

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Pepin: I think hon. members on the other side will have a few supplementary questions.

Mr. Peters: Chicken!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, when the noise has subsided I will ask the minister my supplementary question. He has already answered some questions that might have been supplementary, but let me conclude with just one question. Because of the seriousness of the problem and the fact that the DISC threat is now a reality, and keeping in mind that a budget will be presented in the House a week from Monday, will the minister seize an opportunity next week in order to make a full and frank statement of the government's position and the facts, to which there could be a reasoned response? This development is bound to have some impact on the coming budget debate, so will the minister seize an opportunity to do this early next week?

Mr. Pepin: I will do that, Mr. Speaker, but I cannot say at what precise time. It might be during the budget debate, for example.

UNITED STATES DISC PROGRAM—PROVISION TO
GOVERNMENT OF NAMES OF AMERICAN COMPANIES
MAKING USE THEREOF—CANADIAN PROTEST

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister the following question. According to the report to which reference has been made, the United States government refuses to reveal the names of the DISCS which are in place, and refuses to reveal the names of the parent companies. There may or may not be justification for that as far as the public is concerned, but I should like to ask the minister whether the government of Canada, as a partner to the auto pact agreement and generally as a partner in trade, has demanded that it be given the name of these DISCS and of the parent companies which have established such corporations so we may know exactly how our trade and jobs will be affected?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, my officers have made attempts to find out which companies were registering or applying for DISC status. They have not been successful. I do not know exactly at what level that was done, but I have already indicated this morning that in respect of Ford and General Motors we have received information from those companies that they have registered for DISC status. If the question is wider than that I will see what I can do about obtaining official information, but I have little influence on the way the United States decides to implement its laws.

Mr. Lewis: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, may I remind the minister of the very soothing words the President of the United States used—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have not yet reached the point of debate on this matter but we should try as much

[Mr. Speaker.]

as possible to limit the exchange to questions and answers.

Mr. Lewis: I will put it this way, Mr. Speaker. In view of the soothing words addressed to this House by the President of the United States, is the minister making a protest to the American administration that, as he himself said on March 17, the DISC program is a violation of the auto pact as well as all other trade arrangements under GATT?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, this has already been done. A note was sent to the United States government last December, if my memory is good. We also made a formal protest during a debate which took place at GATT on all of the United States economic measures of August 15.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There are many members seeking supplementaries. The matter is important and we will spend some time on it, but I must try to establish some kind of balance between the representatives of parties in the questioning. I think the hon. member for York South should be allowed one further supplementary for the moment and then I will recognize the hon. member for Edmonton West.

UNITED STATES DISC PROGRAM—NON-IDENTIFICATION
OF DISC EXPORTS FOR CUSTOMS PURPOSES—
SUGGESTED PROTEST BY CANADA

Mr. David Lewis (York South): My further supplementary is based on the information that the American program does not require American exporters to export their products under the DISC name, with the result that customs officials in Canada cannot ascertain whether the products were manufactured under DISC. In view of the fact this practice seems to be a deliberate, clandestine attempt to take advantage of Canada, may I ask the minister whether the government will protest vigorously against this kind of policy by the American administration?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I said in answer to the previous question that this had already been done. I do not see what we would gain from repeating these things. I might observe en passant—

Mr. Lewis: You did not say you did it.

Mr. Pepin: I might answer this morning the question asked yesterday by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby. I just want to observe that the prices of the exports of an United States Manufacturing Company to Canada are not necessarily affected. It may very well decide to use the DISC advantage simply to maximize its profits. Therefore there is a distinction between the DISC effect on the profits of the company in the United States and its effect on export prices to Canada, which is an important distinction.

UNITED STATES DISC PROGRAM—PROVISION OF
INFORMATION ON CANADIAN COMPANIES AFFECTED

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade