

PROBE INTO THE CAUSE OF OTTAWA FIRE

Statements Differ as to the Point in the Reading Room at Which Blaze Started.

COL. SHERWOOD

Commissioner of Dominion Police Makes Report to Commons On the Fire.

Ottawa Report.—Conflicting evidence as to the exact place of origin of the fire which destroyed the Parliament Buildings one week ago tonight, and expert testimony as to the method by which an incendiary blaze could have been started in the reading room through the use of a chemical solution, sprayed on the papers therein, were furnished at the first day's sitting of the Special Commission of Enquiry.

Some dozen witnesses were examined during the morning and afternoon sittings. They included Col. Henry Smith, Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons; Mr. David Ewart, former chief and present consulting architect of the Public Works Department; Mr. Frank Glass, M.P., who was in the reading room when the fire started; Mr. Charles Stewart, chief doorkeeper of the Commons; the curator and members of the reading-room staff; Dominion Police and pages; Chief Engineer Thomas Wensley; Mr. E. L. Horwood, chief architect of the Public Works Department and Mr. Edgar Stanfield, Mines Branch expert and others.

Mr. W. R. White, K.C., of Pembroke is acting counsel for the commission. During the morning sitting it was brought out in the testimony of the Sergeant-at-Arms that the responsibility for fire protection in the building was divided between himself and the Commissioner of Dominion Police, Col. A. P. Sherwood. From other witnesses it was elicited that while there was no modern sprinkling system and none had ever been considered, there were chemical fire extinguishers and lengths of hose distributed about the buildings so that every spot might be reached in case of fire.

PLACE FIRE STARTED. Evidence as to the place of origin of the fire was taken at both the morning and afternoon sittings and proved to vary. Mr. Frank Glass, who, excepting Mr. W. B. Northrup, was the only M.P. in the reading room about the time the fire started, stated that it originated among the papers at the first double desk, near the Commons end of the room, and this was supported by the evidence of a page boy this afternoon. A Dominion page boy, however, this afternoon testified that it started at the second desk. It was shown that the blaze, when first noticed, had been of very small dimensions, and confined to two paper files. The chemical extinguishers had not refused to work, but in spite of all efforts the fire had spread very rapidly.

Mr. Stanfield, the Mines Department expert, demonstrated to the commission how a fire might be started by sprinkling a chemical on paper. A great deal of smoke and considerable odor was caused in the course of his demonstration.

At the morning sitting Mr. Glass had testified that there was no noticeable odor when the fire started. Mr. Stanfield stated that the difficulty would be to get the smoke out of the reading room.

The interesting development so far is the importance attached by Commissioner Pringle to the information he has received that fires have been set in the United States by the pouring of a chemical over paper. This information was contained in a confession of an Ohio criminal, who was sent to the penitentiary for incendiarism. The fires are said to have been started in Ohio by this process. The chemical remains potent for 20 minutes, giving the firebug plenty of chance to get away, and then bursts into flames. A sample tested by Deputy State Marshal Fleming of Ohio, was found to act as the criminal claimed.

Thomas Smith Moore, the Dominion constable on duty at the door of the reading-room, said his attention was called to the blaze by Mr. Glass, who got a fire extinguisher and operated it. The flames died away where he used the fluid, but spread elsewhere. About five minutes before he was called he saw A. Dewitt Foster, ex-M.P., enter the reading room. He did not notice when he went in.

Constable Miller testified that the smoke was very thick, but he did not detect any smell of chemicals.

Constable Knox said the extinguisher was too feeble for the fire. The water pressure was good. He had seen the fire first under the second desk. Mr. Pringle understood Mr. Glass to say the fire was at the first desk, where Mr. Northrup, M.P., had sat. Counsel White, however, understood Mr. Glass to say the second desk. The stenographic notes of Mr. Glass' evidence said the first desk, and Rene Smith, a page, corroborated this.

Edgar Stanfield, chemist, said chemicals could have started the fire.

COL. SHERWOOD'S REPORT. Ottawa, Feb. 16.—A report by Col. A. P. Sherwood, Commissioner of Dominion Police, upon the fire which destroyed the Parliament buildings was read by the Prime Minister in the Commons to-day. It was dated Feb. 4, and read as follows:

Sgt. Carroll, who was in charge of the policemen in the buildings on

the night of the fire which destroyed the Parliament Buildings, reports that the fire broke out at 8.30 in some papers on a shelf of the second reading desk next to the Commons entrance to the reading room. Constable Moore was the nearest officer at that point, and his attention was called to it by a member of parliament whose name he cannot recall. The fire at the time Constable Moore saw it had apparently just started, and had not reached serious proportions. He immediately got a fire extinguisher from the Senate side, thereby passing the flame. Upon operating the extinguisher, he found it had no restraining effect, because the flames had gained great headway in that brief space of time.

"The sergeant and one or two other men got ready the hose at the door of the chamber of the speaker of the Commons, but the blaze was already coming out from the reading room, so they were compelled to abandon it. Then they got the hose in operation from the west corridor, while other constables with the caretaker of the Senate reading room, had also a line of hose operating from the Senate side. But even there they found the smoke so dense that they were unable to get any results and were forced away from that part of the building by the time the fire brigade had arrived. The police then sent their energies to warding them out of the rooms and to getting them out of the building, as it was evident that the conflagration was going to be serious."

After speaking of the loss of life in the fire and naming the victims, Col. Sherwood concludes: "I have no reason to believe the fire was the result of a malicious act, but would suggest that a board of inquiry be constituted to fully investigate and ascertain all the facts concerning the fire, and, if possible, ascertain the cause."

200 TURKS DIED IN SMYRNA RAID

Recent French Aeroplane Attack Had Deadly Effect.

Two Vessels Were Also Sunk at Their Docks.

Athens Cable.—Two hundred Turkish soldiers are believed to have been killed and scores wounded, three military warehouses were burned and two ships sunk by the French aviators who made a successful attack upon Smyrna on Tuesday.

Details of the raid, which was made by a squadron of seven aeroplanes, are given in advices received from Mitylene to-day. The aeroplanes rose from warships off the coast of Asia Minor and appeared above Smyrna just after sunrise. Five from anti-aircraft guns was immediately opened upon the daring French fliers, and two German aeroplanes rose to meet them. The French aviators routed their aerial opponents in a conflict lasting only a few minutes, and they proceeded with their work of destruction.

Four bombs were dropped upon a group of buildings in which supplies for the Turkish troops were stored. Three of these caught fire and burned rapidly. Two bombs smashed a section of the Ottoman barracks, killing or wounding all the soldiers there. As the French aeroplanes departed they dropped seven bombs upon Turkish shipping in the harbor. Two vessels were sunk at their docks and others were damaged.

DURAZZO GONE?

Vienna Reports That Her Troops Have Taken City.

Vienna, via Berlin and Amsterdam, Cable.—A despatch from Cetinje says it is reported here that Austro-Hungarian troops have reached Durazzo, and are occupying the Albanian city without resistance.

Rome, Feb. 16.—Allied troops are reported to have been landed at Avlona, Albania, sixty miles south of Durazzo, to reinforce the Italian and Serbian forces, which are defending the city.

French soldiers have been landed on Fano Island, fifteen miles northwest of Corfu, and have taken complete possession.

There has been severe fighting north of Durazzo, where both the Serbians and Austro-Hungarians claim to have won a victory. A despatch to the Idea Nazionale from Durazzo states that Prince William of Wied, former King of Albania, has arrived at Scutari to make a triumphal entry into Durazzo, his former capital.

ASQUITH FIRM

In Reply to Protest Over Closing of Galleries.

London, Cable.—Premier Asquith to-day received a cable and a communication which called upon him to urge a reconsideration by the Government of the decision to close the museums and picture galleries. Recently there have been many strong protests against the closing of the institutions.

Mr. Asquith in reply to the appeal of the deputation to-day said there was necessity for every possible economy during the war, which was being fought under unprecedented conditions. He announced that with certain restrictions the National Gallery, the National Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, so far as the popular portions of them were concerned, and the reading room of the British Museum would still be available for public use, but that beyond these concessions he could give no hope that the Government would recede from its decision to close them.

MINE DESTROYS SHACK

Paris, Cable.—The sinking of the fishing smack Duplex at the mouth of the Gironde on Monday as the result of the explosion of a floating mine which had been detected and laid ahead of the ship, was announced in a Havas message from La Rochelle.

The master of the craft and six members of the crew were lost.

SHORT ITEMS OF THE NEWS OF THE DAY

Calgary Soldiers Wreck Two Restaurants Which Were Employing German Waiters.

SWISS LOAN

Nothing in Report of Britain Sending a Special Envoy to Washington.

The Syrian colony of Montreal has given \$2,270 to the Canadian Patriotic Fund.

Old Knox College, Toronto, has been secured for a soldiers' convalescent home.

Berlin Free Public Library is to be opened on Sunday afternoon, trustees taking charge in turn.

Austria was asked by the United States for an explanation of the submarine tanker Petrolite.

Fire losses were exceedingly heavy in Brantford during the past year, amounting to \$209,578.

Former District Fire Chief Gunn, of Toronto, has been restored to his rank and assigned to East Toronto.

The Brantford Municipal Railway Commissioners decided to give ten fares for a quarter to all men in khaki.

The license of the Clarkson Hotel, Barrie, where drink was sold to a soldier in prohibited hours, is to be suspended for six weeks.

French must not be used contrary to law in the Green Valley Separate School, according to a judgment given by Mr. Justice Masten.

The British War Office has sanctioned the raising of two overseas battalions of the London regiment recruiting among colonialists in England. Major (Rev.) Williams, of Hamilton, chief recruiting officer of the Toronto military district, plans to mobilize boys, women and men, over age to take the places of young men going on active service.

An order in Council has been passed renewing the agreement of the Dominion Government with the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan regarding maintenance of the Northwest Mounted Police.

At the end of the second day of the three-day campaign to raise \$100,000 for the Canadian Patriotic Fund, Brantford citizens had contributed over \$88,000.

The Swiss Government announces that the new war loan of 100,000,000 francs, bearing 4½ per cent. interest, has been over-subscribed by 25,000,000 francs.

An official of the British Foreign Office said that as far as he knew there was no truth in the report that a special envoy would be sent to Washington.

It was learned in Quebec, on good authority at the Parliament, that negotiations are going on to employ allies enemies interned in Canada on the improvement of the roads leading to the Valcartier camp.

M. W. Bro. E. A. Evans, of Quebec, was re-elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Quebec, A. F. & A. M., at the forty-sixth annual communication, held in Montreal.

Two big restaurants were completely wrecked on Thursday night by a mob of soldiers, who alleged that the restaurants were hiring German waiters. The police were helpless.

The Town of Renfrew, which last year held second place in the Dominion as regards per capita contribution to the Patriotic Fund, has once more risen to the obligation of the Empire by subscribing \$42,000 during a four days' campaign.

BOB COOK AGAIN.

Dufferin Man, in Trouble Before Breaks From Battalion.

Goderich, Report.—Bob Cook, of the Westminster Battalion, a paroled prisoner from Kingston, who got out on condition that he would enlist, broke away from the battalion this morning under exciting circumstances and is said to be at large. He is the same Bob Cook, who, at Kingston, was the subject of a campaign in which he was being sought by the police. He was afterwards captured in Toronto and sent to a military camp. This morning the battalion went out on the front line on a route march, and when about two miles outside the city were given a three-minute rest. Cook had been straggling behind, and when ordered to get up he refused to get into line with the rest of the men. It is alleged that he pulled an ugly-looking knife on the officer, who was unarmed. As several of the privates approached, Cook, who was without his coat, jumped the fence at the side of the road and had a good start before the chase was started after him. Several bodies of troops have been sent after him, but he is still at large. Chief Randall has notified all the surrounding points, especially Goderich, Acton and Milton.

LABOR MAN ENLISTS. Berlin, Ont. Report.—David Hughes, vice-president of the Trades Union Council, which aroused considerable stir recently owing to passing a resolution condemning the recruiting campaign of the 11th Battalion, enlisted this morning. It is understood that the differences in the organization have been amicably settled and that perfect harmony prevails. Hughes is well-known in local labor circles.

HOLZER GONE FOR GOOD.

Sarnia, Report.—The American immigration officers at Port Huron conducted an investigation this afternoon into the case of Rev. Armin Holzer, the Austrian pastor, of Sarnia, who made a getaway on Tuesday night following an investigation of his war sympathies. Holzer has been given permission to enter the United States. It is declared by pressmen Mr. Holzer declared he would not return to Canada.

It's all right to look on the bright side, but perhaps the man who does seldom gets below the surface of things.

NOTED MILLER

Well Known Canadian Killed in Auto Accident at Los Angeles.

Goderich Report.—S. A. McGaw, until recently general manager of the Western Canada Flour Mills, died last night in Los Angeles, as a result of an automobile accident. Mr. McGaw had a continental reputation as an expert of flour milling and trade conditions, having been connected with this industry during his business career of some fifty years. From 1889 to 1896 he was western manager of the Lake of the Woods Milling Company. He returned to Goderich and formed the Lake Huron & Manitoba Milling Company, to take over the local Ogilvie mill plant. He became associated with Andrew Kelly, of Brandon, and with other interests formed the Western Canada Flour Mills, with head office in Toronto.

17 SUBMARINES IN SHORT TIME

Returned Canadian Surgeon Tells of Britain's New Scheme.

Glass Bottomed Boats Used in the Search.

New York Report.—Dr. M. S. Ingarrived to-day on the Anchor Line Cameronia, from Liverpool, declared that he had knowledge of the capture in British nets of seventeen German submarines and told how the crew of one of them had been found shot to death after it had been towed ashore. Dr. Ingalls said he had been allowed to descend into this submarine and had seen the bodies.

"To save them from death by suffocation," he said, "the commander had shot all his men and then himself, apparently."

Dr. Ingalls added that the British are now making use of glass bottom boats with more or less success in scouting for submarines, in conjunction with a hydroplane fleet. The glass used, he said, gives a clear view of the water to a depth of fifty or sixty feet.

240,000 TROOPS RAISED SO FAR

Canada's Forces Are Increasing Rapidly at Present.

Average Increase 1,000 a Day During January.

Ottawa Report.—Recruiting figures for January show an average of practically a thousand men per day for the full month. Commanding officers of each division say that the men are enlisting now at a most satisfactory rate. The continued keeping up of the flow of new men to the colors is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that up to the end of last year Canada had already enlisted about 210,000 men. The total number recruited to date, including officers, is now over the 240,000 mark. To the total number of 1st Military District (London) has contributed a little over 20,000 men, the 2nd District (Toronto) about 54,000 men, the 3rd District (Kingston) a little over 25,000 men, the 4th District (Montreal) about 23,500, the 5th District (Quebec), about 5,500, the 6th District (Maritime Provinces) nearly 23,000, the 10th Military District (Manitoba and Saskatchewan) about 46,500, the 11th District (Alberta), about 23,000, and the 13th Military District (British Columbia and the Yukon), nearly 23,000.

During January the Toronto District recruited over 8,000 men, the Maritime province about 2,000, western Ontario about 4,000, eastern Ontario about 3,000, Quebec about 2,000, Maritime Provinces about 2,000, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, over 5,000, Alberta 2,000, and British Columbia nearly 2,000.

ALLY CREDIT.

Anglo-French Arrangement Made, Says M. Ribot.

Paris, Cable.—Minister of Finance Ribot told his colleagues in the Cabinet Council to-day that as a result of his visit to London with the Governor of the Bank of France, from which they returned last night, the Bank of England would lend assistance to the Bank of France to facilitate commercial credit in England, and that arrangements had been made between the two Governments for payment of purchase made by the French Government in the United States and Great Britain.

M. Ribot said that the London Stock Exchange would admit securities belonging to French soldiers to be dealt in on condition that the intermediaries should be the Bank of France and the Bank of England and that the proceeds of the sales should be employed in paying for purchases in England.

A man always wears a bigger hat just about the time he graduates from college than at any other time in his life.

BOMBED TRAINS AND SCHOOLS

Recent German Air Raiders Demonstrated Kultur

In Their War On English Women and Children.

London Cable.—A British official statement was issued to-night on the Kent coast by German seaplanes on Wednesday as follows:

"The first raid appears to have selected for its target a tramway car full of women and children and the first bomb fell on the road close behind the car and exploded without damage. The driver pulled up immediately and the passengers alighted. There was no panic, although the raider could be plainly seen circling round at a great height, and three more bombs were dropped in an adjoining field.

"The second raider made an attack on a large girls' school. One bomb fell through the roof and exploded in the upper story, doing some material damage. Portions of the ceiling fell into the room below, where a class of small children was being held. One little girl was slightly cut on the foot, and a maid was slightly injured.

"Three other bombs fell in the school grounds, where two exploded without damage. The third failed to explode. Two other bombs were dropped on outlying parts of the town, causing slight material damage. A woman received some cuts on the cheek.

"Within a few minutes of sighting the hostile aircraft, naval and military aeroplanes went in pursuit, but were unable to overtake them, owing to the precipitate nature of their flight."

CALGARY MOBS ON A RAMPAGE

Cleaned Out Two Restaurants—Police Were Helpless.

Claimed Germans Ousted Veterans as Waiters.

Calgary Report.—A mob of several hundred soldiers completely wrecked the White Lunch restaurant, on Eighth avenue east, to-night, following up the work of destruction by wrecking the premises of the same concern on Ninth avenue.

A rumor that the manager had dismissed returned soldiers who had been hired as waiters, and had replaced them with Germans, was responsible for the attack.

P. H. Naegel, the manager, to-night denied that he had dismissed any returned soldiers, or that he had hired any Germans, but said that he had occasion to dismiss a man who had at one time been a soldier, but was not now with the overseas forces.

He declared that the affair was the result of conspiracy. Soon after 9 o'clock about five hundred soldiers, from four battalions stationed here, marched in a body down Ninth Avenue to the White Lunch.

Chief of Police Cuddy, half a dozen constables and plain clothes men hurried to the scene. All customers were sent out and the doors locked. When the soldiers arrived the chief asked them to disperse, and not to behave in an unlawful manner. He was disregarded and as a preliminary a shower of missiles went crashing through the big plate glass windows. A woman cashier, trying to save some plants, was slightly hurt, and Police Constable Fraser so badly cut by flying glass that he had to go to the hospital.

The policemen were swept aside like chips in a gale, and for an hour the mob did its will with the place. The crowd was increased to two thousand, and the officers were helpless. The furniture, fixtures and the cooking apparatus were smashed and fragments, marble counters and stoves, looked as though artillery shells had exploded. A cash register was ripped open and looted. Coffee urns and gas stoves were torn from their places. Electric fixtures were pulled down. The street outside was littered with wreckage. The safe was thrown downstairs into the basement, breaking the stairs.

MacKinnon's Dancing Academy on the second floor was not spared. Civilians were mostly in evidence here, as, it is said, it was not the intention of the soldiers to attack the academy. The windows were smashed and the furniture demolished and thrown out of the windows. British flags displayed on the walls were torn down and destroyed. One of the employees put another flag at a window, but that was torn down and thrown into the street.

A second division of the mob visited the other restaurant owned by the White Lunch Company on Ninth ave., and treated it in a similar manner. The cashier and waiters fled for safety, and in a twinkling the interior of the place looked like a building "somewhere in Ypres."

Street car traffic was held up for a long time. It was two hours before the mob wearied of its work and the police gained control of the situation. No arrests have been made. General Cruikshanks, commanding military district 13, says that an investigation will be held.

The man who talks about his mother's cooking forgets how his father used to talk about his mother's.

NO LET-UP TO THE STRUGGLE IN THE WEST

Desperate Fighting Around Vimy and South of the Somme is Continued.

FRENCH GAINS

In Latter Place Allies Took and Kept a Footing in German First Line.

London Cable.—The fighting in the Vimy sector north of Arras against which the Germans have been launching violent attacks for some days continues with little decrease in intensity. The Germans captured a section of French communicating trenches west of La Folle yesterday, but were dislodged by a counter-attack. At sunown last night the Germans again attacked, this time directing their assault against the Neuville-La Londe road. They were repulsed on the greater part of the front attack, but recovered a mine crater when they had previously lost.

Hand grenade fighting continued to-day in the same group of trenches west of La Folle, the French passing their counter-attacks with success and making some progress. The Germans made two assaults west of Hill 140 (northwest of Vimy), but failed to gain. On the Neuville-St. Vaast-Tuesmes road the Germans exploded a mine, but the French anticipated them and occupied the crater. Second only in interest to the operations in Arras is the combat south of the Somme. Here the French gained a foothold in the first line of German trenches to the north of Brequignourt and repulsed a German attempt to drive them out.

Two large shells were thrown in the direction of Belfort to-day by the German long-range gun or guns which have been bombarding the French fortresses for the past few days. The location of the battery doing the firing was reported to the French yesterday and to-day, immediately after the two German shells were fired, the French long-range guns took up the bombardment of the German emplacement.

The British report chronicles a successful bombing raid by eighteen aeroplanes on enemy huts at Torkland, several huts being damaged.

BRITISH REPORT. London, Feb. 16.—The British official communication issued this evening says:

"Eighteen aeroplanes carried out a successful bombing raid yesterday on enemy huts at Torkland. Several huts were damaged and a steam railway was hit. All the machines returned safely. "Some skirmishes between our troops took place last night west of Kemmel. Last night and to-day the British artillery has been active against the enemy. Early this morning the enemy sprang a mine northeast of Ghenvich. No damage was done and we suffered no casualties.

"There was mutual shelling to-day south of the Bois Grenier. Hostile artillery shelled Poperinghe and Everdinghe to-day. Our artillery engaged an enemy battery west of St. Julien."

FRENCH REPORT. Paris, Feb. 16.—The following official communication was issued by the War Office to-night:

"In Arras in the course of the day we continued to make progress by means of grenades in the underground passages to the west of La Folle. Two German attacks directed against our positions to the west of Hill 140 were completely repulsed.

"To the north of the road from Neuville to Thelus the Germans exploded a mine, the crater of which we occupied.

"To the south of the Somme a detachment of enemy infantry, which attempted to debouch, was driven back to the trenches by our curtain of fire.

"In the region of Beuvraignes our artillery destroyed a blockhouse and bombarded the emplacements of the enemy.

"In Champagne a destructive fire on the German works in the direction of the Butte du Mesnil gave excellent results.

"In the Woëvre we carried out in the forest of Montmarais, on a salient of the enemy line, a violent bombardment, which caused the explosion of munition depots.

"The Germans to-day fired two more shells of heavy calibre in the direction of Belfort. Our artillery immediately took under its fire the emplacement of the enemy battery, which was marked yesterday. At the same time we shelled the military establishments at Dornach, southwest of Nidkhausen."

AN AUSTRIAN IN TROUBLE. Kingston, Report.—The police to-day took into custody Augustus P. A. A., about 25 years of age and an Austrian, who with his wife, has been living for some time on the Italian road, near Montreal Street. He is alleged to have written a letter to a friend stating that there were many "rebels" in Kingston, and that an effort would be made to get together.

THE FIEDLER ARRANGED. Halifax, N. S. Report.—Preliminary investigation into the charge of murdering Sgt. Fiedler, of the 6th Halifax Rifles, was opened here this morning. Several witnesses testified that Fiedler was subject to fits of melancholia, and that on the day of the murder he was in a highly nervous state of mind.

Luxury is said to be the lure of the movies, and it does indeed cheer one up to see Richelieu grasp the telephone for a quiet little talk with Anne of Austria. Washington Post.