

Question of Privilege

parish, by the parish priest of St. Luc parish, the Rev. Donatien Donais and his churchwardens, Messrs. Gerard Depelteau, Robert Baillargeon and Raoul Lague. Messrs. Hamel, Ouimet and Baillargeon, members of the legislature as well as myself, had also written to Hon. Jean Lesage and Hon. Paul Earl.

In May 1961, Premier Jean Lesage indicated that he looked disapprovingly upon such a project and that he refused to issue a permit for a new race track in the province of Quebec where, according to him, there were already too many. But it is important to mention to the house that in June of the same year Premier Lesage changed his mind and asked Hon. Bernard Pinard, provincial minister of highways, and Hon. Paul Earl, minister of revenue, to look after the matter. Besides, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Premier Lesage will be the first to vouch for the facts I just related.

Moreover, about June 15, 1961, Mr. Ouimet, member of the legislative assembly for St. Jean, informed us that he had decided to continue his representations in favour of the St. Luc project, of which the principal promoter was Dr. Roch Deslauriers, of St. Jean. He told the latter that the Quebec premier had told him to meet with the minister, Mr. Bernard Pinard, who from now on would look after racing matters in the province. Therefore, Mr. Ouimet was granted an interview by the minister of highways on June 21, 1961. He invited to accompany him the member of the legislative assembly for Iberville, Mr. Laurent Hamel, Dr. Deslauriers, the secretary of the united harness association, Mr. Sebastien Brisson, and myself. As agreed, Mr. Bernard Pinard received us all in his office on June 21, 1961, in Quebec city. He confirmed to us that he had been requested by the premier to look after our St. Luc project. He added that he was himself in favour of that fine project. He told Dr. Deslauriers that he would have to meet Hon. Paul Earl to discuss with him the details concerning the financing of the venture.

In the meantime the member of the legislative assembly gave us the assurance that he would continue to exert pressure in Quebec city to hasten the issuance of a permit.

About January 22, 1962, Hon. Paul Earl asked me if he could meet me at my place in St. Jean, with Mr. Deslauriers and also Mr. Ransen and Mr. Maron, Mr. Deslauriers' new partners. So, the four of them came to my home on a Sunday afternoon. The promoters said they had the funds needed to build the race track, that is to say \$4 million.

[Mr. Dupuis.]

Mr. Paul Earl said he was quite satisfied with this meeting and told them he would probably be able to issue the permit within a few days.

But at the end of January 1962, Mr. Earl told us that if Mr. Deslauriers wanted his permit he would have to get new partners. And at the beginning of February he asked him to go and meet Mr. René Hébert, who would arrange a meeting for him with those new partners who were ready to invest half the amount required for a race track. They were people by the name of Veilleux, from Drummondville, which is outside the constituency of St. Jean-Iberville-Napierville. In fact, it had been rumoured for some time that those Drummondville businessmen were trying to obtain a race track permit and that powerful friends were seconding their project.

I was surprised at Mr. Earl's suggestion that Mr. Deslauriers should join that group, because they wanted to build a race track outside my riding. I told Mr. Deslauriers that he would simply have to give up his project if he was asked to take part in some other one outside the constituency of St. Jean-Iberville-Napierville. But he was so anxious to build a race track that he was willing to make any concession to that end.

Mr. Earl told me that in order to obtain his permit Mr. Deslauriers would have to change partners. He explained to me that the provincial government was willing to deliver only one race track permit and that both projects would have to be combined.

I agreed to call on Mr. René Hébert with Mr. Deslauriers. I knew Mr. Hébert very well because he had always been connected with the financing of the provincial Liberal party. We met him at his office on Galt Street, in Verdun. He told us that Mr. Earl had asked him to do everything he could to merge the Veilleux and Deslauriers groups into a single company and to explain to them the procedure they should follow to obtain a race course permit. Messrs. Hébert and Deslauriers signed a mutual agreement and Mr. Hébert suggested to Mr. Deslauriers that they should go to Drummondville the next day so that he could be introduced to Mr. Veilleux. They wanted me to go along with them, but I turned down the invitation and I told them that I already felt that pressure was being brought to bear to have the project switched to Drummondville instead of St. Luc. Mr. Deslauriers asked me to witness the signing of the "mutual agreement" but I refused to