

this House, under Rule 10, said Committee to be composed of Sir Robert Borden, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Messieurs Reid, Pugsley, Stanfield and Pardee, and that that portion of Rule 10 limiting the number of Members of the said Committee be suspended in relation thereto.

Mr. Speaker laid before the House,—The Report of the Joint Librarians of Parliament, which is as follows:—

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT,

OTTAWA, 19th January, 1917.

*To the House of Commons:*

The Joint Librarians have the honour to report to Parliament for the year 1916, as follows:—

The disastrous fire which destroyed the Parliamentary Buildings in February, did not leave the Library unscathed.

The fire originated in the reading room, which contained a large and valuable collection of books, as well as the current newspapers.

When these took fire, the whole collection of books was hopelessly doomed to destruction.

During the night the water thrown upon the burning buildings found its way ultimately into the Library, and the floor was flooded to the depth of a foot, during the two days which followed.

Much damage was done by this flood of water; but, owing to the exertions of some members of the Library staff, who were on duty, the books on the lower shelves were, as far as time allowed, removed and placed on higher shelves out of danger.

The general effect of the fire on the Library was stated in a report to the Prime Minister, read to the House of Commons on 14th February, as follows:—

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT,

OTTAWA, 14th February, 1916.

“SIR,—In response to your request for a report on the condition of the Library and the losses sustained by the fire of Thursday night, 3rd February, we have the honour to report as follows:

Some exaggeration prevails as to the extent of the loss sustained. During the night of the fire, in accordance with instructions from the chief of the fire brigade, a large number of volumes was removed by the Library staff, and by the troops kindly and promptly offered by Colonel Street, of the 77th.

These were stored in various places and the volumes that had to be left partly in the open were protected by the men of the Public Works Department as well as was possible.

Later in the night the removal was countermanded by the chief of the fire brigade. The last load of these books so removed was returned on Thursday, 10th February. There has therefore not been time to re-arrange the books and ascertain the loss in removal and the damage by water.

Our actual total loss by fire is certainly large, but is confined to books in the reading room and gallery above, as follow:—

1. An extensive collection of rare editions of the Bible.
2. A very large collection of English pamphlets.
3. A still larger collection of reviews, magazines and periodicals of various kinds: quarterly, monthly and weekly, both French and English.
4. A valuable collection of ecclesiastical literature and law covering more than a century.