

*Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act*

with this situation, and more specifically, as reported on page 14557 of *Hansard* for February 2, 1982, I asked the minister whether his discussions with the provinces and especially with Quebec, as well as with the industry were still going on and whether there was a statute of limitation. The minister then replied that his discussions with the provinces and the industry were going on but they were not bringing about the results he had hoped for any more than they are now.

It is unfortunate that in this respect, we have been unable to obtain—we had other communications, Mr. Speaker, but we obtained neither the participation of the provincial governments, nor that of the industry. An important aspect at this time is the statute of limitation; the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs confirmed that any payment made to UFFI home owners would not deprive them of their right to take legal action against both levels of government, and as to the statute of limitation, he assured us that the bill that is now before the Quebec National Assembly would have the same effect on the Government of Canada as on the Quebec government, which means that the statute of limitation under this bill was set on July 1, 1982.

In view of this situation, I must say that I was proud of the reply made by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who, in connection with this problem, has made a tremendous contribution. His job has not always been easy, for he has received a great many representations and met many people in his office who have not always been kind to him, but I think that if we have now reached this stage in our study of this bill, following certain changes that have been made at the request of the Quebec caucus, it is due to a great extent to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who has paid particular attention to the remarks made by government members in general and by the 74 members of the Quebec caucus in particular.

Following this most important question I put to him, I was delighted to see that, on April 27, the bill which is before the House this evening was introduced and it covered in fact that matter of \$5,000. One thing is extremely important in the bill, and that is Clause 6. The department states that under the terms of this bill, home owners will retain the right to start proceedings against the government if they so wish, even if they avail themselves of the benefits of the program, or receive financial assistance.

This bill gives the government enough leeway to make such changes in the program as could become necessary in the light of new developments or technological breakthroughs. In short, with regard to that situation, the bill having been introduced on May 25, 1982, the flexibility granted by the government with regard to instituting proceedings was discussed, and the government agreed that it would not prevent them even in cases where the complainants had received financial help. I feel that point is extremely important because many of the victims feared that receiving \$5,000 would preclude their

taking action against anyone as acceptance of the money would be equated with a settlement. Such is not the case, Mr. Speaker, as stipulated in Clause 6 of the bill.

Another important thing occurred on May 25th, 1982. Members of the committee dealing with the matter at the level of the National Advisory Council on UFFI, as advisors to the minister, also announced on that day that \$40,000 would be paid out in direct financial assistance to the Quebec Federation of UFFI Associations. That was in keeping with the bill of April 27 which raised the possibility of government flexibility in that respect. Discussions went on after May 25, 1982 and then I had the pleasure of moving under Standing order 43 that the bill be adopted at all stages. Unfortunately it was rejected, shot down by one of the parties, the New Democratic Party. But eventually I introduced it anew and on that day of July 7 we were given more details, and that is the very important thing I want to tell the House before concluding my remarks. With respect to the bill or the program we had announced on December 23, 1981 and the items I enumerated before six o'clock, we agreed to numerous changes in the regulations so that first of all we would accept applications from all people who had urea formaldehyde foam insulated houses. In other words, all home owners who wanted to take the necessary steps to remove some of the foam from their houses would be eligible for non-taxable financial assistance of up to \$5,000.

Every home owner is perfectly free to decide what type of corrective measures he wants to take for his house, and he is also free to decide to remove the foam if he wants to and the government will retroactively pay for such expenses up to \$5,000. That is another aspect of the changes we made in the regulations. The people who have already removed the foam or who are in the process of doing so will also be eligible under this program, provided they can produce the appropriate receipts required under the regulations. That, Mr. Speaker, was announced in a communiqué made public on July 7 by the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Some people referred to the costs of the tests and before six o'clock I mentioned the famous \$100 cost. Well, we have done away with that \$100 charge so as to reduce as much as possible the expenses incurred by home owners. It was decided, Mr. Speaker, to eliminate the \$100 required for the exhaustive test. The cheques, which have already been mailed and received, will be returned or the amount refunded.

I see that my colleague for Lévis (Mr. Gourde) is also very happy about this situation. He certainly received many representations from his constituency, as did my colleague from Missisquoi (Mr. Bachand). There were certainly many UFFI victims in their ridings. I can also see that my colleague for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) looks very happy across the aisle. They were all very glad to learn that home owners would no longer have to pay \$100 for the test. Moreover, with regard to