

Inquiries of the Ministry

that particular study? Are we making any plans internally within the structure of the Canadian government, or is everything going to depend on what decisions are reached in conjunction with the United States?

Mr. Davis: We have our own plans and, as the hon. member knows, we have what might be called a crisis management organization in the Department of the Environment.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baldwin: There is lots of room for that.

Mr. Fairweather: Have you got one for the government?

Mr. Davis: In other words, we are co-ordinating not only the studies of a preventive nature but also with respect to possible oil spills in the Puget Sound area. But as I said before, Mr. Speaker, we do not want to accept the idea or give an indication that we accept the idea that tankers will be coming into that area.

• (1120)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to hon. members that we really are getting into a debate on this subject. We might return to the matter in a short while. For the moment the Chair will recognize the hon. member for York South.

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TRADE

UNITED STATES DISC PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR LIST OF AMERICAN COMPANIES MAKING USE THEREOF

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce some questions arising out of the statement he made yesterday that approximately 1,500 United States companies have registered under DISC. During the statement he mentioned only three, namely, Ford, General Motors and Chrysler, whose names had already appeared in the press. Would he inform the House whether he has information about the names of other U.S. firms which have registered under DISC, that is, of the 1,500 he mentioned yesterday and, if so, would he undertake to table a list of the names of such firms?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, we have other names of United States companies that are establishing DISC companies at this time. We get this information sometimes through Canadian subsidiaries of these U.S. companies. As I reported already to the House, we are trying to devise a system by which we would ask for identification of these companies when they export goods to Canada. I will look into the suggestion made by the hon. member as to the publication of the information we have.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, would the minister inform the House what it is that he has to look into? If he has names, as he has said he has, would he tell the House why he

could not directly undertake to give that information to members of parliament and to the people of Canada?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, to be frank, the United States government does not appear to be very keen to publish the names of these companies.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Why?

Mr. Pepin: I prefaced my answer by saying, to be absolutely frank on the subject—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Why are you so considerate of them?

Mr. Pepin: Second, Mr. Speaker, the information that we get is only hearsay some of the time. As I indicated yesterday, in analysing the situation with respect to U.S. automobile companies, there is a substantial margin of nuances in the different cases. You have companies, as I indicated yesterday, that have formed DISC's and are using them. Others have formed DISC's but do not know exactly what they are going to do, and there are others that have not applied at all. I would be afraid of providing inadequate information.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to do a responsible job. If hon. members on the other side would like to be irresponsible, that is their choice.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the minister that it is not responsible to keep parliament and the people of Canada in the dark.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: That is cowardice rather than responsibility.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will appreciate that he was recognized for the purpose of asking a question.

Mr. Lewis: In view of the fact that this development in the DISC program holds out a very serious threat to the jobs of Canadian workers and to production in many areas in this country—electrical, petrochemical and others—what steps is the government taking now to obtain the necessary information both from Canadian companies that are subsidiaries of U.S. companies and from the United States department itself? Surely Canada is entitled to know who is going to cut its throat.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member's question has developed into an argument, but perhaps we might allow the minister to reply to that part of the hon. member's statement which was a question.

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, when I hear my friends of the NDP moralizing, I always think of that man in the Bible who said "I thank God that I am not like other men".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.