

Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act

Do You Have a Problem?

I believe the government is sidestepping its responsibility to Canadians whose homes are contaminated by UFFI. I intend to press for compensation for home owners who are victims of the government's mistake in approving the use of this dangerous substance. I need facts and figures about the extent of the problem in Kootenay East-Revelstoke. If you are affected, please complete the following questionnaire, give it to me when I am in your area, or send it to my office in Ottawa.

I want to talk a little bit about that. At that time the defeated Conservative member decided he should do something. He decided to attend public meetings in my riding to hear about the concerns of the people there. At least he had a little more gumption than members of the Conservative Party here this afternoon. Not one Conservative fought for the full compensation for UFFI victims which this bill does not provide. Shame on the Conservative Party of Canada.

I would like to read into the record some of the answers to my questionnaire. I think it is well worth putting some of them on the record. The following is a letter sent to me from Revelstoke:

Thank you for taking up the cause of those of us who are "stuck" with this problem.

For myself, it is difficult to say whether or not the health problem I have had since about last Christmas is due to the formaldehyde gas or is due to a virus and as I have had a sinus problem for many years . . . for the past nine or ten months I have suffered more severely with it and with recurring muscle and joint pains.

Mr. Gurbin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the hon. member who has the floor now has considered the possibility that the person about whom he is talking who is getting sick might be getting sick from watching the NDP on television.

Mr. Parker: Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of comment and concern the Conservative Party has for people who are suffering from these kinds of problems.

The letter goes on:

From a purely economic point of view those of us with the insulation are at a distinct disadvantage:

(a) We paid income tax on the grant money from the Government.

I do not know whether that has been mentioned yet. People who received grants paid income tax on those grants. The letter continues:

(b) We paid the labour costs to instal the insulation.

(c) Worst of all, no one will buy a house knowing it has been insulated with urea formaldehyde foam—if one wishes to sell it would be necessary to have the foam removed, new insulation put in and, depending on how it would be removed, either the exterior or the interior walls redone.

That is a letter from a widow who needs assistance, and she does not need just \$5,000. She needs full compensation and assurances from the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) that regulations will be set forth to protect people such as herself. I should like to put on the record a reply from a constituent in Kimberley, British Columbia which reads as follows:

● (2120)

We are both over 70—Last 6 months neither one of us has been well.

These are the things that people are saying. Another reply reads this way:

My husband who is a kidney patient has contracted emphysema.

These are the kinds of replies we are getting. As I toured my riding I visited some of these people. One lady in Kimberley had several small children. The walls of the house had bulged over 12 inches and they were in the process of moving out of the home. They did not know whether anyone was going to pay the expense of their staying somewhere else while they had the testing done on the house. Now the government has the gall to offer \$5,000 in compensation and say that perhaps there will be more money later on and perhaps there is some way they will be able to deal with the problems.

As I toured the riding, people asked me when the government will finally recognize that it created a serious problem when it guaranteed to pay for the installation of this insulation. The government gave a lousy \$350 grant, which has resulted in as much as \$15,000 or \$20,000 damage to some homes.

Some people want to sell their home but the real estate agent has told them that they must acknowledge that urea formaldehyde has been used and that the agent must tell the new buyer of this. If that is not done and it is revealed at a later date, the sale could be null and void.

The representative of the Kinsman Club came to see me with a sample of the material, asking that it be tested. It was installed in their hall and they wonder if people are being contaminated. We have heard of problems in the schools as well. I think the government has a responsibility to trace these problems and introduce programs of full compensation in the realization that there could be very serious medical problems.

A house in Revelstoke is very close to the track. All of the sudden the plaster and the gyprock in that home started to crack. The residents became very ill. They began to get nosebleeds, the children were sick and the housewife was more sick than usual. They went to the doctor about their problems. The urea formaldehyde in their home was starting to deteriorate and it was creating the problems.

In most cases the people have mortgages and because of the high interest rates now in effect, they are paying up to the hilt. To ask them to try to raise another \$10,000, \$15,000 or maybe \$20,000 to have urea formaldehyde removed and then the government will reimburse \$5,000, is hypocritical.

I do not think the Conservative party has done justice to this House of Commons by not putting up one speaker on this bill, Mr. Speaker. This is a very serious injustice not only to their constituents but to the people of Canada. For them to accuse this party which is trying to get the message out to the country that this is a lot more serious than the government is leading us to believe, is hardly fair.

Those are the kinds of things that are happening, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that it has been a privilege for me to represent Kootenay East-Revelstoke and to have the opportunity to stand up in this House and speak for the people of my riding.