



CANADA

HOUSE OF COMMONS

**FIRST SESSION
38th PARLIAMENT**

**Order Paper
and
Notice Paper**

No. 101

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

QUESTION

Q-1512 — May 17, 2005 — Mr. Cummins (Delta—Richmond East) —

With regard to government measures that result in the build-up of moisture in the wall cavity of buildings and their inability to dry-out:

- (a) did Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) management consider this wet wall syndrome in 1981, and if so, what action was taken;
- (b) did CMHC management consider this wet wall syndrome in subsequent years, and if so, when and what actions were taken;

- (c) was CMHC management advised that by being aware of the wet wall problem the corporation would be delinquent if they did not advise the public of the nature of the problem, and if so, what actions were taken;
- (d) was CMHC management advised that government departments could be exacerbating the wet wall problem, and if so, what actions were taken, when were they advised, which departments were involved and what was the result of these actions;
- (e) was CMHC management advised that government programs were resulting in the wet wall syndrome, and if so, what actions were taken, when were they advised, which programs and what was the result of these actions;
- (f) were there, by 1981 and in subsequent years, reported cases of moisture induced structural damage in housing across Canada, and if so, indicate the number by year and by province;
- (g) was CMHC management advised by 1981 and in subsequent years of risks involving structural damage to National Housing Act (NHA) insured housing leading to widespread defaults on mortgages with CMHC having to repossess these units and rectify the problem at substantial costs, and if so, when and what action was taken;
- (h) when was CMHC aware that the wet wall syndrome occurred most often in coastal regions with significant rainfall, and what action was taken with regard to building codes and construction practices affecting British Columbia;
- (i) were there concerns, by 1981 and in subsequent years, that the wet wall syndrome was triggered by barriers trapping moisture and preventing natural drying, and if so, what was the nature of these concerns and what actions were taken to address them;
- (j) was there an awareness at CMHC, by 1981 and in subsequent years, of results of research undertaken by the National Research Council (NRC) suggesting that rain penetration was a primary cause of moisture problems in some climates, and if so, when and what action was taken with regard to British Columbia;
- (k) was there an awareness by 1981 and in subsequent years that changes in the building practices, in part induced by changes in the National Building Code and government programs promoting energy efficiency, were sometimes a source of the wet wall problem, and if so, when and what actions were taken to address this problem;
- (l) which of these changes to the National Building Code addressed moisture penetration in exterior walls and natural drying of the wall cavity, particularly in areas of high relative humidity and rainfall and in what years were these changes made;
- (m) in which years did CMHC or NRC recommend changes to the National Building Code that had the effect of reducing the ability of the wall cavity to dry naturally; (n) what measures did CMHC and NRC undertake to alleviate the wall moisture problems, in

spite of the slower drying effects of better insulated and airtight assemblies, and when did they take these measures;

(o) when and what were the nature of National Building Code revisions after 1981 that were designed to improve the ability of the wall cavity to dry naturally, or at least to reduce moisture incursions;

(p) what active measures did CHMC and NRC take to inform homeowners in British Columbia of the wet wall problem and when were they taken;

(q) what active measures did CMHC and NRC take to inform builders and the housing industry in British Columbia of the wet wall problem and when were they taken;

(r) what active measures did CMHC and NRC take to ensure that building practices in British Columbia addressed the wet wall problem, indicating the date of such actions and the success of the initiative; and

(s) did CMHC liquidate its national portfolio of co-op housing, and if so, (i) when did this occur, indicating by street address the locations, and indicating the number of these co-ops by province, (ii) what was the reason behind the decision to liquidate, (iii) how many of these projects suffered from wet wall and drying problems, (iv) were these problems disclosed to the individuals or government agencies that purchased them, and (v) were engineering reports written, and if so, detail what they disclosed?