted by federal government money and federal government approval?