

hon. members, particularly those representing the province of Quebec.

This is related to the vote on capital punishment held in the House last week. According to a press release, the hon. member said that during a reception I gave for all members from Quebec, certain undue pressures were exerted on them, and I quote the statement he is reported to have made:

[English]

He made them believe the government could fall if the bill was defeated. They were also told if they voted for abolition they would have more chance of advancement, possibly being appointed parliamentary assistants and get government trips.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, my first reaction after reading such a statement was to burst out laughing, as did a good many members. I do not think, however, that we should remain silent about it because I feel it affects the privileges of hon. members. It questions not only my own integrity concerning my relations with members but also the reputation of government members who represent the population of Quebec.

I positively and categorically deny that I, or anybody I know, have or has approached Quebec members to influence them about a free vote. I declare that all members from Quebec who were present in the House voted freely according to their own conscience. In these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe should withdraw this assertion from his statement:

[English]

It's silly, but it impressed some.

[Translation]

I believe that his statement is not only silly but scandalous and if the hon. member is a gentleman, he will apologize to hon. members of the House.

[English]

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Outremont was rising on a question of privilege—

[Translation]

An hon. Member: Speak French.

Mr. Wagner: I hear people from the other side say to me again "in French". Did they not listen to the program in which the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) called upon Quebecers to support him in his bilingual program?

An hon. Member: You may speak as much as you want, but at least be clear.

Mr. Wagner: The hon. member could at least say "vous" to me instead of "tu".

[English]

I thought the minister and hon. member for Outremont was rising on a question of privilege to apologize to the majority of Canadians for the betrayal by the cabinet on the question of capital punishment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

Mr. Wagner: However, I notice that he is more worried about his cocktail parties, about the timing of the cocktail party, about how much was drunk, whether or not it influenced some people, whether or not—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

● (1510)

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I think he should be allowed to finish.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You let the minister go on, and he did not have a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I do not propose to stop the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe continuing to make an equal contribution to the question of privilege. However, I insist that he stay within the limits of the question of privilege that has been raised.

Mr. Wagner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will do my best to abide by your ruling. I was suggesting that the minister was preoccupied with his cocktail party. I think it is the responsibility of the Speaker to decide if there is a well-founded question of privilege in this case. I may chide the hon. member for Outremont for relying on a press clipping emanating from the *Globe and Mail* whose correspondent secured the information—

An hon. Member: From you.

Mr. Wagner: No, not from me, but by listening at 8.15 in the morning to a seven-minute program on CKEC, Montreal, and who probably did not grasp all the nuances that were made in the declaration, which declaration followed immediately after the declaration by the hon. member for Outremont which was an attempt to extricate his government from the blunder of the Trudeau-Lang-Sauvé approach to cabinet solidarity.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the Prime Minister is getting so annoyed. That is awful. Perhaps he will cool off for a few minutes and maybe he will get his money's-worth.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wagner: In order that you are able to appreciate the situation, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I did declare on that program that it was shameful and, I think, in very poor taste for the Quebec leader of the Liberal caucus to hold a potent cocktail party a few hours before the vote.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wagner: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the celebrations had nothing to do with the vote, because the vote was on Tuesday night and usually these celebrations are on Wednesday night. Maybe it was designed to strengthen the grasp the Quebec leader has on the Liberal caucus, or maybe it was designed to show that he does rise above the