

# FIRE DESTROYS CANADA'S PARLIAMENT BUILDING

## THE OUTBREAK CAME WITH DRAMATIC SUDDENNESS WHILE HOUSE WAS IN SESSION

The Most Picturesque Public Building in North America is a Shapeless  
Ruin--Several Lives Lost--Fire Believed to be Work of the **Enemy**

### FIRE THE ACT OF **ALIEN** FOES?

Four Separate Blazes in the  
Reading-room

### SENATE CHAMBER IS GONE

A Number of Members More or Less  
Seriously Injured—Troops to the  
Scene to Assist the Ottawa Fire-  
men—Building Doomed.

(Special Despatch to The Globe.)

Ottawa, Feb. 4.—At one o'clock the main tower was a gigantic torch of flame, and the fire was steadily eating its way into the Senate side. The Red Chamber itself is doomed, but the firemen still hope to check the flames in the east and west portions of the building. Heroic efforts are being made to save the Library, but it is doubtful whether they can succeed. The flames have crept along the vaulted passage leading just to the door of the Library.

#### Troops Saving Documents.

Troops have been mobilized, and are busy salvaging such of the most important books and documents as can be assembled in haste. Salvage work is also going on with the furniture, pictures, etc., in the chambers of the Speaker of the Senate, while some salvage has also been saved from the rooms of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Robert Borden in the extreme west of the building.

#### Hughes Says Accidental.

General Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia, pending an official investigation of the fire, is not inclined to attribute it to incendiary work by some **alien enemy**. According to the story told by the policeman just adjacent to the reading-room, the fire started among some files of papers.

He tried to extinguish it with a chemical extinguisher. However, just at that moment, he says, the door leading into the Senate rooms was opened and a strong draught of air blew through, fanning the flames among the newspapers. This story, however, conflicts with that of Messrs. Martin, Bradbury and other members who claim to have been in the reading-room at the time. The latter had a close call.

#### The Bells Toll Midnight.

A grim and almost uncanny feature was the tolling of the twelve gongs of midnight by the tower clock, still doing business in a furnace of flames. It is probable the last time it will toll. The tower is expected to collapse within an hour.

Shortly before 2 o'clock Fire Chief Graham stated to The Globe that he was reasonably confident that the fire-fighters would be able to save the Library, the quarters of the Speaker of the Senate and the extreme portion of the eastern wing, together with the fireproof addition to the western wing, which was built six or seven years ago. This wing contains the Press Gallery, the quarters of the Liberal members, and Premier Borden's office. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's office is apparently doomed.

#### Fighting for the Library.

The Library floor is over six inches deep in water and the task of remov-

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At first it seemed as though it might be confined to the reading-room, and the firemen on the roof just back of the library fought strenuously to check the flames. Soon, however, it was seen that the fire had made its way through the ceiling partitions into the Speaker's quarters, into the Chamber, and on through the offices of the west wing. It got into the elevator shafts also, and up into the second and third stories. A strong wind blowing from the north helped to fan the flames, and this, combined with the enforced draught inside the buildings, and the thick smoke, made the work of the firemen more difficult.

#### Pinnacles of Flame.

In an hour's time the central portion of the roof fell in, and the noble Gothic towers behind the library building were pinnacles of flame. Fear of falling walls and turrets prevented the firemen from effectively fighting the fire from the inside. From the outside it seemed as if the puny streams were making little or no impression on the raging furnace within. By 11 o'clock the whole interior of the central and western portions of the building were practically destroyed.

#### Signal Burned, Clock Went On.

The main tower, isolated as it was from the main part of the building, still stood intact with the light still burning at the top, this time belching the usual sign that the hour was in session. The clock went on striking the hour as though nothing was happening.

#### Many Documents Lost.

Within fifteen minutes after the fire started the place was cleared of everyone but firemen. No one else could venture in on account of the smoke, and there was little opportunity for the clerks in the records and other important offices to save their documents. Some of these were undoubtedly of great importance to the conduct of public business, and their loss will seriously hamper the proceedings of Parliament and cause considerable confusion before the House can again resume its labors. A Cabinet Council will be called tomorrow morning to deal with the situation, to prepare plans at once for the renewal of the building, and to devise ways and means of continuing the legislative work of the session.

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ing the books has been abandoned for the present. The saving of this building, should it be accomplished, is due to the fact that it is separated from the main building by a short passageway, and the firemen have concentrated their efforts at the end of this passage.

#### Escaped Through a Tunnel.

Two of the spectacular incidents of the fire were the escape of one of the employees in the boiler-room through a tunnel with his clothes on fire, and the carrying of one of the restaurant girls who had fainted down the stairs from the top story through the smoke by John Corrigan, assistant steward of the restaurant.

#### Of Incendiary Origin.

All kinds of ugly rumors are afloat as to the origin of the fire. According to the attendants on duty, it started in the reading room, where thousands of files of the daily and weekly press of Canada, Britain and the United States are exposed for reading and reference purposes. According to the statements of those who first discovered the blaze, four separate files of newspapers at different parts of the reading room started blazing simultaneously. They believe that the origin was incendiary, and opinion seems unanimous to-night that the fire is the work of alien German enemies, although, of course, this is only a surmise.

#### A Gallant Rescue.

Hon. Martin Burrell was carried out by two of his Cabinet colleagues, Hon. Dr. Reid and Hon. Pierre Blondin. He had fallen, stifled with the smoke and badly burned about the head. While his injuries are serious, he will recover. Dr. Michael Clark, Mr. Dellsie and Mr. Nesbitt, the other members who were the most seriously injured, are reported to be altogether out of danger. Mr. Burrell was working in his private room adjoining the reading room when the fire started. When he attempted to get out he had to plunge through flames in the corridor and then feel his way fifty yards along the dark, smoke-filled, crooked corridor to gain safety. That he escaped as he did is remarkable.

Mr. Douglas is safe, though somewhat seriously burned.

#### Troops Aid.

Shortly before midnight bodies of khaki-clad troops arrived to aid the police. The vast awe-stricken crowds were driven back for safety. Troops and firemen are preparing at midnight for the collapse and fall of the central tower with its high steeple. The handsome Gothic structure is doomed.

Mayor Martin of Montreal, who was passing the reading-room, states that he was knocked down by the force of flame as though by an explosion. In fact, he declares that it was an explosion. Geo. Bradbury, M.P. for Selkirk, was also close when the shock came, and holds the same opinion. In fact, all who were in the Commons declare that the suddenness of the outbreak would lead to the strong suspicion that there had been foul play and that the fire was the carefully-planned product of an incendiary.

#### Loggie and Pardee Safe.

At 11.30 to-night it was definitely reported that Mr. W. S. Loggie was safe and only slightly injured. He is believed to have effected an exit through the rear, and was not seen; consequently it was feared for some time that he had been burned. Mr. Duncan C. Ross, Assistant Liberal Whip, announces that Chief Liberal Whip Pardee was called home unexpectedly to Sarnia, and is satisfied that he left for home by train before the fire.

#### Startling Outcry

#### of Excited Attendant

Parliament was engaged in debating over the Jamieson resolution on Ash. The Chamber was only about one-third filled. Fortunately, neither Premier Borden nor Sir Wilfrid Laurier was in his seat, neither having returned to the Chamber after the dinner recess. Mr. W. S. Loggie was speaking from the Liberal side,

while Deputy Speaker Rhodes was for the first time in the Speaker's chair. Suddenly an excited attendant burst through the doors behind the chair of the Sergeant-at-arms. The startling appearance of a stranger on the floor of the Chamber caused a momentary sensation.

"Fire!" he shouted, pointing upward. "The building's on fire!"

The warning was scarce out of his mouth, when, with a roar, a huge tongue of flame broke into the Chamber from the east side. There was a crash, as of something breaking and falling, and almost before the alarmed members could even rise from their seats a cloud of dense smoke poured into the Chamber. In a moment it had become so thick that it was impossible to see three feet ahead.

#### Members Struggle to Safety.

In the ghastly, scorching mist it was only possible to hear men struggling to safety and shouting directions to one another. Several desks were evidently overturned in the efforts of befogged members to reach any of the exits. Several times there were cries of pain, usually following the sound of falls. The fire broke into the Chamber from the ground floor, and the galleries, which were fortunately sparsely filled, are believed to have been cleared without loss of life or injury. The newspapermen in the Press Gallery all made their escape, but found themselves cut off from the press room by smoke and flame.

#### Clark, Nesbitt, Burrell Injured.

At 9.15 Dr. Clark and Mr. Nesbitt were rescued. Dr. Clark is reported terribly burned, and Mr. Nesbitt, seen by The Globe correspondent, was badly cut and dazed. Neither, however, is dangerously injured. Hon. Martin Burrell, Minister of Agriculture, is also badly burned about the body.

Dr. Clark endeavored to leave by the main entrance, but was driven back by fire. In the dense smoke he had a terrible experience working his way to the upper side exit, but finally was discovered and dragged out. Mr. Nesbitt was struck by a stream of water from one of the hose lines. In the dense atmosphere his predicament could not be seen and he had a close call.

#### Others' Narrow Escapes.

Among other members who had narrow escapes and sustained slight injuries were:

Messrs. Martin (Regina), McCurdy, Michaud, Ernest Lapointe (Kamouraska), Hazen, Oliver, Turriff, Carrick, Dellsie, Guthrie, Burnham.

#### Elderly Member Rescued.

David Henderson of Halton, one of the oldest members of the House, being about seventy-five years of age, was in the Chamber at the time. He struck himself coming out and stumbled, but Hon. Robert Rogers and W. E. Knowles, Moose Jaw, lifted him and he got out uninjured and in safety.

#### Lights Went Out.

Shortly after the fire reached its wildest proportions the lights all through the buildings went out, and the pitch darkness made the work of the firemen, police and those engaged in rescue work all the more hazardous and difficult.

#### A Great Mass of Fire.

Although there were supposed to be fire walls, the big roomy corridors provided a fine draught for the flames, and the firemen, owing to poor water pressure and the size of the building, soon lost control. The fire raged with fury for four hours making an appalling but splendid spectacle for the tens of thousands who crowded up on the Hill. General Sir Sam Hughes, who was early on the spot, promptly called out the 77th Battalion, who formed a fire cordon around the building. All the available fire appliances in the city were brought into play, and ambulances to look after those who had been overcome by smoke or who had been injured were rushed to the scene.

#### Firemen's Heroic Work.

The fire was fought by the firemen both from the inside and the outside