

Editorial ? Cooler heads will prevail

This week, many are reflecting that 100 years ago, the First World War was just getting started.

Traditionally, many have supposed the whole thing started because an Archduke was assassinated in Sarajevo. But the causes go much deeper than that.

That massive conflict was the result of pride and ambition on the parts of a number of royal houses who dominated Europe early in the 20th century and the people who worked for them and governed on their behalf, along with a complicated network of alliances. But what really set things off, we believe, was a lack of appreciation among the European leaders of what they were actually getting themselves into.

There is a story that during that conflict, the German Chancellor was asked how it all happened, and his reply was "Oh! If I only knew!?"

There remain areas of strife in our world too. There are conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as other places.

There are always fears that they will escalate into something horrific, and while there is the possibility that things could get out of control, we believe it's much more likely that cooler heads will prevail before things go too far.

The people who ran European governments 100 years ago probably didn't appreciate how bad things could get. Leaders today, we believe, are very in tune with that, and can well understand that the results could be so serious as to dwarf the impact of the First World War.

In one sense, that terrible conflict of 100 years ago might have been a blessing in disguise. It forced leaders to understand what terrible powers they could unleash.

We're confident those lessons haven't been forgotten.