

Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act

Committee, not to mention engineers and representatives of all disciplines and professions, even lawyers. I do believe we should forget the political aspect and work honestly and objectively with a view to finding an acceptable solution to the problem. Earlier I extended my congratulations to the Federation of the committees of victims of Quebec. I had an opportunity to meet with that group and so did all other members from Quebec. Those people asked us to give them some information about the situation. As a result of that meeting, we were asked to declare the problem of urea formaldehyde "a national emergency situation." Mr. Speaker, I suggest that nobody would hesitate to call that situation a national emergency problem because we have no idea of the extent of the damage. In my riding, the association did urge, and I quote their text word for word:

● (1700)

We urge our Members of Parliament Marcel Roy and Yves Demers as well as the hon. Jeanne Sauvé to bring pressure to bear upon Mr. Ouellet so that he will declare UFFI-insulated houses a "national disaster".

With respect to the first item in the claims of Laval UFFI victims committee, it was agreed, and the minister himself referred to this in the health, welfare and social affairs committee, that we could declare the situation of UFFI-insulated houses a national disaster. Speaking of national disaster, I think it is appropriate to recall that Laval was heavily damaged by floods in the past. In various regions of Canada, people took action under the existing national disaster legislation to estimate the damages, and the provinces shared on a per capita basis with the Canadian government the cost of the damages paid to the victims. Since I have been a Member of Parliament, I believe that legislation was used two or three times by some provinces. We agreed with the first item of their claims that it is a national disaster and we urged them to make similar representations to the provincial members and their ministers because the Canadian government, through the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, did agree to call it a national disaster. I have asked the Laval members of the Parti Québécois to agree as we did that the situation of UFFI-insulated houses be considered as a national disaster. I trust that the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle), whom I see over there, will also be able to support the claim put forward by the members of the Quebec federation of committees of UFFI victims, to the effect, that the situation be considered a national disaster; therefore, under the existing legislation, the provinces will contribute on the basis of their population to the amount paid the victims. That was accepted. The second claim was taken from a brief presented to me on June 15.

We require our MPs to vote against the bill unless its regulations are changed.

Well, after several discussions, we did not want to play into the hands of the NDPs, and organize a filibuster talking about unemployment, talking about interest rates and housing conditions, when in fact we should be deciding whether, today

or three months from now, we should grant \$110 million worth of assistance to UFFI victims.

For our part, this is what we said: "You can oppose this bill if you want to, but you will not have a penny from the Treasury Board before fall when the session is adjourned, while \$110 million would be available under this legislation, which would mean \$5,000 per housing unit." The minister has stressed several times the flexibility of Bill C-109, saying that the terms of financial assistance will be prescribed by regulation rather than by legislation. You are asked to support this legislation, and then we shall see whether the provinces are willing to co-operate since the minister has stated that the situation may be viewed as a national disaster.

After that meeting, Mr. Speaker—and this shows how objective the committee has been—the following was published in the *Contact Laval* newspaper on June 30:

UFFI victims satisfied with their meeting with federal MPs.

While no formal commitment was made by the three federal Members of Parliament for Laval, the Laval committee of UFFI victims has said that it is fully satisfied with the results of the meeting it had with its federal representatives last Sunday to look into the situation. The meeting lasted over three hours and followed the sit-in in the office of the Member for Duvernay, Yves Demers. The Laval committee stated that the three Members of Parliament had sympathized with the predicament of its members and that positive results could be expected in the near future in response to the representations made by the Federation of Victims to the minister concerned, the hon. André Ouellet.

"I believe that some progress has been made because of this meeting," stated Mrs. Emilie Morais-Deschênes, who was expressing the views of the committee.

Many questions were discussed during the meeting, including the matter of the bill which Mr. Ouellet plans to introduce in the House of Commons and of the program to decontaminate UFFI-insulated houses.

According to Mrs. Morais-Deschênes, the Laval members of Parliament agreed to ask Mr. Ouellet for amendments to his bill and were interested by the request of the victims to have UFFI-insulated houses declared a national disaster.

The hon. members will note how often this request comes up and how much the federation of UFFI victims insists on having UFFI-insulated houses declared a national disaster. I continue with the article:

"The meeting has had positive results for both sides and I believe that we can look to the future somewhat more optimistically," concluded Mrs. Morais-Deschênes.

All this shows that no one has taken the limelight on this issue. I believe that all members of this House have met their responsibilities and received representations from their constituents, and I think this is one of the reasons why the minister has agreed to make many amendments to his regulations concerning the taking of samples, the amount of \$5,000, the clean-up of houses and the possibility of removing the insulation from between the walls of these houses. I believe that the minister has been very flexible because, once again, this is a new problem, a new rapidly changing situation, and our efforts must be sustained because how are we to know what the harmful effects will be in six months. I believe that the government has shown great caution, but before declaring a national disaster, we would need the support of the provinces. The