

Canada Ports Corporation Act

Vancouver. Given the rates and service extended by the port of Seattle, Vancouver will not be able to compete under the constraints and regulations which may be imposed by a minister whose policies do not reflect the needs of those ports. They do not have the flexibility and they must get the approval of the minister, the czar of ports administration, the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board before they can make any substantive move or change in their charges. They are bound by regulations, by a constitution so-called, which are approved by the minister and can only be changed with his approval. So they need the autonomy and the freedom to act. The ports need sometimes to say yes on the spot, as in any other business.

It is not improper to mention the policy of this government on applications by shipping lines to enter the ports of Canada. In one instance in particular a line which wanted to enter the port of Saint John was told it was the policy of the government that if you want to do business in this country you shall do it through the port of Montreal. Not only did Saint John not get the business, but neither did the port of Montreal. The policy cost both ports business.

You cannot have political influence and at the same time have the proper management of the ports structure which this nation requires. This bill, which is not accompanied by an element of policy which indicates there is in fact port autonomy, is a useless piece of window dressing which does little more than rephrase the original National Harbours Board Act. It puts a new gown on it with a lot of tinsel which is going to fall off when it gets on the dance floor. The tinsel does not mean that the ports of Atlantic Canada will have any independence unless there is an absolute about-face in government policy. That is what it is all about, policy—industrial policy, transportation policy, transportation viability, the greatest possible productivity, economy and number of jobs. When they become the objective of government policy, then the independence of individual ports will have been created. But as outlined here, that independence is retained in the hands of the minister, his appointees and the employees of his department. It is a façade, not an improvement.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to on division, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport.

• (1740)

UREA FORMALDEHYDE INSULATION ACT

PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO HOME OWNERS

The House resumed from Monday, May 31, 1982, consideration of the motion of Mr. Ouellet that Bill C-109, to provide for payments to persons in respect of dwellings insulated with urea formaldehyde foam insulation, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I shall take advantage of this opportunity to make a few comments on this bill, which should be examined very carefully, considering the impact it will have on UFFI victims and the seriousness of their situation. The subject has not been before the House for quite some time, but the UFFI problem is causing thousands of Canadians to suffer losses that are almost irreparable. Our official critic, the member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Scott) made a very eloquent speech on the subject. He quoted figures, and I feel he was perfectly right in speaking on behalf of 80,000 to 100,000 families, 300,000 Canadians altogether. He was also right in pointing out to the government that if all these people, these families had been located in the same city, the government would immediately have taken special measures and declared a national disaster, and there is no doubt that they would have been assisted by other levels of government, but in any case, the federal government would have moved far more quickly than it has done up to now.

The fact remains however, that the situation cannot be ignored and this legislation cannot be adopted without a number of very stringent recommendations to the government, especially when we know that thousands of Canadians throughout the country are faced with quite exceptional problems and do not have the resources to cope with them, because of the government's failure to provide for adequate economic legislation. What a terrible thing, for people already facing high interest rates and an economic recession, to have to deal with this curse, so to speak, which sooner or later will oblige them to leave their homes if they are not able to do a thorough cleanup. Mr. Speaker, the House will recall, and there is evidence to that effect, that the matter was already being discussed seven or eight years ago. In the U.S., there had already been hints that the product could be dangerous, and I still wonder how Canada and the Canadian authorities could approve this product and allow it to be installed, and I also fail to understand why the government is refusing, or at least it did for some time, to accept a large share of the responsibility in this area.

It is a fact that some departments had warned other departments, especially the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, of the hazards of using this product. It is also a fact that the government not only promoted its use but also subsidized its installation. Mr. Speaker, I realize that today there are