

Privilege—Mr. Matte

Governor General, will proceed to the Senate chamber today, the fifteenth day of December, at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Edmond Joly de Lotbinière
Administrative Secretary
to the Governor General

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. MATTE—RCMP—REPLY OF SOLICITOR GENERAL RE DEATH OF MICHEL VIGER

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a question of privilege. Since the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) when answering my question took that opportunity to insinuate falsehoods, I now take the liberty of making the necessary rectifications. The Solicitor General's insinuations concerning my recent statements regarding the serious presumptions I entertain about the circumstances surrounding the death of Michel Viger are of an hostile character and show a reaction of panic on his part. The reasons which force me to search for truth and justice are not based on the sensationalism of rumours which would be more or less groundless; they are rather the result of a profound indignation stemming from the following facts. First, the authorized criminal action of a special committee of the RCMP which, instead of preventing subversive activities, actually sought to provoke them. Some people tell me to prove it. All they have to do is simply refer to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts which was in session here on Parliament Hill in 1969 and they will know what I mean. Second, the explicit disclosure of some of these facts by the authorities themselves, which cannot be denied, with the intention of concealing more compromising circumstances. Third, the fact that a whole nation has been profoundly traumatized in 1970, following tragic events whose origin is foreign to the legitimate aspirations of Quebecers and which were provoked by these famous special committees whose methods are more like those of the Gestapo. These are reasonable and sufficient grounds indeed. The minister thinks that he can allow himself to cast doubt on my good faith because, in his opinion, he alone and his government hold the key to that enigma by the fact they control this famous special committee which, as I just mentioned, looks like some modern version of the Gestapo.

I am not therefore expecting the minister or the government to simply confess the ignominious actions of these agents provocateurs of a few years ago, we saw how a president of the United States denied vigorously some facts which were actually quite true. I intend to safeguard my reputation. My only concern is to rid our institutions once and for all of hatred and terrorism, and for that purpose it is necessary to go to their roots, namely these agents provocateurs who worked systematically in order to bring about the October crisis of 1970, and for the edification of the minister himself, to know

[Mr. Speaker.]

to what extent, when I am asking him what were the circumstances, his department is really aware of the circumstances surrounding the alleged accident in which Michel Viger died.

Before answering my questions, the minister should have the decency to investigate. He would discover things he may not be aware of but which can very well have happened. Because Michel Viger, whom I knew, told me himself in so many words he was a Royal Canadian Mounted Police agent, and on this I would like to conclude my question of privilege.

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this government established last June a commission of inquiry in order precisely that we could have an independent body inquiring on certain allegations made in months past. The hon. member is straying enormously from the debate. He spoke the day before last and it has been reported in newspapers across Canada that he blamed the RCMP for Mr. Viger's death. The *Montreal Gazette* of December 14, 1977 for instance had this headline, and I quote:

MP accuses RCMP of murder.

Mr. Speaker, we have the same thing in the newspaper *Ottawa Today*, *Today Staff*:

[English]

RCMP accused in Viger death.

A Quebec MP said last night he suspects the RCMP was instrumental in the death of the man who shielded Pierre Laporte's murderers in his farmhouse outside Montreal.

René Matte, social credit MP for Champlain, said in a Radio-Canada interview last night that he suspected the RCMP in the death of Michel Viger—

[Translation]

It is not only in the English press. The hon. member was well understood in both the official languages of this country. The newspaper *Le Droit* carries the headline:

Matte claims Michel Viger was murdered by RCMP.

Mr. Speaker, it is, of course, also in the *Journal de Montréal*. What I said to the hon. member in the question period is either he has or does not have information about that death. If he does not, Mr. Speaker, and he made up that rumour, he deserves to be called, as I did in the question period, irresponsible.

An hon. Member: True.

Mr. Fox: If he has information in that respect, Mr. Speaker, he also deserves to be called irresponsible because his duty as a citizen and as a member of parliament, Mr. Speaker, is to make the information he has immediately known to the relevant authorities. If he has information on the causes of Mr. Viger's death, causes which were explained by Mr. Viger's father in interviews with reporters during the day as surely being accidental, well, his duty, Mr. Speaker, is to bring those facts to the attention of the attorney general of the province where the death occurred, a government with which he has excellent relationships for that matter, the attorney general of the Province of Quebec. If he has not done so, Mr. Speaker, he is also irresponsible.