

which recommended or suggested some 100 products for use as home insulation. It did not say that one particular product was the ideal solution, so that the consumer was given a choice.

The specifications for urea formaldehyde foam were approved by the Standards Council of Canada, and information was published on possible uses of this product. That was in 1977. In 1979, two complaints were registered following possible harm caused by urea formaldehyde. By September of 1980, 100 complaints had been registered. From then on, the government would be taking various steps to protect the consumer. After the 100 complaints in September, 1980, in December of the same year, the Department of National Health and Welfare conducted an investigation into the possible hazards of this product. So at that time, there was some reason for concern, and we proceeded to determine what hazards were involved. The Department of National Health and Welfare took action. That was in December 1980. A report was published, and the product was put on the list of hazardous products. Under the Hazardous Products Act, the product was banned for commercial use. Here again, we see that the government acted very responsibly. However, when the product was put on the list of hazardous products, the private sector appealed the decision in order to be able to go on selling the product. At this point, we may well ask, who was going to pay the legal costs of consumers in the courts? It was, in fact, the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs which paid the legal costs under the Hazardous Products Act, and the product remains banned. Mr. Speaker, these are just a few historical data which I have recalled to determine whether, as some members of the opposition, and especially the New Democratic Party members, are saying, the government shirked its responsibilities with respect to the use of this product.

● (1650)

So what happened next? There were all kinds of reports and it seems that the use of this product, the manner in which the product was installed, created certain problems. However, not all home owners who used the product are now suffering ill effects as a result. During the debate on second reading of Bill C-109 to provide for payments in respect of dwellings, the member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) was, I believe, the spokesman for the official opposition on the Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, and as reported in *Hansard* of May 31, at page 17917, he himself used the product and did not have any problems. I shall quote what the member for St. John's East said during the proceedings on second reading:

—I believe the government also has a very serious obligation to tell the House exactly what it feels is its responsibility to those who do not have health problems as a consequence of urea formaldehyde foam insulation, and I am one of them. There is no problem in my home. I do not live there all year round. It is in my constituency, but I have no problem there. Indeed, the insulation has worked very well. It has served me very well, but if I were attempting to sell my home, I

would have to state that it has urea formaldehyde foam insulation because that is now a regulation of most real estate companies in the country.

Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act

That is another aspect. But then we can both accept the fact that there are home owners who have suffered ill effects and also that we cannot ban the product outright and say that it was 100 per cent harmful. We are aware that there were victims and there still are. If the product was properly installed, according to the specifications, those people or those home owners have solved their insulation problems, and I think the member for St. John's East probably reflects the circumstances of the vast majority of home owners who insulated their homes with this product. But, Mr. Speaker, that does not solve the problem of other Canadians who have been practically enticed to use that product. The New Democratic Party may very well claim that the amount of \$110 million is not enough, but then again perhaps \$500 million would not be enough either, so in its wisdom the government has to keep in mind the fact that the money comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers and that it must then be redistributed once we are sure that those grants are relatively proportional to the moral responsibility of the government. I will come back to that aspect in a moment.

Of course, some people will echo the New Democratic Party and say that it just is not enough. The fact remains, however, that not one of 30 countries in the rest of the world has agreed to grant \$110 million to people who have used this product. Not a single country has agreed to do that, only Canada's Liberal government has accepted that moral obligation because it is aware of the significance of this issue for the victims. Mr. Speaker, I could talk for another hour about cases which I have heard about in my riding from people who came to see me in my office. I have files, including this one whose importance cannot be denied because it is one inch thick, nothing but letters to and from Mr. Guy Chevalier of Sainte-Dorothée who has given me permission to mention his name. This goes to show to what extent members have received representations from people who have been victimized by this product. I think that all members fully grasp the significance of this problem which has made headlines week in and week out, sometimes as a result of publicity, sometimes because of changes in temperature and humidity. But it is a fact that the issue has evolved considerably and we are still unable to say what is the exact cause of this problem and what is the ideal solution. I am sure we all want to help the people who have used this insulation and I think that all members are now fully aware of the situation.

I want to single out and commend all the organizations that have made representations, either to their Member of Parliament or to the minister concerned, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. (Mr. Ouellet). Setting all political considerations aside, I think each one of us ought to make an objective effort to solve this problem which takes a new dimension practically every day. We have physicians in the House as well as on the Health, Welfare and Social Affairs