

Urea Formaldehyde Insulation Act

These are matters which are new to me. They are new to most of us, and we do not fully understand the implications of them. But we require an absolute commitment from the Minister of National Health and Welfare as to the ministry's full participation in and covering the potential and real hazard. It is therefore important that we recognize it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired. I now recognize the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser).

Some hon. Members: Filibuster!

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, as belated as it is in the evening, it is certainly a privilege to rise to speak on this bill. I do not doubt that my fellow colleagues in the New Democratic Party feel very strongly that the bill before us tonight is inadequate. In fact, I believe some of our colleagues on the government side feel the bill is inadequate. There was a general understanding many hours ago that each party would be brief in the speeches in the second reading stage in order to get this bill into Committee of the Whole. The reason we wanted to get the bill into Committee of the Whole was so that questions which members have to ask the minister could be asked.

● (2100)

What we have been subjected to in the last 40 minutes is a display of mock words by the New Democratic Party House leader. The purpose of the display was to push this debate on until we reached the point where there was really little time to ask the questions of the minister which the minister already said he is in the House to answer.

Hon. members who have known me for many years know that I have always been on pretty good terms with many of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party. I am not quick to cast aspersions in this House. Anybody watching this performance tonight maybe wondering what is going on. I feel very badly about this. Regretfully, I do not think the House leader of the New Democratic Party has served the people who are suffering from urea formaldehyde by his display tonight which took the last 40 minutes.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is my understanding that on second reading a member is entitled to 40 minutes, entitled to express concerns—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member is not making a point of order.

Mr. Fraser: I never said that members are not entitled to 40 minutes. I am saying that if this place is to function and when it is clear that members are trying to co-operate to get the debate to the stage where questions that are appropriate to ask are to be asked, and somebody else plays games to stop it, it is inappropriate that they get up—

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I regret the intervention and I will not make another. I wonder if the

minister—the member—might accept a question that would clarify the situation.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, the difficulty is that my friends in the New Democratic Party are now finding out what it is like to have their little game exposed. They do not like it so they are jumping up and down. They now want to ask the minister a question. They have had hours and hours to ask the minister and they have been careful not to do this.

The House leader of the New Democratic Party posed a lot of questions that all members in the House know have to be posed and answered. However, he did not pose them at a time and in a place where the minister could answer them. That is the game he has been playing.

Earlier the suggestion was made that other members in this chamber are not sincere in their worries about this issue, that somehow or other some members in the House do not care as much about the problems and limitations in the bill as do our friends in the New Democratic Party. Let me say this.

No one would ever accuse my friends in the New Democratic Party of having, nor would they claim to have, a monopoly on wisdom, perspicacity and intelligence. They have never done that. However, they have always claimed a monopoly on virtue, and that is what they have been trying to do tonight.

That is regrettable because I have received hundreds of letters from people in my province on this issue. I have met with people who are suffering from urea formaldehyde. I think that the bill presented by the minister is inadequate and there are some questions that have to be asked.

I will accept an assurance if it is given to me because I accept assurances solemnly given by hon. ladies and gentlemen. I will cut off my speech if my friends in the New Democratic Party will now rise and say that they have had their fun, they tried to make a point and they now want to move into committee of the Whole. If the House leader of the New Democratic Party wants to interrupt me to say that is what they will do, that is fine. However, why should I now sit down and let them get up and make the same speech over again, knowing that what they are going to do is ensure that all of those people across this country who want the answers to the questions that the House leader of the New Democratic Party asked will not be answered? If the New Democratic Party speakers get up after I sit down and carry on making the same kind of speeches, because of the terms of the House order which they agreed to yesterday, it will guarantee that the minister will not be allowed to give any answers in the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fraser: That is a game that is being played. My friends in the New Democratic Party have been shouting at me. They always shout when I get upset because I do not usually go after them. I try to get along with them because I am a very patient and tolerant fellow. They are now saying, "Oh, you are supporting the Grits". Isn't that interesting? Let me say this.