

Mr. Speaker: I will recognize the Hon. Member for Trinity for the last question.

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CANADA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

PAYMENT MADE TO ALBERTA GOVERNMENT TO HELP TRUST COMPANIES

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance and is with regard to the \$275 million payment from the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation to the Alberta Government to finance that province's bail-out of two ailing trust companies. Since the Corporation has a deficit of over \$1 billion and has no mandate to give grants to provincial Governments, why did the Minister approve the payment?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to approve the payment because it was the best solution for the CDIC to minimize its exposure and to minimize what it would have to pay out, as well as solving the problem of those financial institutions in Alberta. There is room for that payment. However, CDIC will have to have its funds replenished very soon if it is going to continue to make payments of this sort.

USE OF TAXPAYERS' MONEY

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, I am questioning the Government's apparent manoeuvring to use taxpayers' money for a \$275 million gift of a bail-out without consulting Parliament. Will the Minister not agree that it looks furtive and that there should be more openness and accountability for an unusual arrangement of this kind?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, this is not a gift and it is quite wrong to call it a gift. The CDIC received all the indemnities it wanted. The CDIC proceeded in this instance, as it always has, by making its understanding public, and it will continue to do so.

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PRIVILEGE

INTERVIEW GIVEN TO PRESS BY MR. DE COTRET

Mr. Speaker: I advise all Hon. Members that there was a question of privilege raised yesterday. It was agreed that it would be continued today when the Minister was here.

[Translation]

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, at the end of Oral Question Period yesterday, the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) informed the House that he had given the Chair written notice of his reasons

Question of Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez

for raising a question of privilege about an interview I gave to the press as reported in *The Globe and Mail* last week.

Mr. Speaker, you suggested adjourning the matter and I want to thank you for doing so.

[English]

As a first point, Mr. Speaker, I noticed that in the intervention of my hon. colleague in this House he stated that I had been quoted as having said, or had apparently said, or words to that effect, certain things. While he may question the accuracy of the media in this respect, I can say that the media truly reflected what I said on this very important issue. The media report was indeed accurate.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I shall, if I may, expand somewhat on the statement I made to the press and thus comment on the question of privilege which, in my opinion, is not well founded.

[English]

Essentially, Mr. Speaker, I took the opportunity of a general press conference to make what I thought was a very important point, that we have in this country a competent, able, and hard-working Public Service which is doing an excellent job for the country. I stand by those statements. I would like to have been able to convey that message personally to the Public Service critics in the opposition Parties.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) claims that I am imputing motives or comments to members of the Committee. I would like to repeat what the Hon. Member said as reported at page 3967 of *Hansard*, and I quote:

[English]

He is suggesting that the members of the committee thought that Mr. Lussier was a liar and that is why the committee was putting him under oath to give testimony.

[Translation]

Without going over the full proceedings of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration of last January 28, Mr. Speaker, I think that a reading of the report on that meeting makes it quite clear that the question of swearing in the witness stemmed from the obvious concern of certain committee members who wanted to be sure they would get correct answers to their questions. I do not question the authority of the House of Commons or the authority of one of its committees to order witnesses to be examined under oath, as set forth in Beauchesne's Citation 635.

Mr. Speaker, my remarks to the press related first and foremost to the relevancy of such a request by the committee under the circumstances. Let me explain this.

Mr. Speaker, we all agree that in a parliamentary system the Minister is responsible for providing information to Parliament and its committees. Such is the basic principle of ministerial responsibility in a democratic parliamentary