

militia, to have adopted it as a site for our barracks at Montreal.

I may say that in addition to my own judgment I consulted the best military authorities we had. I consulted General Sir Percy Lake, who was here at that time, and he entirely approved, and I think I may say that it is the unanimous opinion of the militia council, and of the best authorities here and in Montreal that we should have pursued the course we have.

Later, my hon. friend the present Minister of Militia and Defence addressed the House, page 3151, in the following words:

Last year two or three officers wrote me concerning this proposed site.

That is, the Longueuil site.

Their objections were first the inaccessibility of the site, and second, the condition of the ground. It was pointed out by these gentlemen that part of the ground is very low and that part of it is a sticky clay, so that on dewy mornings, unless it were well drained, it would be a rather unfavourable ground on which to drill. I have made inquiries from some of the gentlemen representing that part of the country and they tell me that that condition extends only a short distance along the river bank and that the ground is higher and more sandy further back.

So that we have here the opinions of both the ex-Minister of Militia and Defence, Sir Frederick Borden, and my hon. friend the present incumbent.

Mr. SAM HUGHES: Would the hon. gentleman point out the information the present minister gave in regard to that matter?

Mr. LEMIEUX: I have just read it.

Mr. HUGHES: I am afraid not.

Mr. LEMIEUX: My hon. friend, in his remarks before the House—

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. gentleman should be fair enough to say that what I said was that the member representing that particular county (Mr. Geoffrion), told me that.

Mr. LEMIEUX: I have quoted the remarks made by my hon. friend, but for the information of the House I shall read them again:

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[Mr. Lemieux.]

river bank and that the ground is higher and more sandy further back.

So my hon. friend had all the information he needed upon which to base his opinion and his judgment. We have, therefore, the fact that the Government owned that immense block of land, which was near the city of Montreal, on the south shore of the river, and quite accessible by tramways, railways and ferryboats. We have the further fact that the Minister of Militia of the day, Sir Frederick Borden, Sir Percy Lake, inspector-general of the Canadian Militia, and militia council had approved the selection of that site which cost Canada nothing, and had given it as their opinion that the money available should be spent on the buildings proper. We have, on the other hand, a qualified statement of opinion given at that time by my hon. friend the present Minister of Militia and Defence; I hope I represent him fairly in saying that he gave at least a qualified opinion on the subject. After that policy had been accepted by Parliament, everyone expected that the construction of the barracks and military school would proceed forthwith. But last summer the people of Montreal and of the country were somewhat startled on learning that this Longueuil site, which cost nothing to Canada or to the Militia Department, had been discarded, and that another site had been secured at a huge figure. On looking over the Auditor General's Report for the year 1913, I find this item:

Montreal barracks site. Purchase money for site in St. Michael de Lachine, Jacques Cartier, 157 arpents, W. T. Rodden and Fair & Cameron, \$180,000.

What is the history of this purchase? I am informed that on June 24, 1912, William Thomas Rodden, of Montreal, sold to His Majesty the King, represented by my hon. friend the Minister of Militia and Defence, part of lots 8 and 9, parish of Lachine with a combined area of about 150 acres, for the sum of \$180,000 cash. The deeds apparently were recorded at the registry office on the 26th of June, 1912, the official number being 217,809. Most of the property is in the rear of the Forest and Stream Club fronting on the public road and extending in the rear to the tracks of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific railways. This was a distance of 1,133 yards. The sale price figured out at exactly \$1,200 an acre for vacant land, miles from the Montreal post office. The deed was signed apparently, as I am informed, by