

# The Day at the Capital

(Staff Correspondence.)

Ottawa, Feb. 10.—There are indications of an awakening on the part of Ottawa out of the attitude of trustfulness and benevolence which it has hitherto maintained toward "our friend the alien enemy."

This morning, an investigation into the destruction of the Grant-Holden clothing firm fire was concluded, and from the evidence adduced the suspicion exists that the fire, which destroyed the building and its contents, was "set" in several places.

This afternoon a Dominion chemist of the mines branch entered the parliament buildings fire inquiry armed with a small bottle. He poured the contents upon some papers, and the commission waited interestedly for the result. In five minutes the papers mysteriously burst into flame.

## Time For An Alibi.

The chemist informed the board that combustion might be delayed for fifteen minutes by careful preparation of the fluid. That would just be about time for a man to go from the hill to the station and get onto the night train; it would also provide sufficient time for the proving of an absolute alibi. It was upon this theory as applied to the conflagration on the hill that the commission worked today.

The suspicions aroused by such circumstances is finding vent in

various ways. A local paper has published a list of men of German birth holding positions of trust in the civil service of Canada. They include Dr. Gussow, chief Dominion botanist; Dr. Haanel, head of the mines branch; A. Kastella, mechanical superintendent of dredging; G. Heldmann, secretary of the minister of marine and naval service; and others. In addition, mention was made of Capt. Hahn, Gen. Hughes' chief intelligence officer at the front. Coincident with the publication of this list comes news from Toronto of the formation of an "anti-German league," which is undertaking a campaign to oust men of German origin from the civil service. And the Ottawa press also takes a strong stand on the matter.

#### These Officials Unfriendly.

"We have no reason to believe," says the Free Press tonight, "that the Germans holding high offices in this country are unfriendly towards Canada. But they have less reason to be friendly toward us than the Germans who carried out the propaganda of plots in the United States had reason to be friendly to that country. And the United States had no reason to suspect the Germans until the evidence was unearthed. We have seen how far other Germans could be trusted. Why should we trust the apparently innocent Germans holding high office in Canada?"

The question arose in the house this afternoon. Hon. J. D. Hazen rose to defend his secretary, and to state that he would stick by him as long as his secretary stuck by him. Mr. Heldmann had been born in Germany, but had come to Canada a child in arms, when his parents left dissatisfied with their fatherland to find a new home in Canada. He had a brother fighting in the ranks in Flanders. He was himself a faithful and trustworthy employee, but it was not true that he had access to confidential documents and correspondence.

#### Gen. Hughes to the Defence.

Gen. Hughes also came to the defence of his intelligence officer, but he qualified his former description of him by stating that he was a German-Canadian. He had won the D.S.O. and was absolutely reliable.

Dr. Pugsley, M.P. for St. John, was not at all satisfied with the manner in which the government dealt with the alien enemy question. It was a poor student of psychology, for it interned men who were noisily demonstrative and it allowed the man who kept his mouth shut—but his ears open—his freedom and his job. The man who kept his own counsel might be a far more dangerous man than the one who talked loudly.

Nobody came to the defence of Messrs. Kastella, Haanel or Gussow.

The senate has also taken a hand in connection with the question. Senator Cloran expressed strong opposition to the Danrosch band coming to Ottawa since many of its members were Germans. They might, he declared, carry bombs in their violins, hand grenades in their cellos and base horns. And it now appears that the German members are to be replaced by Russians and that no German music will be played. The nerves of Ottawa at present could not stand for it.

However, amid all this, Col. Sherwood, through a memo to the house this afternoon, stated that he did not think that the fire on the hill was the result of a malicious act.

#### Extension of Parliament.

Meantime the senate after an hour and a half debate this afternoon, passed the resolution providing for the extension of parliament. The address, suitably engrossed, will at once go forward to the British parliament.

Among the important losses in the parliament buildings fire was the correspondence and private and public documents of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. His office in the west wing was fire-swept, and scarcely any of his papers accumulated during the past four years as leader of the opposition were saved. The intimate documentary history of Liberalism and parliamentary proceedings as contained in the files of his office has been lost. Apart from the inconvenience to the Liberal leader himself of the loss of many of his papers of reference and his correspondence, there is undoubtedly a loss to the future historian, to whom such of Sir Wilfrid's papers as might have been published would have been of inestimable value.

#### Has New Office.

Sir Wilfrid is now installed in a

new office in the present quarters of parliament. It has been appropriately fixed up over night, and is one of the best of the "mushroom" offices of the new house of parliament. An oil painting of Alexander MacKenzie, his predecessor as Liberal premier of Canada, hangs appropriately above his desk, part of the salvage from the fire. Mr. MacKenzie worked as a mason on the earlier portions of the buildings, and later, when premier, supervised the structure of the library. It still stands intact a monument to his memory.

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