

eighteen inches on centres, filled in solid with lime mortar concrete, the soffits of the beams exposed.

That the walls have suffered so little damage from the fire, is due to the nature of this construction, which might be termed "semi-fire-proof." The floors have not burned through; they have remained in position, and very materially stiffened the building and retarded the fire. But it will be necessary to take out the floors, remove the iron beams and replace with steel beams and fireproof material.

The walls of the main tower are backed up solid with limestone rubble, exposed on the internal face. The fire has done considerable damage to this limestone backing and to the Ohio sandstone around the window openings. It will be necessary to take down the spandrel walls between the four corner piers to the level of the sill of the large windows and rebuild.

The area in the heart of the building formerly occupied by the Commons Chamber and the Senate Chamber, from the north wall of the main corridor, "with the exception of the basement and foundation walls," is a total loss.

The building as it stands to-day represents an asset in labour and material in position, of fully \$2,000,000, that can be re-used.

I am going to read that again, because it seems to have been completely lost sight of by this Parliament:

"The building as it stands to-day represents an asset in labour and material in position, of fully \$2,000,000 that can be re-used."

The external walls require but few repairs, and when these are made all evidence of fire will be obliterated.

If more accommodation is required in the Commons Chamber and the Senate Chamber, these rooms could be placed on the east and west sides of the main building carried out in the same style of architecture, and the space they formerly occupied could be utilized in providing increased office accommodation and stack room for the library.

The Library building is a most dangerous fire hazard. The floor, shelving, and roof should be replaced with fireproof material.

Respectfully submitted,

(Sgd.) John A. Pearson.
(Sgd.) J. O. Marchand.

There you have, on the authority of these two gentlemen who state in the opening paragraph of their report—

We have made a careful examination of the Main Building that was recently destroyed by fire.

—a statement further on in these words:

The building as it stands to-day represents an asset in labour and material in position, of fully \$2,000,000, that can be re-used.

Prior to that paragraph they point out those portions of the building which are practically undamaged by fire, and which at that time they proposed to rebuild, and thus restore the old building. As I have

mentioned to the committee, the transaction that had already been entered into at the date of this report, February 17, 1916, with P. Lyall & Sons, namely, an arrangement to remove the debris on a basis of cost plus 10 per cent, gave point to the rumours that were current regarding favouritism that was to be shown this firm, and I made it my duty again to warn the Minister of Public Works of the danger of continuing these relations with this or any other firm. I also took occasion to inform the then leader of the Opposition and some of my political associates of what I believed to be very objectionable features in connection with the proposed procedure. I went further and repeated not only to the then Minister of Public Works, but also to the then leader of the Opposition and to some of my political associates as well, my objections to taking the work out of the hands of the Department of Public Works and to the appointment of a joint committee of Parliament. Shortly afterwards it was my misfortune to be forced to go away on account of illness, and altogether I was absent from Ottawa about two months while Parliament was in session. On my return to the city, I found that a joint committee of Parliament had been appointed, that among others I had been named as a member of that committee, and further, that a contract had been given, without tender, to the firm of P. Lyall & Sons to reconstruct the damaged building on the basis of cost plus 8 per cent for the first \$4,000,000, and 7 per cent on an additional million up to \$5,000,000. In that connection, and at this stage of my remarks, I want to observe that at that very time this same firm of P. Lyall & Sons was carrying out a contract with this Government in Toronto in connection with the new Union terminal station there, and that that contract was also on a cost-plus basis, but they were doing that work for cost plus 3 per cent, while here in Ottawa they were given this contract, without advertisement, without tender, without any competition, on the basis of cost plus 8 per cent for the first \$4,000,000, and cost plus 7 per cent for an additional million up to \$5,000,000. In connection with this method of awarding contracts, may I point out that it is just as possible to secure competition on a cost-plus basis, as it is to put work up to competition on the ordinary basis at unit prices. That has been done, I think, not only by the Department of Public Works, but I am quite