

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Pepin: We are meeting with these gentlemen and, as I said, Chrysler Corporation has not to my knowledge applied for DISC company status in the United States.

Mr. Broadbent: Would the minister be in a position now to inform the House as to the intention of the General Motors Corporation in Canada vis-à-vis DISC?

Mr. Pepin: I will have to ask my hon. friend for some patience. I have said a number of times that I would be meeting these companies today and on other days of the week and that I will be reporting fully to the House at the next opportunity, which appears to be the debate on the budget.

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INDUSTRY**REASON FOR EXPANSION OF OPERATIONS BY VERSATILE MANUFACTURING LIMITED IN UNITED STATES RATHER THAN MANITOBA**

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the fact that Versatile Manufacturing Limited has decided to expand its operations in the United States rather than in Manitoba, can the minister inform the House whether his officers have met the officials of Versatile Manufacturing to determine whether the decision was taken as a result of the United States DISC program or because of the taxation policies of the federal government or the policies of the Manitoba government?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, Versatile has had a subsidiary in the United States for the last ten years. They have now decided to expand that operation in the United States. They have held conversations with Premier Schreyer and with officers of my department and they say that the DISC program was not taken into consideration in the upcoming expansion.

Mr. Mazankowski: Can the minister advise the House whether his officials have undertaken an investigation and have had discussions with the officers of Versatile with a view to determining whether indeed the DISC program did have an effect on the decision?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I just answered that question by saying that the company officers say that it has not had any influence. I cannot swear on their behalf that it did not, but that is the information they have provided to us.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS**FORECAST OF UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS TO END OF 1973 BY UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO INSTITUTE—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. David Lewis (York South): My question is directed to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. I gave him notice of the subject matter. Can he inform the House whether his

[Mr. Pepin.]

department has received as yet the quarterly unemployment forecast from the University of Toronto Institute for the Quantitative Analysis of Social and Economic Policy, dated April 26, 1972, which projects seasonally adjusted levels of unemployment in excess of 6 per cent to the end of 1973, and unemployment as high as 6.3 per cent—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows that the purpose of a question is not to convey information but rather to seek information. I would think that perhaps the first part of the hon. member's question, for the time being anyway, might be to the point and the minister might be allowed to reply to that part of the hon. member's question.

Mr. Lewis: I was almost finished, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member might allow the minister to reply to his question. If he seeks further information he may ask a supplementary question.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I did not know whether the hon. member was finished. I rather thought he was.

I want to thank the hon. gentleman for giving me notice of his question. Unfortunately I just received it when I came into the House. Recently my department received this forecast, which I understand is a preliminary forecast only. It is now being studied by officials in my department. I might say to the hon. member that we constantly receive the results of a variety of forecasts and we are continually analysing and comparing them with our own economic model. Whatever forecasts I give, I will give on Monday night.

Mr. Lewis: In view of the level of unemployment forecast for 1973 as I have indicated and the level of 6.3 per cent for the last quarter of this year forecast by the institute, do these forecasts vary significantly from the forecasts made in his own department regarding unemployment levels in 1972 and 1973?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, forecasting depends on the assumptions you make, and I should like to compare those assumptions with our own before giving an answer to the hon. member's question. But it is something I might deal with.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Are you assuming an election?

Mr. Lewis: May I ask the minister a question arising out of the fact that on a number of occasions he has said he is not in the business of forecasting, which I presume also applies to the department that advises him. If that is the case, what exactly is the forecasting unit numbering some 36 people in his department doing and how much is it costing the taxpayers to have a forecasting unit that does not forecast?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest that that is argument. If the hon. member is actually seeking this information, the question might be placed on the order paper.