

It is too soon yet to speak with certainty of the cause of the fire which destroyed the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa; but at such a time suspicion is naturally directed to the alien enemies of the country, and the evidence that is available supports such a view.

First of all there is the statement by The Providence Journal, which has taken an active part in the exposure of pro-German designs and activities in the United States, that three weeks ago it gave notice to the Department of Justice of the United States that the Canadian House of Commons was to be attacked as the beginning of a campaign against Canada, and that the campaign in the United States would be suspended temporarily so that attention might be paid to Canada. When there are the known facts connected with the origin of the fire. It is reported to have started in the reading room, where four separate piles of newspapers began blazing forth at the same time. How the fire was communicated to the newspapers is not yet known; but what facts there are point to incendiarism, and therefore to the alien enemy.

What is known of the activities of the enemy in the United States naturally tends to strengthen the suspicion. The men who are doing the work of Germany in the United States have shown themselves to be thoroughly organized, resourceful and unscrupulous, and they seem to be well supplied with both money and information. That sooner or later they would turn their attention to Canada was, perhaps, to be expected. That they can hope to accomplish for the cause of Germany by the destruction of property in Canada is not easily seen. If they are capable of learning anything from experience they must know by this time that the first and most direct result of such an act as the destruction of the Parliament Buildings would be to strengthen the determination of the Canadian people to devote their energies and resources to the carrying on of the war to a successful issue. That has been the result of the murderous raids upon England, Belgium and France. The effect of the campaign in the United States has been similar. It has intensified the feeling of distrust and resentment, to such an extent that by many of the American people Germany is regarded as an unscrupulous enemy, seeking to preserve the guise of friendship as a cover for its hostility. With all these facts the promoters of the German campaigns of frightfulness must be familiar, yet they continue their work regardless of the consequences. They seem to revel in destruction for its own sake.

The loss of the magnificent structure at Ottawa, intimately associated as it has been with the history of Canadian national development is greatly to be deplored; but this is not time for vain regrets. New buildings will take the place of those destroyed and the government of Canada will go on. The spirit of the country was shown by Premier Borden in summoning the members of Parliament to meet where some suitable place can be found, with as little loss of time as possible. There is a business of serious and pressing importance to be attended to. The destruction of the Parliament Buildings will mean loss and inconvenience, but the business of the country must go on. A serious responsibility rests upon the Premier as head of the country in this emergency; but it does not rest upon him alone. It is shared by all the representatives of the people and by the people themselves. Canada must face the situation with greater unanimity and determination than ever.