

Staff Relations Board, to designate those public servants who are essential to the interest, safety and security of the public. The Federal Court of Appeal simply confirmed the interpretation which we have given to that provision of the law, and which we have applied in many other instances. For example, I refer to the correctional officers in prisons, to nurses and other such groups. That is what the decision means, Madam Speaker. I understand the union, in fact, is seeking leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. It may be some time before our interpretation is definitively confirmed. There is no intention on the part of the government, Madam Speaker, to apply the law in any other way than was intended when adopted in 1967.

POSITION OF MINISTER OF LABOUR

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): My supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Labour. Given the minister's earlier statements questioning the continued usefulness of the right to strike, and also given the recent Gallup Poll outlining Canadian concerns about the right to strike, I should like to ask the minister if he is giving any consideration to any action which would result in a restriction of the right to strike in those areas where the public is concerned generally, such as airlines, railroads, telephones or postal services.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, the answer to the hon. member is no. We believe, from tradition and experience so far, that by and large Canadians prefer to solve industrial disputes by resolving them first through mediation and arbitration, and letting the interested parties come to a peaceful solution without interference, wherever it is possible.

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[Translation]

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

UREA FORMALDEHYDE FOAM INSULATION—INQUIRY
WHETHER COMPENSATORY MEASURES WILL BE ADOPTED

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs I shall direct my question to the minister responsible for housing. Yesterday, my colleague from Hamilton-Wentworth raised the issue of the famous urea formaldehyde foam. Since the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has declined offhandedly any government responsibility in this matter and in view of the fact that in 1976, the Departments of Energy, Mines and Resources and Consumer and Corporate Affairs had recommended that no federal department use this product and that in 1977 the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation not only approved this product, but also agreed to subsidize it under its CHIP program, can the minister responsible for housing tell us today whether he feels at least some degree of moral and social responsibility in this matter and whether he will try to propose some compensation for these 100,000

Oral Questions

home owners who not only have problems with their mortgages, but are being forced out of their homes because of a product for which the government has a certain responsibility?

[English]

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member is aware that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, who is not here, is the chairman responsible in government to deal with this issue. I hasten to add that I am a member of the committee where the situation is being studied. The representations made by the hon. member are high on the list for consideration by that committee.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER SPECIAL GRANT WILL BE RECOMMENDED
FOR OWNERS FORCED OUT OF HOMES

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, the reply of the minister will certainly not reassure those who have major problems. I ask my question of the minister responsible for housing since the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has declined all responsibility. An inquiry will result in recommendations which I suppose will be relevant several months hence.

Could the minister assure these people that he will recommend the provision of a special grant in the next budget so that they will have somewhere to live next winter? I ask the minister to show some compassion for thousands of those people, both adults and children, who will not be able to live in their homes during the coming winter if the government does not take specific action.

[English]

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, at the outset I would reject the premise of the statement made by the hon. member that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has rejected his responsibility. The opposite is true. He has been designated by the cabinet as the minister responsible to study the very issues that the member raises. If the hon. member pursues it and says that this is an issue of such moment that so many members are concerned about, I ask him what action did his government take about the same problem while they were in office?

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HOUSING

REQUEST FOR ACTION ON MORTGAGE INTEREST RATES

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for housing. The minister has had petitions, he has had briefs, protests, and CMHC reports. All of them are directed to immediate action on interest rates to solve Canada's housing problem. Yet all he does is ask for another survey of Members of Parliament. When will the minister get busy and ignore Scrooge, the