

tawa. For that reason I went to some trouble to acquaint myself with the ground for these rumours regarding the engagement of the firm of P. Lyall and Sons. While it would not serve any purpose to retail in this chamber what I then ascertained, I may say that I learned enough to justify me in going to the then Minister of Public Works and urging upon him that he should not give a contract to the Lyall firm, nor to any other firm, without advertising for tenders and without putting the work up to public competition. I observed, on the occasion of the interview, that my representation did not seem to make any very deep impression upon the gentleman, who received me most cordially and who was most affable in the discussion of the matter that I brought to his attention. A day or two later, additional ground for the rumours that were in circulation regarding the favouritism that was likely to be shown to the Lyall firm was afforded by the fact that they placed a force of men at work to remove the debris from the partially destroyed building. As regards that, I made an inquiry in the House, and the question and answer are reported at page 806 of Hansard of 1916, as follows:

Debris of Parliament Buildings.

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. Murphy: In view of certain items that have appeared in the press, I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works, what arrangement, if any, has been made with Peter Lyall and Sons for the removal of the debris of the destroyed Parliament Buildings, and also what arrangement has been made, if any, for the rebuilding of the destroyed structure.

Mr. Rogers: The matter of removing the debris has been handed over to Messrs. Lyall with instructions to clean out the inner parts as well as they can. Nothing further than that has been done.

Mr. Murphy: On what terms?

Mr. Rogers: On terms of costs plus ten per cent.

I had a further interview with the then Minister of Public Works, and I pointed out to him how undesirable it was to establish this kind of relation with the Lyall firm. I urged upon him the desirability of reconstructing the national building under conditions that would make the contract in any event above suspicion if it would not be entirely free from criticism. The then Minister of Public Works suggested that the proper thing to do would be to appoint a joint committee from both sides of the House of Commons to supervise the work. To that I at once objected and directed the hon. gentleman's attention to the fact that members of the House of Commons were,

[Mr. Murphy.]

with very few exceptions—and I questioned if there was any exception—not familiar with building operations, and they were not the proper body, no matter how capable they might be in other directions, to superintend the reconstruction of the partially destroyed Parliament Buildings. I urged upon the then Minister of Public Works that the work of reconstruction should be left in charge of the Department of Public Works and should be let by public tender after advertisement in the usual way. The matter practically ended at that stage as regards interviews.

Later on the architects, who were appointed to make an investigation of the partially destroyed building and to advise as to what should be done, submitted a written report dated February 17, 1916. That report was presented to the House of Commons on the date that I have just mentioned, and it will be found at page 889 of Hansard of that year. I now propose to read the report:

The Honourable Robert Rogers,
Minister of Public Works,
Ottawa.

Re Parliament Buildings.

Dear Sir,—We have made a careful examination of the main building that was recently damaged by fire, and beg to report as follows:

The major portion of the buildings at present left standing, more particularly as regards the internal and external walls, have suffered no material damage.

The west wing, which was recently built on modern fireproof methods, is uninjured by fire and but slightly damaged by water.

From this point—viz., the west wing—travelling south to the southwest tower, thence east along the south front to the southeast tower, thence north to the northeast tower, thence west to the east wall, thence north to the north tower—all these walls which comprise the perimeter of the building are practically intact and uninjured; it will be only necessary to make repairs to a number of windows on the south front, where the flames have injured the Ohio sandstone trimmings.

Starting at the same point before mentioned—viz., the west wing—and travelling in the same direction: all rooms fronting on these elevations have been more or less swept by fire and burned out; the brick masonry in the internal longitudinal and cross walls, also the masonry in the external walls inclosing these rooms has suffered little damage—the stability of these walls has not been impaired.

The character of this masonry, both in material and workmanship, is first class. The external walls are faced with Nepean random rock-faced quarries, with Ohio stone trimmings to window openings; the walls are backed with rubble, and faced on the inside with brick carefully built and properly bonded into the rubble masonry. It is this facing of brick that has preserved the limestone rubble against damage by fire.

The floors throughout the building are constructed with 7-inch iron I-beam joists spaced