

MR. B. LAW M. P. LOST IN FIRE

LEFT COMMONS CHAMBER TO TELEPHONE IN BASEMENT AND WAS TRAPPED

Mr. E. W. Nesbitt From Woodstock Had Thrilling Escape Barely Missing Death---Policeman Who Rescued Him Was Lost---Deputy Clerk of House Also Missing---To-day Only Shell of the Great Structure Remains But it Can be Largely Repaired.

THRILLING STORIES OF ESCAPE FROM DEATH BY FIRE AT OTTAWA

Mr. B. B. Law M. P. and Mr. Laplante, Assistant Clerk Among Those Missing, and are Likely Dead; Firemen Stuck to Their Posts.

Ottawa, Feb. 5.—With firemen still playing on the empty shell of the Parliament Buildings, with a toll of seven dead and half a score injured, and with Parliament meeting for the transaction of "business as usual" in the improvised Chamber of the Victoria Memorial Museum, the capital yesterday realized something of the great national tragedy of Thursday night.

The walls of the building still stand, to outward view, almost the same as they have stood since Confederation, save for the fallen ornate crown of the main tower, and a few shattered and jagged peaks of some of the smaller towers. Inside, however, there is nothing but a mass of fire-swept ruins, oneath which still lie the bodies of five of the victims. Last night soldiers and firemen were digging among debris twelve feet deep seeking to uncover the charred remains of those who lost their lives while bravely striving to stay the progress of the flames.

BRIGHT SIDES TO PICTURE
It will be days before the full story can be told. Meanwhile, however, the main outlines of the capital's biggest story are becoming fairly clearly defined amid the maze of rumors and sensational conjectures which sprang from the suddenness and confusion of the catastrophe. There are a few bright sides to the picture. The beautiful architectural gem of the Library Building, with its irreplaceable treasure of books and public documents has been saved. The historic monument, one of the finest bits of architecture of Canada, and of the continent, still stands, in outward semblance, repairable with the expenditure of a million dollars. The loss of life, considering the suddenness of the fire's attack, which swept through the whole building from corridor to corridor within five or ten minutes from the time the fire was first discovered, would assuredly have been greater had the Chamber of the Commons and the galleries been filled. As it was, there was scarcely a quorum in the House and

in the galleries only a couple of dozen.

REMARKABLE ESCAPES
The escapes, as told in the calm light of day, were many and sensational. The marvel of it is that the toll of death was but seven, including only one member of the House, Mr. Law of Yarmouth, N.S., and the Assistant Clerk of the House, Mr. J. B. Laplante. The news that Mr. Law had been caught in the death trap became known to the members only yesterday morning, when it was found that he had not returned to his room at the Alexandria Hotel, and that no one had seen him after the fire.

MR. LAW'S BADINAGE
Shortly before the alarm of the fire startled the members of the Commons, Mr. Law had told Dr. Chisholm of Inverness that he was going up to his room in the Nova Scotia headquarters on the top floor to telephone about a dinner engagement the following night. He told Dr. Chisholm, who was the next speaker on the fisheries debate then in progress, to "speak good and loud so that I may hear you upstairs."

When the members made their hurried rush from the Chamber Mr. A. K. Maclean of Halifax ran up to Nova Scotia rooms, fearing possibly Mrs. Kytte, wife of one of the members, who had been there a short time before, might have been caught there. He says he looked into the room, but it was empty, and with difficulty he escaped through the smoke down the stairway at the west end.

CAUGHT IN TELEPHONE CABINET
It is presumed that Mr. Law, instead of going to his room to telephone, went into the basement to the telephone booth situated just below where the fire broke out. With the door of the telephone booth probably closed, he was unconscious of the quick rush of fire and smoke along the corridor. When he attempted to escape it was too late. Death came either from asphyxiation or he was buried beneath the debris from the

floor above, which collapsed within a very few minutes after the first alarm. Just how he met death will probably never be known. Yesterday there was no flagstaff on the gaunt main tower on which the flag could be half-masted. The tribute to his memory was paid in the broken words of Premier Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the new Commons Chamber yesterday afternoon and in the hushed words of sadness and regret with which the members referred to "poor Law."

MR. LAPLANTE SUFFOCATED
The death of Mr. Laplante is also shrouded in mystery. He was sitting beside the Clerk of the House at the table of the Commons when the fire came. He told Dr. Flint, the Clerk of the House, that he was going up to his room on the second story. A few moments later Mr. E. Norman Lewis, M.P. who was on the second corridor assisting two or three visitors from the gallery who had rushed to a fire hose and were attempting to play it on the oncoming flames, saw him in his room just off the gallery-entrance to the Commons. Mr. Lewis was himself hurrying to escape, but says he saw Mr. Laplante changing from his official robes to a suit for outdoor wear. So far as he knew, that was the last seen of him. The rushing smoke probably caused his death from asphyxiation before the flames which followed did their part.

MAY USE OLD WALLS AND RE-MODEL INTERIOR
The financial loss and the prospects of being able again to utilize the walls which are still standing cannot be determined until the Public Works Department has carefully looked over the ruins. Externally it looks as if the walls and the main tower could be left standing, although in many places the stones are cracked by the heat and some of the arches and turrets have crumbled. The roof over practically the whole building has collapsed, and the whole interior with the exception of but a very few rooms is now empty, but a mass of charred debris.

WILL REMAKE INTERIOR
Certain it is, however, that if it is decided not to raze the building to the ground and start all over again with a new and extra splendid structure, the whole interior plan will be changed, providing for more commodious and better arranged Commons and Senate Chambers, better ventilation of the galleries, the waste spaces of the wells in the interior of the building, and generally safer and larger offices and rooms for the members.

ORIGINAL COST \$2,500,000
On the actual construction of the building there was spent about \$2,500,000, but building rates and material were much cheaper at the time of Confederation. The loss in contents will run up into the hundreds of thousands. Altogether, it is pretty safe to estimate the cost of renewal at least three million dollars.

OFF THE HILL TILL 1918
There are few sanguine enough to expect that Parliament will again meet on Parliament Hill before the fall of 1918. For the balance of this session the Victoria Memorial Museum almost as large as the old Commons wing, will be utilized, with the Commons occupying the eastern half and the Senate the western half. Meanwhile it is expected that arrangements will be made at once for temporarily remodeling the new million-dollar customs building at Ottawa so as to provide accommodation for Parliament next session.

Of tragic interest is the story of how Policeman Desjardins lost his life after assisting Mr. E. W. Nesbitt, M.P., to escape. Mr. Nesbitt was one of a score of members in the Commons Chamber when the fire broke out. He thought it was but a small blaze and would be quickly put out.

Like the other members of the House he never suspected that smoke and flames could travel with such amazing rapidity. Without bothering to go out and see where the fire was, he turned to his newspaper at his desk. As he did not fully realize what was going on, suddenly the rush of smoke through the doors of the north end of the Commons aroused him, as it did also five or six other members who were still in the Chamber.

RUSHING FOR AN ESCAPE
There was a rush for an exit at the middle eastern door of the Commons Chamber. A blinding pall of smoke drove them back. Another rush was made for the doors back of the Speaker's chair with the same result. It was then realized that the situation was becoming desperate. The lights had gone out. The Chamber was filling with smoke, and the corridors glowed through the smoke with the fire which leapt along the wainscoted ceiling apparently two or three feet per second. Gropping in the darkness the members sought escape by the southernmost doors. Finally they burst into the corridor, and with linked hands made their way into the main lobby and thence by the side entrance door out into the open. Mr. Nesbitt, however, got lost from the rest and started first down the corridor between the Commons Chamber and Conservative room No. 16 towards the fire.

CRAWLING THROUGH THE SMOKE
Gropping along the wall and pressed back by the onslaught of the flames, he realized his mistake. His ears were singed by the heat as he crept on his hands and knees back the corridor to the exit into the lobby. It was so black that he could not see where he was going. Instead of keeping straight on for the door, he turned to the right up the corridor toward the telegraph offices and the press room. By this time he was almost overcome by the smoke. His hand had been put by falling glass. He groped his way into the telegraph office half-way up the corridor. He broke open the window and got a refreshing gust of pure air. He went out into the corridor again, and at this moment a crash was heard and a gust of fresh air again swept in. Revived again, he started for the door, but a fan peculiarly asphyxiating smoke fan, blowing from the Commons Chamber and up through the whole building, within three minutes the place became unlivable, and fire-fighters had to back up.

FUEL FOR THE BLAZE
In the reading-room were at least 1,200 files of newspapers, while in the galleries above were some 4,000 volumes and periodicals, forming times and fuel for the raging furnace. The glass roof crashed in and a vortex of fire was formed, soon blowing a gale down the corridors. Members gropping in their way out declared that the flames seemed verily to leap along with here and there little explosions of powder deposits of dust. Along the fire recently oiled and varnished, the fire also crept with amazing rapidity.

WATER PRESSURE LOW
The water pressure was low all night by the booster pumps installed in the basement were promptly set going. The engineers in charge of these pumps, who heroically stood at their post till smoke and flame drove them out at midnight, declare that the pressure gauge varied from 35 to 75 lbs., and that there was difficulty in getting water. At previous fire tests the pressure gauge has been over 100 lbs. One explanation of this is that the fire engines which were stationed at the fire hydrants outside to help the external streams used up most of the supply of water furnished by the city mains.

THEORY OF INCENDIARISM
With regard to the origin of the fire, official Ottawa still inclines to the belief that it was an accident, and that the appalling rapidity with which the flames spread was due to the combustible nature of the material in the reading room and immediate surroundings, it, coupled with the enforced draught of the heat engendered in the high and wide corridors. Unofficial Ottawa, including many mem-

bers of Parliament, declare "the Hun hath done this thing." The evidence available seems to support one contention as well as the other.

COL. SHERWOOD'S REPORT
An official memorandum by Col. Sir Percy Sherwood, Chief of Dominion Police, submitted to the Premier last night, states that as far as can be learned the fire was caused from a lighted cigar, cigarette or match carelessly dropped in the reading room. Statements from two of the Dominion police stationed just outside the doors of the reading room are given in summarized form. According to these statements, the policeman on guard played on the telephone at the Commons entrance to the reading-room, testified that when the alarm of fire was given to him by one of the members who rushed out of the room, he ran for a fire extinguisher at the other end of the room.

BLAZED UP VERY QUICKLY
Though only four or five seconds could have elapsed before he got back, the blaze had caught the adjoining newspaper files and was roaring four or five feet up in the air. He turned on the extinguisher, but instead of putting the fire out, the effect seemed rather to be to add to its fury. He yelled to another constable in the corridor and they ran to the fire hose about fifteen yards distant outside the door of the Speaker's chamber. The water turned on at the Michigan Central Depot to hold the Canadian Pacific train until his arrival.

FLAMES UNCONTROLLABLE
Meanwhile constables from the Senate entrance to the reading-room had brought another line of hose into the lobby. The heat meantime had become intense, and the flames had leaped within less time than it takes to tell it from one end of the room to the other. The water turned on at the Michigan Central Depot to hold the Canadian Pacific train until his arrival. Customs Officers Bennett and Wallace, acting on these orders, refused to allow the train to enter the tunnel and the passengers were closely watched.

ABUSE OF A "GENTLEMAN"
After examining the passengers on the Grand Trunk train, Detective Smith and Charles Jenkins, Chief of the Pinkerton Detective Agency at Detroit, searched the C.P.R. train. Strony was found in the parlor car, and it is said that when asked to produce his ticket he protested loudly that he was a "gentleman and not entitled to such abuse."

PASSPORT A FORGERY?
He speaks with a decided foreign accent and produced a passport issued apparently by a Belgian Consul at a point in Canada in September, 1915. Strony's photograph appears at one corner of it. According to the message received by Smith from Col. Sherwood, Strony left Ottawa on Thursday night two hours after the fire started. It is alleged that certain papers were found which implicated him in a plot to bomb Ottawa. He will be held at Windsor pending further instructions from Ottawa. Col. Sherwood gave orders that the prisoner was not to be interviewed by newspaper men.

CHARLES STRONY DETAINED AT WINDSOR OVER OTTAWA FIRE

Supposed to be a Belgian Musician and Performed Before Duke of Connaught and Staff Thursday Afternoon.

Windsor, Feb. 5.—Taken from a Canadian Pacific train at the Michigan Central tunnel depot here late yesterday afternoon by Provincial Officer James P. Smith, a man giving his name as Charles Strony, twenty-eight years old, and who claims to have been born in Belgium, is being held at police headquarters on the possibility that he may be implicated in the destruction of the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa. Instructions were received from Col. Sir Percy Sherwood, Chief of Dominion Police, by telephone, ordering Strony's arrest. The description given by Col. Sherwood was incomplete, but the number of the railway ticket held by Strony tallied with that given by the Ottawa authorities.

ARE MAKING INQUIRIES
With regard to the Windsor arrest, he merely said that the man arrested was known to have left Ottawa after the fire broke out, and that the police thought it wise to detain him, and make enquiries before he crossed the American border. No definite charge has been laid. A searching investigation has been started by the government, and only such an investigation will satisfy in the present temper of the people.

WINTER TOURS TO FLORIDA, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, CALIFORNIA, ETC.
The Canadian Pacific Railway offers particularly good service to Detroit, where direct connection is made for Florida, via Cincinnati and Atlanta, Ga. Jacksonville, Florida is reached second morning after leaving Detroit. Excellent connection for Florida is also made via Buffalo.

MUSICIAN BEFORE THE DUKE
Strony indignantly denied any connection with the fire, and declared that he was a musician, a subject of Belgium, and had played before the Duke of Connaught and members of the Duke's staff at Ottawa last Thursday afternoon.

DRAGNET FOR SUSPECTS
Ottawa, Feb. 5.—Although ostensibly scouting the theory of incendiarism, Dominion authorities are drawing the net around every possible sus-

pect, and the detective staff is busy following all clues. Numerous rumors have been reported to Col. Sherwood of alleged suspicious characters around the corridors within the past few days. So far, however, it is declared that nothing has been shown pointing to any real evidence that there were alien enemy plotters in the building. However, Col. Sherwood confirmed the story of the arrest of a suspect at Windsor, Ont., and intimated that there will be more arrests. He declined, however, on being interviewed by your correspondent, to give any particulars or to say that the circumstances of the fire pointed in any way to incendiarism.

THOSE CONTEMPLATING A TRIP
of any nature will receive full information from any C.P.R. agent, or write M. G. Murphy, District Passenger Agent, Toronto.

THE BUFFALO PROSECUTOR last year handled 1,193 criminal cases.

—the healthful drink
—the wholesome drink
—the cooling drink
—the delicious drink
—the satisfying drink is
O'Keefe's Pilsener Lager
"The Light Beer in the Light Bottle"
MAY BE ORDERED AT 25 COLBORNE ST., BRANTFORD.

LABATT'S LAGER
IS MILD, PURE, APPETIZING
Just the Beverage for the busy man—rests the nerves and ensures sound sleep.
If not sold in your neighborhood, write
JOHN LABATT, LIMITED
LONDON - CANADA
Special arrangements for direct shipment to private consumers.

E. C. Andrich, BRANTFORD DISTRIBUTOR
88 Dalhousie Street
Bell Phone 9 Auto Phone 19

That Son-in-Law of Pa's



Copyright, 1916, by Newspaper Feature Service, Inc. Great Britain rights reserved. Ed. Wellington

CASTORIA
For Infants and Children.
Mothers Know That Genuine Castoria Always Bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Atkinson* in Use For Over Thirty Years **CASTORIA**

SEE COURIER WANT ADS.

War s!
BUILDING MY

empire nee s services---It them now is the time like!
DO YOU
to join th your ers you g time.

cheer if ity?
alion