

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 9, 1962

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE

MR. RACINE—INACCURACY OF ANSWER BY
PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER

Mr. Speaker: On April 5 the hon. member for Beauce raised a question involving the Minister of Public Works, who was not then present, and at my request the matter was deferred until the minister would be present. The hon. member for Beauce raised as a question of privilege the correctness of an answer given by the Minister of Public Works some days earlier in respect of the vendor of a property in Beauceville as a site for a post office, I think. Perhaps the best course would be to have the minister make a statement, if he has had an opportunity of examining *Hansard*; then I may dispose of the matter after hearing him.

Hon. D. J. Walker (Minister of Public Works): A question of privilege was raised by the hon. member for Beauce on April 5 during my absence from the house, concerning the site for a new post office building in the town of Beauceville East, in the province of Quebec. This is my first opportunity of replying, and I should add that I have no objection whatever to this matter or any other matter connected with my department being referred to the public accounts committee.

As early as the fiscal year 1957-58 it was noted that a need was developing for more postal accommodation in Beauceville East. Subsequently, after consultation with the post office officials, a new public project was scheduled tentatively for 1962, and meanwhile a continuing lease was arranged. In 1959 Mr. Paul Giguere, at that time mayor of Beauceville East, requested the government to construct a new federal building to benefit his community. A similar request was received during the same year and the one following from the hon. member for Beauce himself and also from the council of the municipality.

In November, 1960, as a result of its investigations, my department decided to list the project for consideration in the main estimates of 1962-63, and began actively to examine the requirements of the project including the availability and cost of a site.

The initial visit of departmental officials to Beauceville in December, 1960 disclosed only two sites priced at \$20,000 and \$30,000 respectively, and both poorly situated due to the flooding which occurs on the Chaudiere river at that place. Shortly thereafter Mr. Giguere, now ex-mayor, suggested a third possible site described as the Lorenzo Mathieu property and available for sale at \$16,000. Subsequently Mr. Giguere informed the department that he had taken an option on the property in his name for \$16,000 in order to prevent its sale to others and to assure that the government would get this site for a post office. His previous interest as mayor of Beauceville East in acquiring a new post office lent credence to his statement.

After due consideration it was found that this property was the best of the three examined, being the only one free from flooding; and, as it was centrally located adjacent to the bank and the city hall, and the most economically priced, it was clearly the most advantageous purchase available. I should add that it had approval, as to location, of the new mayor of Beauceville East, Mr. Jacques R. Renault.

Accordingly the matter was submitted to the treasury board and the purchase price of \$16,000 for the Mathieu property was approved.

Obviously the hon. member was correct in his statement regarding the name of the vendor given in my answer of March 19, 1962. Some of the records in my department identified the site as the Lorenzo Mathieu property, as a result of which this name was inadvertently used by the department in the preparation of the answer to the hon. member's question and read by me to the house. I therefore request that *Hansard* be corrected at page 1921 for March 19, 1962, by the substitution of the name Paul Giguere for that of Lorenzo Mathieu.

(Translation):

Mr. Jean-Paul Racine (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I accept the correction made by the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Walker).

However, reference to the motion I proposed last Thursday, would show that it read as follows:

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Megantic (Mr. Roberge), that the matter concerning the purchase of a parcel of land for the construction of a public building in Beauceville,