

*Adjournment Debate*

been talk of building at Lac Mégantic for nine years now. On October 10, 1963—I was a member of Parliament at the time—the occupants of the Lac Mégantic post office asked me to intervene with the Post Office Department and the Department of Public Works to ask that repairs be made to that post office.

Here is the letter I received in reply to my question:

The minister has asked me to reply to your letter dated October 3 with regard to the condition of the inside of the Lac Mégantic post office. Your remarks surprise us. Rest assured that our Montreal officers will inspect the building immediately. Unless you insist, we doubt that it will be necessary to consult Mr. Langford, since our Montreal office has an architect as well as an engineer who are capable, to our mind, of taking care of all repairs or alterations in that building.

At that time, I asked that repairs be made; it was found that no repairs were indicated because the building was in perfect condition. Some time later, those inspectors and engineers inspected the building and condemned it. Now, Mr. Speaker, that building is as solid as the Parliament buildings. That building is in perfect condition; it is still in good repair.

On that occasion I had also asked to repair the post office in Coaticook, a city identical to Lac Mégantic. There again was a very good building that has also been condemned, to which they found all kinds of defects. Those buildings were about to crumble down; they were not safe and could not be of any use to the public. So they had to be set aside.

As to the Lac Mégantic building, windows were boarded up and in 1963 they put a big sign on the door saying: A new post office will be built here to provide all public services to this area. Much water has flowed under the bridge since then.

Mr. Speaker, decisions of all kinds were made. First they decided to erect a small one-storey building and that was refused by the municipality on account of the municipal rules prohibiting one-storey buildings in the town. It had to have two storeys. Afterwards, I intervened on many occasions and with the support of the municipal council, I obtained the permission to erect a federal building for all federal services.

We have at home the following services: customs, post-office, Unemployment Insurance Commission offices, manpower services and other agencies of the federal government.

All those services could be in that building but it was closed; offices were sub-leased elsewhere and since then we pay rent. During the last eight years, Mr. Speaker, we paid almost \$200,000 for rent elsewhere and buildings that were in very good condition were closed.

In Coaticook, I enjoyed the full co-operation of the civic authorities and we had the honour of obtaining a brand new federal building which could be used to accommodate all federal services. Nothing has changed in Lac Mégantic. On five occasions, we have been promised some buildings. Plans and specifications have been drawn up, tender have been drafted and each time they were to be called somebody put a spoke in the wheel. The issue has been used for petty politics.

[Mr. Latulippe.]

I have here a letter dated September 1, 1970 and addressed to Mr. Hervé Fecteau, clerk of the municipality of Lac Mégantic and I quote:

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 8, 1970 and addressed to the minister, along with copy of the resolution passed on June 1 at a meeting of the municipal council of Lac Mégantic and a picture of the former post office to be demolished.

I appreciate your interest in the improvement of postal premises at the above-mentioned location and wish to advise you that we are trying to set up some new premises as requested. Local officials have experienced some difficulty in this connection due to the local building code which specifies that buildings situated in the district where the construction of the new post office is contemplated must have at least two stories. Department officials are considering the possibility of building a property for renting purposes and it is anticipated that tendering will take place about September 1, 1970. Mr. Laing will write to you as soon as we have further information.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has now expired.

I recognize the Postmaster General (Mr. Ouellet).

**Hon. André Ouellet (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I know some hon. members who, hardly a year after being elected to this House, have obtained post offices. So, I would like to suggest to the hon. member that he should not be too proud of his performance, since he has been waiting for his post office for ten years.

I would also like to remind the hon. member that the things he said to a newsman of the paper *La Tribune* last weekend and those he stated tonight in this House clearly show that he is off the track concerning the construction of a federal building in Lac Mégantic.

**Mr. Latulippe:** You are the one who is off the track.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I went recently to Lac Mégantic and I noted the urgency of building a new post office there. Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the Department of Public Works has been authorized since April to call for tenders for the construction of a new federal building on the very site of the former Lac Mégantic post office. The construction plans provide, in a first phase, for post office facilities and, in a second phase, for other rooms on the second floor designed for other federal departments.

Before that call for tenders, the Unemployment Insurance Commission had asked the Department of Public Works to provide it rapidly with facilities at Lac Mégantic.

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Now, the Department of Public Works is considering, as it ought to do, the possibility of revising its plans for the immediate construction of a two storey-federal building.

This is the situation, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure the House that my colleague, the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Dubé), will announce his decision in due time. I am convinced that such a decision will please both the municipal council and the whole population of Lac Mégantic, and I hope that the hon. member will approve this decision.