

family woke up every morning with nasal congestion. Headaches and nausea were not uncommon, particularly in the wife, who stayed in the home all day. He was angry because the government was doing nothing, and he did not know what to do about his house. Again, he was an average worker who had put all his savings into fixing up his home. He had worked very hard and now his major capital asset was at risk. Added to this was the complete frustration, month after month, indeed year after year, of the federal government simply not taking this problem seriously and doing nothing to help.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to read a letter from the Rapanos family of Carnarvon Street in Vancouver. This is what they say:

In the Autumn of 1978 we decided to take what we felt would be a good step to improve our home which was constructed in 1943 and to help protect our family from the future inflation in energy costs. The CHIP programme was available to provide a further incentive. After obtaining three estimates, we enquired about the contractor's reputation and whether or not the urea formaldehyde foam he was proposing to use was CMHC approved. Everything checked out so the work was done and subsequently we received a CHIP grant. There was some unusual smell and at one place a wet spot appeared on the wall next to an electrical outlet but since we were also painting at the time we attributed some of the smell to this even though it still seemed to continue for a time after the painting had been completed. At this time we had no reason to suspect anything out of the ordinary.

Since 1978 a number of facts have become known to us:

1. At the end of 1979 we brought our normal, healthy baby home from the hospital. She immediately developed bronchial and breathing problems which we treated with innumerable visits to the doctor. The child has had more antibiotics and prescriptions in her first two years than many people experience in twenty years. She is well below average in terms of her growth today in spite of her being of average birth weight and we are very worried about the long term effects of her ongoing breathing problems in terms of her future health and growth.

2. We, ourselves, have both noticed, particularly in the winter months when the windows are more likely to be closed, that sore throats in the mornings were an almost daily occurrence for both of us, yet the colds we expected to follow never occurred. It has seemed, however, that we have both experienced a lot more "colds" or precold symptoms over the last few years.

The above observations were prior to our awareness of any potential health impacts of the UFFI. Since the time of the ban on use of the material a number of further facts have come to be known through reading the studies associated with the product, discussing the effects with staff from the Vancouver Health Department and speaking to others who have this insulation in their homes.

3. The degradation of this unstable UFFI material is a certainty, only the rate is variable and unpredictable and this degradation releases formaldehyde gas.

4. There is no established "safe" level for this material for long-term continuous 24-hour per day exposure (as in the case of a mother and child at home). The .1 parts per million is an arbitrary figure gleaned from research to date. The Final Report of the Department of National Health and Welfare Expert Advisory Committee on Urea Formaldehyde Foam Insulation April 1981 states:

"The Committee is therefore not prepared to recommend any level of formaldehyde exposure as inherently safe."

The carcinogenic potential of this material is not clear; however, it has been shown to effect rats at 6 ppm which is presumably over a fairly short test period.

I am sorry the minister has just left us because the letter goes on to say:

Mr. Ouellet, what is this going to mean to the health of our child as she grows in this environment? Would it be "safe" to have more children? Looking at the health of our child now, we must say we are extremely concerned. We have

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therefore come to the conclusion that this level of uncertainty is too great & that the only thing we can do is have the UFFI removed.

5. Our home has been tested by the City of Vancouver Health Department (report attached). The tests indicated that the formaldehyde level was approximately .05 ppm in the living space and .66 ppm in the walls, which indicates that the level of gas being produced in the walls is creating a potential to continue to contaminate the home.

There are no new furnishings or finishes in the home which could have contributed to this formaldehyde level and we do not smoke.

I might mention that was the kind of rationalization I recall the minister using in this House to try and get himself and his government off the hook. The letter goes on:

6. We recently found another home which we were interested in purchasing and have discovered, from speaking to three separate real estate companies, that in spite of the fact that the home we were interested in was assessed at a lower value than ours, because of the formaldehyde ours would in fact be worth much less on the market. Only one company stated that the presence of the foam should result in a lowering of the list price by \$25,000, while the other two simply suggested quite low asking prices and said that the "buyer resistance" to homes with UFFI had become "considerable".

One agent advised that several of the major banks were either refusing to write mortgages for such homes while others "reviewed" each case on its own merits.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this illustrates again in very human and specific terms the seriousness of this problem and the terrible situation in which home owners find themselves. The letter goes on:

In the case of this insulation, where the Government acted as a promotor through CMHC (and apparently through RAPCO), in the use of this product, action should be immediate and complete. If you do not provide full compensation in this case, how can your ministry ever have any respect from private companies who might be required by your Ministry to recall their faulty products. This is a terrible double standard!

The fact remains that the effectiveness and safety of UFFI were misrepresented when the product was given an endorsement. Since that time, your Government has fully recognized the problem and has established a compensation program.

Mr. Minister, why make this compensation incomplete! We can demonstrate a concrete economic loss and we believe also demonstrate health effects; why then when WE have acted in good faith, should we be penalized either for the full cost or a portion of the cost of removal of this frightening material from our homes. What kind of common justice is there in helping some people but not others? Your proposal is insufficient, unfair and discriminatory.

• (1550)

This stuff decays and a .5 ppm reading today is not either safe or constant over time and we would be irresponsible to raise children in an environment contaminated by the material or the fungus that live in it 24 hours a day—selling the home is a very costly non-solution which simply shifts the problem.

In conclusion, we must say that we believe that this hazardous material **MUST BE REMOVED** from our home and this conclusion is drawn from the National Research Council data, economic damage and most important, real and rational concern about the **PRESENT AND FUTURE OF OUR FAMILY**.

That letter was written by Bill and Marilyn Rapanos. It is typical of what so many UFFI home owners across the country feel. I think the only positive thing that we can say about this situation is that home owners in every province of Canada are so incensed that they have formed very militant citizen action groups. They are determined not to accept the insulting kind of compensation program which the government has proposed and which, of course, is legislated in Bill C-109 under discussion.