

just as available upon an application, say, under freedom of information, as information is in offices in the National Capital district?

**Hon. Herb Gray (President of Treasury Board):** Madam Speaker, this is the approach we are pursuing in the context of the Act as adopted by Parliament. I think the Hon. Member has raised a very useful point in that regard.

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### INDUSTRY

#### MAISLIN INDUSTRIES—ABILITY TO MEET FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of—I am sorry I have forgotten his portfolio. Is it International Trade?

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Madam Speaker:** It is Industry, Trade and Commerce.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Thank you. I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. It has to do with Maislin, Madam Speaker. Can the Minister tell us whether he has received any indication as to whether Maislin is in a position to meet its financial commitments or otherwise? If so, what indications has he received?

**Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to the Leader of whatever title he holds.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lumley:** The answer is that I have no indication at this point in time that Maislin will not meet its present financial obligations.

#### SECURITY OF GOVERNMENT LOAN GUARANTEE

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, is the Minister at all concerned about the \$34 million commitment in taxpayers' dollars this Government has given to Maislin, and will he take an interest and make inquiries as to the financial position of that company? Will he take an interest and see whether or not, on behalf of Canadian taxpayers, that \$34 million is in any jeopardy of being lost to them?

● (1500)

**Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Madam Speaker, we take a very serious interest, not only from the taxpayers' standpoint with respect to the Government guarantee of \$34 million but also the 2,000 jobs that are very important to this country. There is an interdepartmental

#### Privilege—Mr. Mackasey

committee which is chaired by one of my officials who is in communication with Maislin on a monthly basis.

Obviously, like a lot of other trucking companies, they are experiencing financial difficulty. That is why they had to come to the Government of Canada in the first place. I share with the Hon. Member our concern over the survival of that company.

#### REQUEST THAT MINISTER MAKE INQUIRIES

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, will the Minister take a sufficient interest to make inquiries of his official and to inform the House tomorrow what the indications are of the financial stability of Maislin, and thus perhaps give some reassurance to Canadians that their \$34 million is safe?

**Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Madam Speaker, as I indicated in answer to a question from one of his colleagues last Thursday or Friday, I believe, the new president of the company is preparing a five-year forecast because we did not find the previous five-year forecast acceptable. I believe that will be available some time around the first of April.

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### PRIVILEGE

#### MR. MACKASEY—PAID LOBBYIST ALLEGATION IN MONTREAL "GAZETTE"—RULING BY MADAM SPEAKER

**Madam Speaker:** I wish to rule today on the question of privilege which was raised in the House by the Hon. Member for Lincoln (Mr. Mackasey) in which he alleged that false and libellous accusations against him had been published in the *Montreal Gazette*.

This case, which is certainly a serious one, poses a number of difficulties for the Chair. The first difficulty that I have is, of course, the time at which it was raised but, for obvious reasons, I will not take that into consideration at the present time.

A reflection upon the reputation of an Hon. Member is a matter of great concern to all Members of the House. It places the entire institution under a cloud, as it suggests that among the Members of the House there are some who are unworthy to sit there. An allegation of criminal or other dishonourable conduct inevitably affects the Member's ability to function effectively while the matter remains unresolved.

In this connection I would quote from a memorandum submitted by a parliamentary expert, Mr. L. A. Abraham, to the British Select Committee on Parliamentary Privilege which reported in December, 1967, the following:

The object of an action for defamation is to obtain for the plaintiff compensation for the loss of that esteem in which other people previously held him. But when the House proceeds against a person who has published a libel on a