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Estimate Stands At 2,000 Killed And An Equal Number Of Injured

This Morning's News From City Overwhelmed By The Catastrophe

Showstorm, While Adding to Suffering, Helps Work of Firemen—Agonizing Search For Missing—Hundreds of Bodies in Morgue

Halifax, N. S., Dec. 7.—Up to noon today there was no change in the police estimate of the number of casualties in yesterday's disaster. The dead number about 2,000, with the same number of injured, two-thirds of the latter suffering from flying glass.

4,000 TONS OF MUNITIONS EXPLODED

The cause of this disaster now is stated as follows:—A French munition steamer, carrying 4,000 tons of munitions, including, it is said, a considerable quantity of trinitol, the most highly explosive material manufactured, and a Belgian relief steamer came into collision off Pier 8, just at the entrance to the basin.

Halifax, N. S., Dec. 7.—The war has touched Halifax. Sorrow and anguish are left in its trail. Where only a few hours ago the most prosperous city in Canada stood secure in her own defences, unafraid and almost apathetic, there are now heaps of ruins. No one can yet estimate the loss of life and property, and words fail to describe the mental anguish of those who have lost home and dear ones by one cruel stroke.

Many and conflicting were the stories of the origin of the explosion, but the real story was at last learned, two vessels had collided and one was a munition ship. Although believed to be purely accidental it was nevertheless due, so and caused by conditions the war created.

Five minutes before the explosion men were going about their business, women were busy in their homes and children played about the floors or went hurrying to school. Up the harbor steamed a ship laden with munitions, and down the harbor came a ship flying the Norwegian flag.

Orders were at first given that everybody should flee to the south of the city, and in a short time Barrington street resembled a road in Belgium or Serbia, when the people fled before the advancing Hun.

There were blanched faces and trembling hands, a few had tears pouring down their cheeks, but there was no undue excitement and no disorder. The wildest rumors were in circulation and every bearer of tidings was immediately surrounded. The stories told nothing in the telling, until the brain reeled and the heart grew sick trying to picture the horror and desolation.

On the one side the King Edward Hotel stood a practical wreck, on the other the central portion of the railway station no longer existed but the wreckage up to and including this point was as nothing to that beyond. Houses were simply indistinguishable masses where they had not been devoured by the flames that rise and fall, that roared and seethed and made the place like a smelting oven.

FEARFUL SUSPENSE

Most pathetic stories, so tragic that they almost benumbed the sensibilities seeped through. One possessing all the elements of horror was told by two white-faced sailors who came to a local newspaper office to see if they could help them in their search. They were both looking for wives and children. They had lived in Hanover street and when they had gone to what had been their homes, there was nothing but ruins and search among them had revealed nothing.

They had then made the rounds of the hospitals with hope and fear gnawing at their hearts, but all to no avail. A list of the temporary hospitals and shelters were furnished them, but at last account 47 were still torn between hope and uncertainty. Nothing is more terrible than cruel suspense and strong men as they were their faces showed this strain.

FIVE LITTLE ONES DIE

In the Infectious Diseases Hospital Miss Mulcahy, a nurse, was so badly injured about the face that she may lose an eye, and the building was practically wrecked, but none of the patients suffered serious injury.

St. John Men Bring Home Tales Of The Awful Disaster

Lieut. Colonel Good Was in Centre of Scenes of Devastation; Mount St. Vincent Girls Home; Esmond Barry Speaks of Harrowing Experiences

Among the passengers to arrive in the city this morning from Halifax on the Maritime train was Lieut. Colonel Good of Fredericton. The colonel left St. John on Wednesday night for Halifax and arrived there just about five minutes after the big explosion took place. Speaking of the disaster this morning, he said that he never witnessed such a sight, not even on the battlefields of France.

As soon as the train was brought to a standstill every member of the crew and many of the passengers got right to work in caring for the dying and suffering. Those on the train that knew anything of first aid were kept on the train, while the others went in search of the injured.

The wounded were brought back into the train and after the whole train, consisting of seven cars, was filled with the injured the train was taken to Truro. In one case the colonel said that he was coming up one of the streets looking for injured people when he stopped in front of a burning wooden house. As he was looking into the house an old man standing at the side of the house came up to him and said that his wife and family were in the structure somewhere.

In estimating the damage, he said that fully sixty per cent of the buildings of the city had been affected and at least forty per cent of them wrecked. Stores of all kinds were vacated, fruit, clothing, groceries and hundreds of other lines of goods were all over the streets and roads.

The city when they left last night was not under martial law, but there was some talk of it.

Passengers on the train arriving in the city this morning from Halifax said that the Belgian relief steamer came steaming up the harbor about 8.30 o'clock yesterday morning. She at the time was on fire. Those in charge of the steamer apparently tried to make the berth at which the French ammunition steamer was tied up to. So soon as the crew of the Belgian saw that their steamer was about to hit the munition boat they all took to the boats and only three of them were injured, while every member of the crew of the munition boat was either killed or drowned.

Just prior to the explosion a slight fire had broken out on the end of No. 8 pier and the chief and seven firemen were endeavoring to extinguish the blaze when the explosion occurred. All nine were instantly killed. Three large splinters of wood were found in the fire chief's body, one in the head, one under the left arm and the other through the stomach.

MOUNT ST. VINCENT YOUNG LADIES' HOME

On the train which arrived from Halifax early this morning were fourteen young ladies from the Mount St. Vincent Academy at Halifax. Ten of these belonged to St. John and four were from outside points. They were: Miss Elizabeth Gorman, daughter of Mrs. Thos. Gorman, 78 St. James street; Miss Bertha Drometto, Miss Gertrude Thompson of 115 Dorchester street; Miss Gertrude O'Neill of 109 Elliott row; Miss Eleanor Tapley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis E. Tapley of Princess street, Miss Helen Flood, daughter of John Flood of 123 Duke street; Miss Marion Frost, daughter of Major J. S. Frost, O. C. the 62nd Home Guard; Miss Gertrude Costley, 325 St. James street; West St. John; Miss Anastasia McNulty, daughter of Mrs. M. A. McNulty of 74 Mecklenburg street; Miss Geraldine Readey, daughter of Louis Readey of Lancaster Heights; and Miss Marion McParland of the same household.

POSTAL CLERK BARRY SAW FEARFUL SCENES

On the same train were Esmond P. Barry, postal clerk, of 151 Waterloo street, and S. Rutherford Jack, railway mail clerk of 26 Pitt street. Both men were at Richmond at the time of the explosion and were active in assisting the wounded to the centres where treatment was being made and wounds dressed. A special train was made up outside of Richmond and sent with wounded and refugees to Truro.

FEARFUL SUSPENSE

"It was terrible," said Mr. Barry, when interviewed early this morning by a Times reporter. "People were dying in our car like flies. Some of them came to the place with noses shot off, eyes put out, faces slashed in all directions with flying glass, limbs torn and distorted. One man came in with blood streaming from what was originally his face. On one occasion while we were working around a wrecked building we could see a little baby fifty feet or more in and underneath burning masses, crying for aid. We could not get within thirty feet of him and had to watch while he was burned to death. Men, women and children were lying on the streets and hundreds are buried beneath wreckage who have not yet been accounted for. I lost all my belongings and was lucky enough to escape with my life, but I have been through an experience which I am never likely to forget."

Word came to the Misses Lynch that their sister, Mrs. Robert O'Mullin and family, were safe, but their house was damaged.

A. H. Chipman and Gideon Heveor were in the Halifax hotel when the explosion occurred. They escaped without injury.

Mr. Miles, son of W. H. Miles, of T. H. Estabrooks Co., who is a cadet in the Halifax Naval College, escaped without a scratch.

Gladys Baxter, daughter of Dr. Baxter, after escaping without injury from her hotel, worked all day in two emergency hospitals and won the admiration of everybody by her untiring exertion among the wounded and helpless.

BRITISH NOW IN STRONGER POSITIONS ON WEST FRONT

London, Dec. 7.—Last night's report from Field Marshal Haig's headquarters says:—

"Local fighting has taken place again today in the neighborhood of La Vacquerie without any change in the situation. In the area south of Bourlon Wood minor hostile attacks were repulsed with severe loss to the enemy from the fire of our artillery and infantry."

"The hostile infantry has been active south of the Scarpe and also in the neighborhood of Arrmentieres."

British Headquarters in France, Dec. 6.—(By the Associated Press).—The British have withdrawn from the salient about Bourlon Wood to a prepared line which should make their position much stronger and more defensible in many ways. The retirement was carried out successfully mainly early on Wednesday morning, and under cover of darkness. Not until many hours later did the enemy discover he was facing evacuated territory.

The Germans today had swarmed over much of the vacated zone and were digging themselves in along the advanced line but as late as 1.50 o'clock yesterday afternoon they were still shelling Bourlon Wood and between noon and 3 o'clock they launched a heavy attack against the empty trenches near Meuvres, showing that they were uncertain of the situation even then.

The ground abandoned was cleared thoroughly and not a gun or any other material appeared to have been left behind. Moreover, the vacated positions were rendered temporarily untenable so that the enemy would be forced to construct new defences and digouts. The British prepared the new line while they still held Bourlon Wood.

(Continued on page 7, third column)

RELIEF TRAIN FROM BOSTON HERE TODAY

A special relief train, containing eleven doctors, ten nurses and four tons of supplies, arrived in the city about one o'clock today. It was sent out by Governor McCall of Massachusetts so soon as he realized the seriousness of the situation in Halifax.

The British prepared the new line while they still held Bourlon Wood. A delegation from the Boston Metropolitan Chapter of the Red Cross, who received orders from the National Headquarters in Washington. Some newspaper men were also in the party en route to the scene of the catastrophe in the interests of American papers. They reported that another relief train will leave Boston some time today bringing food, clothing, etc.

Waterloo, Me., Dec. 7.—The relief train sent to Halifax by Governor McCall and the state public safety committee of Massachusetts was delayed for more than an hour early today by a freight wreck on the Maine Central road bed from Richmond to Halifax, a distance of about two miles, was completely torn up, trains were lifted off the rails and smashed. He said that F. C. Clark, an operator in the North street station, was instantly killed by the falling debris when the station collapsed.

Among those who arrived in St. John from the stricken city this morning were Roy McDonald of this city and Harry Milligan of Milltown, ecclesiastical students of the Holy Heart. That building was damaged but no one was seriously hurt.

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ST. JOHN CITIZENS IN SESSION ARRANGE TO HURRY ALONG SUPPLIES

Business-Like Meeting Makes Rapid Arrangement For Effective Work--Many Donations--Children Help Little Ones of Halifax.

That the citizens of St. John mean to do everything in their power to render succor to the bereaved and homeless people of Halifax was manifested this morning at a meeting of business men, which was held in the mayor's office in City Hall. Deputy Mayor McLellan presided and the spirit which prevailed testified to the eagerness of all to do everything in their power to rush aid to the sister city now in the throes of disaster and despair.

Committees were quickly formed and working arrangements completed in a remarkably short space of time. It was arranged to send a special relief train out tonight with hundreds of thousands of yards of bandages, properly sterilized, thousands of loaves of bread, clothing of every description and anything else deemed advisable.

Some members of the Commercial Travellers' Association in charge of Robert Simms, were delegated to leave for Halifax at noon today and make arrangements to secure a place for the distribution of food, etc., and to have a large sign placed on the building to let the people know that they could procure food, etc. there. It is to be named the St. John Distributing Depot, and all goods shipped from this city will be sent there.

Committees were appointed to take charge of collecting clothing, bandages, food, etc., and others to look after the transportation of them to Halifax. Major Knox, on behalf of Brigadier General Macdonell, addressed the gathering. He said that a wire had been received from Ottawa last evening instructing them to render all possible assistance to Halifax. General Macdonell felt that it would be a good thing to have this done through the representation of the city. He said that arrangements would be made to rush all kinds of food, hospital supplies and other commodities to the scene. Major Knox suggested that it would be well to have all food prepared for immediate consumption and offered to have the military kitchens kept going continuously cooking beef, bacon, eggs, etc.

Deputy Mayor McLellan thanked General Macdonell for his kindness and promised that officials would co-operate with them and see that everything was carefully transported to Halifax.

James F. Robertson spoke about the conditions prevailing after the terrible St. John fire and said that the experience gained would be invaluable in the present catastrophe. He offered several good suggestions, which Mr. Sims promised to follow out.

Commissioner Russell said that he had secured 5,000 loaves of bread to send over with the relief train tonight. He also received a large quantity last night from William Shaw and the York Bakery and neither would accept a cent for their donation.

FOR THE CHILDREN

This morning Superintendent Bridges sent communications to all pupils in public schools asking them to bring with them this afternoon some piece of wearing apparel for the unfortunate children of the stricken city. They were distributed by Walter H. Golding and brought a quick response. The articles will be sent on the relief train tonight. It is felt that two or three thousand articles have been procured in this way. (Continued on page 2, second column.)

ANOTHER SON KILLED IN WAR

Sad Message Comes To Mrs. Robert H. O'Brien of Britain Street

Mrs. Robert H. O'Brien of 184 Britain street received this morning a telegram from Ottawa announcing the death in action of her son Gunner Alfred Patrick O'Brien, on November 28. Gunner O'Brien was only twenty years of age and went over with a draft from the 9th Siege Battery last spring. He had been in France six or seven months. The young man had just finished a business college course and had the promise of a bright future when the call of his country led him to enlist for overseas.

This is the second son Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien have given to Canada, an older son Pte. Charles O'Brien, being killed in action two years ago the fifteenth of this month. He went over with the First Contingent, and saw heavy fighting in Flanders.

Besides their parents these soldier heroes are survived by five sisters and four brothers. Mrs. P. H. O'Brien and Mrs. E. J. Alexander are sisters, the other three living at home. The brothers are Robert, Arthur, and Frank of St. John and Harry of Toronto.

The sympathy of the citizens goes out to the bereaved family.

FEARED BROTHERS DEAD. Fred Elliott of the Stephenson Machine Works, had two brothers in Halifax. They were checking in the North Station when the accident happened and it is feared they are dead.

INJURED COMING HOME. It was rumored about the city this afternoon that there were 400 injured on their way to St. John from Halifax and would arrive in the city this afternoon. The rumor, however, could not be confirmed.

WOMEN KNEW NOT THEIR OWN NAMES

One simple statement that came over the telephone wire from Truro this morning reveals something of the horror of the Halifax tragedy. It was that women had been brought to Truro who were so crazed by the shock that they could not tell their own names.

The Catholic Red Cross is at work in the Y. M. C. I. building making bandages.

WEATHER REPORT

Issued by Authority of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, R. F. Stewart, director of meteorological service.

Synopsis.—The disturbance which was on the South Atlantic coast yesterday morning has moved quickly northeastward with increasing intensity towards Sable Island. Very cold weather prevails in the western provinces.

Ottawa Valley and Upper St. Lawrence—Fair and decidedly cold today and on Saturday.

Lower St. Lawrence—Northeast and north winds, fair and colder today and on Saturday.

Gulf and North Shore—Fresh north-east and north winds, fair and colder today and on Saturday.

Colder and Snow. Maritime—Strong winds and gales from northwest and north, colder with local snowfalls.

New England—Fair tonight and probably Saturday continued cold; fresh northwest winds.