

*Privilege—Mr. Rodriguez*

**Mr. Benjamin:** They are not going to tell you.

**Mr. Blais:** Surely the hon. gentleman does not—

**Mr. Benjamin:** They lied before to your predecessors.

**Mr. Blais:** I am suggesting to the hon. gentleman that he ought to have a bit more respect in terms of the RCMP than he is manifesting now. I suggest to him that the statement I made to the hon. gentleman, and the replies I have given in this House, were quite categorical. There is no indication that the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) has been the subject of any taping. What Mr. Hart has said in his affidavit is just what he has said in that affidavit, and I understand that matter is now a matter at which the McDonald Commission will be looking. It is seized of the matter and is interested in having Mr. Hart attend before it.

In terms of proceedings in this House, Mr. Speaker, I, as a minister of the Crown, have stated there is no cause for the hon. gentleman to make the allegations he has made.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that I have to support the motion of my hon. colleague, particularly as it has been clear for a few months that we should use all available means to know the truth. We can no longer be satisfied with the answers of the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) which, as it has been proven, can vary from month to month according to the immediate circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, we do not care about how the Solicitor General manages to escape his responsibilities, we want to know the truth because the famous issue of national security has paved the way for so many illegalities that nobody even in this House is safe, since we have no form of guarantee with regard to our real freedom.

The motion of the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) being referred to committee, this could provide the opportunity to shed more light on all these matters more or less relating to security, and especially to this interference with individual freedom. Mr. Speaker, I would personally have many incidents to relate on this matter, and that is why I believe, on behalf of all my constituents, that we have the duty to tell the people of all the means available to some authorities who, under the cover of national security, push their weight around. Not only do they not bring about this security, but on the contrary they are traumatizing the whole population. That is why I wholeheartedly support the motion put by the hon. member.

● (1532)

[*English*]

**Mr. Alkenbrack:** Mr. Speaker, I have another thought on the question of privilege.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Moncton (Mr. Jones).

[Mr. Blais.]

**Mr. Leonard C. Jones (Moncton):** Mr. Speaker, this subject, which should be referred to the committee, is very serious. I know that debate in this House on the subject could continue from now until eternity. It seems to me that this is not a matter such as the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) has indicated will be investigated by a judicial inquiry. We are a body which should not have to look to judicial inquiries to correct our problems. We should be able to wash our linen within our House through a committee of the House.

I think the motion of the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) is a proper motion. It might certainly clear the air on this matter and a lot of other matters if the subject matter of the motion is referred to the committee without too much rehashing in public. I believe it should be done immediately.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I earnestly hope that Your Honour will find that my friend, the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), has a question of privilege, and, if you do, I shall be pleased to second his motion for the reference of this matter to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

It seems to me, sir, that what is at issue is not the activity of the RCMP, not even the question of why the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) said one thing at one time and another thing at another time, in both cases being properly advised by his officials. The issue is whether or not the hon. member for Nickel Belt has had his name brought under a cloud. The issue is whether his capacity to do his job as an MP has been impaired. I suggest that the answer to that is yes either way.

If it is true that he has been the subject of surveillance by somebody working for the RCMP, surely that, by definition, is an interference with the rights and privileges of a member of the House of Commons. On the other hand, even if it turns out that there was no electronic surveillance, in view of the sworn statement by Mr. Hart and in view of the nation-wide publicity given to that, many people in this country, particularly many people in the constituency of Nickel Belt, think that my hon. friend has been made the subject of electronic surveillance. I suggest that that puts him in a very difficult position.

I have listened with interest to the debate on what the RCMP is doing or not doing, and whether we should say things about how the RCMP informed the minister, and all of that, but when it comes down to the question that Your Honour has to decide, it is a very simple one: does a member of the House of Commons have a question of privilege? I feel very strongly that the hon. member for Nickel Belt does have one.

Having said that, may I say that it seems to me the things that must be investigated relate, on the one hand, to the statements made by the Solicitor General and, on the other hand, to the sworn affidavit made by Mr. Warren Hart. The Solicitor General has said on one occasion outside the House that the hon. member for Nickel Belt was the subject of surveillance, accidental or incidental. The Solicitor General has admitted that Mr. Hart was in the employ of the RCMP. The hon. member for Nickel Belt admits that he was in a