

ask two questions of the minister following his question of privilege. I am especially concerned by the fact that this whole question should come to the surface after five years. Is justice in Canada so slow? Must such convoluted procedures be used to establish the innocence or the guilt of someone? Is this Canadian justice? No wonder so many ordinary citizens in our society do not believe in it anymore. They know where justice courts are located but they are often looking for justice. It is not the same thing.

● (1540)

I was surprised last week when I read in a newspaper that the accused who had pleaded guilty were nonetheless discharged by the judge presiding over the court. I do not intend to comment on the decision of that court but, Mr. Speaker, I can ponder over the content of this report which indicates that these individuals who pleaded guilty ended up by being discharged. Something is not clear in this case or at least in my mind. If it is clear, it has to be clarified to me and I will do my best to understand.

My first question to the minister who just made a statement is the following: could he tell the House what happened to all the documents which were seized by the RCMP and their friends at L'Agence de Presse Libre du Québec? What happened to them?

My second question is the following: In view of the very clear statement made by the minister to satisfy both Parliament and the public at large, will the minister tell the House whether he would be prepared to recommend to the cabinet the setting up of an inquiry, given the fact that the RCMP is involved and that this body is placed under federal responsibility?

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, I have no authority to recommend anything to the cabinet. It is up to the Solicitor General or the Minister of Justice to make such recommendations. As for me, as Minister of Supply and Services, I do not feel at all entitled to do it.

If you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, I would just reply very briefly to an allegation made by the leader of the New Democratic Party regarding an article published in the Vancouver press. I remember quite vividly the event. There was then a public sale by the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation and I was also about to announce the introduction of a new coin to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the rule of Her Majesty the Queen. At that time, I did say repeatedly to newsmen that that was the purpose of my visit to Vancouver—Vancouver Island in fact. What happened is that the newsman insisted that we talk about that matter and other issues with respect to the time when I was the Solicitor General. I told him I did not want to make any comments on that subject. As he insisted and was asking if I knew the L'Agence de Presse Libre du Québec, I told him that I did know of the activities of that agency and that in so far as I was concerned, it constituted a threat to the security of the state. This was as far as I went because at that time I had neither the desire nor the necessary preparation to discuss this issue. If today my words

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are interpreted in a different manner, as I do not doubt the good faith of the leader of the New Democratic Party, in those circumstances, I am therefore led to question either the good faith or the accuracy of the recollection of the newsman.

[English]

Mr. Fraser: I wonder if I could put a couple of questions to the minister. As I understand the story from the statement of the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) and from the minister today, the position the minister takes is that when the letter of October 9, 1972 came to his attention, it was not so much in the form of a letter informing or assuming that the RCMP, the provincial police of Quebec and the municipal police were involved, but a letter inquiring about it—I think that is the word the minister used. I see him nodding in agreement. At that stage, when the letter was discussed with officials of the RCMP, can the minister remember, to the best of his ability, whether in anything they did or said the RCMP officials who were with him indicated a denial that the break-in about which the letter inquired took place? Was there any suggestion that the minister can remember from any of the RCMP with whom he discussed that letter of denial or was there any implied denial of the suggestion that there had been a break-in by the RCMP?

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid this is going very far into details. I recall very well what I had in mind. First of all, the provincial attorney general had denied any involvement of the police of Montreal, Quebec or Canada; second, I found it unlikely that the RCMP could have been involved in any illegal activity and, third, police officers had repeated to me that night, at the meeting, that anyhow the Attorney General was responsible for the inquiry conducted by the Montreal police. Let us wait for the results of that inquiry. That is very simply what happened.

[English]

Mr. Fraser: I accept what the minister says. The question which I think is concerning a great many people is why, in the absence of some denial on the part of the RCMP officials, did the minister not, of his own volition ask point blank of the RCMP—despite whatever the minister had heard from the minister of justice or other press reports—the simple question as to whether there was any truth in this allegation. Why was that question not asked?

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, of course, all kinds of scenarios may be imagined after the fact. Some may wonder why I did not call the Quebec Minister of Justice to ask him whether he had told the truth when he said that the police were in no way involved. Of course, I could have called the director of security services and told him that the letter from the APLQ was still an important letter from a respectable organization and asked him whether the contents of that letter were true, and so on. But these are scenarios which are easy to imagine after the fact. The fact remains that considering the circumstances prevailing at that time, I think it was simply showing one's