

FIELD MARSHAL FRENCH RELIEVED OF DUTIES IN WEST; SUCCEEDED BY GEN. SIR DOUGLAS HAIG

RELATIONS WITH GREECE STEADILY GROW BETTER

King Constantine to Attend Ball at Russian Legation in Honor of Czar's Name Day, Fifth Greek Army Corps Ordered to Leave Saloniki and Entente Powers Notify Premier Skouloudis Economic Pressure Will Cease and Greek Ships Released.

Paris, Dec. 14—(Delayed)—A despatch from Athens to the Havas News Agency dated Monday, December 13, says: "The ministers of the Quadruple Entente, according to the Greek press, officially informed Premier Skouloudis that the economic coercion has been discontinued and that the Greek ships detained in the ports of the Entente Allies would be released."

Paris, Dec. 14—(Delayed)—A despatch from Athens to the Temps says that the Greek government has ordered the fifth Greek army corps to leave Saloniki.

The military critic of the Temps calls attention to what he characterizes as the singular situation in which the Greek army has been placed by the order of the government that it shall not resist the Bulgarians if they cross the border.

"This is carrying neutrality very far," he says.

Greek Elections Next Sunday Paris, Dec. 13—(Delayed)—The Greek parliamentary elections have been fixed for Sunday next, says Havas despatch from Saloniki today.

Only 20,000 Germans Helping Bulgars. Paris, Dec. 14 (Delayed).—"Not more than 20,000 Germans are co-operating with the Bulgarian army that has been attacking the Allies, according to intelligence gathered from prisoners," says a Havas despatch from Athens dated December 13. The Bulgarians are estimated to have lost 5,000 and 15,000 wounded during the past few days.

Relations Steadily Improving. London, Dec. 15.—Reuters correspondent at Saloniki says that virtually all of Greek eastern Macedonia has now been abandoned to the French and British forces, in accordance with the agreement reached with the Greek government. Most of the Greek troops which were at Saloniki have retired in the direction of Sorovich and Kozani in Greek western Macedonia, while the Lancasa division has gone to Treves.

A Reuters despatch from Athens states that the Bulgarian minister has made public a reassuring statement dwelling upon Bulgaria's friendly attitude toward Greece.

"The Greek government now seems to be satisfied that there will be no Bulgarian incursion on Greek territory," the correspondent continues.

"Relations between Greece and the Entente Powers are improving steadily, and King Constantine has announced his intention of attending the ball at the Russian legation on the occasion of Emperor Nicholas' name day, if his health permits."

The Allied Retreat. Paris, Dec. 15 (Delayed).—Telegraphing from Saloniki, under Sunday's date the correspondent of the Temps describes the Franco-British retreat as being effected with method and regularity. On the evening of December 10, he says, the Allied forces, grouped in the region east of the Vardar, fell back undisturbed on a line about 144 kilometres (90 miles) long, extending from Lake Dorian to Vardar.

The retreat was marked by violent attacks against the entire front, particularly against the centre which, however, according to the correspondent, were kept within bounds. During the night forces took up positions further to the south, along a line almost parallel with the former front.

At the time the despatch was sent the French and British front was established in the vicinity of the Greek frontier, with the Allied left wing on the west bank of the Vardar.

Becomes Commander-in-Chief of Armies of United Kingdom and Created Viscount for Services Since War Began—His Successor Won Renown in Aisne Battle and Mentioned for Brilliant Work in Retreat at Mons—Change at Request of Field Marshal French.

London, Dec. 16.—Field Marshal Sir John French, who, at his own request, has been relieved of the command of the British forces in France and Flanders, has been succeeded by General Sir Douglas Haig. Since the landing of the expeditionary force, Sir Douglas Haig has commanded the first army, and has been repeatedly mentioned in despatches by his chief, whose place he now takes.

The change had been expected for some time, and it was announced in the House of Commons yesterday (Wednesday) that a statement would be published immediately. Sir John French becomes commander-in-chief of the armies in the United Kingdom, and for his sixteen months services at the front has been created viscount of the United Kingdom.

That the elevation of General Joffre had no bearing on the substitution of General Haig for Field Marshal French, however, was announced yesterday in the House of Commons by Premier Asquith. He brought up the matter by saying: "Some changes are in the course of being made, and will be announced almost immediately. They have no connection of any kind with the changes made by the French government with regard to General Joffre's functions."

The official announcement says: "Gen. Sir Douglas Haig has been appointed to succeed Field Marshal Sir John French in command of the armies in France and Flanders. "Since the commencement of the war, during over sixteen months of severe and incessant strain, Field Marshal French has most ably commanded our armies in France and Flanders, and he has now, at his own instance, relinquished that command."

"His Majesty's government, with full appreciation and gratitude for the conspicuous services which Field Marshal French has rendered to his country at the front, have with the King's approval, requested him to accept the appointment of field marshal commanding in chief the troops stationed in the United Kingdom, and Field Marshal French has accepted that appointment."

"The King has been pleased to confer upon Sir John French the dignity of viscount of the United Kingdom. Gen. Sir Douglas Haig is 54 years old. He began his military career with the Seventh Hussars in 1885 and served in the Sudan, and South Africa campaigns, in both of which he won distinguished honors and promotions. At the outbreak of the present war he was general officer commanding at Aldershot, and afterwards was made commander of the first army."

Several times during the war General Haig has come in for high praise in the despatches of the general he is now succeeding. At the battle of the Aisne his conduct was described by Field Marshal Sir John French as "bold, skillful and decisive." In November of last year Sir Douglas, then Lieutenant-General, was promoted to the rank of general for distinguished services in the field.

Won Renown in Mons Retreat. Field Marshal French, in his despatch to the British war office, describing the famous retreat from Mons, credited Sir Douglas with having executed his corps from a difficult position at Landreux.

"I sent urgent messages to the commander of the two French reserve divisions on my right to come up to the assistance of the first corps, which they eventually did," said the field marshal's despatch. "Partly owing to this assistance, but mainly to the skillful manner in which Sir Douglas Haig extricated his corps from an exceptionally difficult position in the darkness of the night, they were able, at dawn, to resume their march south towards Wassy-sur-Guise."

General Haig is a Scotchman. He won his first honor under General Kitchener in the Sudan, where he was promoted to a brevet major on the field for gallantry at Atbara and before Khartoum.

Field Marshal Sir John French had been in charge of the British forces on the continent since the outbreak of the war. He is one of the best known of the British soldiers and always has had the reputation of being a skilful and daring leader of men. Sir John was born in 1852. He served four years in the navy, but not liking the sea he joined the militia and through it entered the army. He has been wide service.

During the famous Ulster movement in March of 1914, Field Marshal French, then chief of staff of the British army, resigned his commission. He was one of the signatories of the memorandum to Brigadier General Gough, giving guarantees to the army



Disavowal of Ancona Case Opposed by Austro-Hungarian Admiralty

Approves of Conduct of Submarine Commander—Reply to American Note Next Week, and Pessimistic View of Situation Justified.

Vienna, Dec. 14, by courier to Berlin, via London.—The Austro-Hungarian admiralty is entirely opposed to any disavowal of the course of the submarine commander who was responsible for the sinking of the Italian steamer Ancona. On the contrary, it approves his conduct fully, and declares that he would have been considered as having failed to perform his duty if he had allowed the Ancona to escape.

The reply to the American note, it is understood, will be delivered soon, possibly Wednesday. The correspondent of the Associated Press has not been able to secure a forecast of the terms of the reply, but all indications are that a pessimistic view of the situation is justified.

The admiralty today stated its case and the attitude of the naval authorities as follows: "So far as the commander is concerned, his course is clear. The admiralty has received his report, and sees no reason to find any fault with his course of action."

"It appears clearly from his report that his ship was in danger; indeed, in double danger, first from the fact that an enemy boat was approaching on a line that threatened to cut off his retreat, and the enemy ship, the Ancona, could have established his radius of action and could have set a torpedo boat flotilla on him; and second there was danger of the Ancona escaping, which, according to his instructions, was to be prevented, in all circumstances. Hence, the conduct of the commander, much as the loss of innocent lives must be regretted and deplored, cannot be disapproved."

"On the contrary, if he had departed without destroying the Ancona it would have been failure to do his duty, since the Ancona could have notified other ships of his whereabouts. The loss of American lives is regrettable, but it is not the duty of officers that they would not be ordered to fight the U-boat submarines and regarding the reputation of the document by the government as a slight on himself, he resigned."

Sir Douglas Haig then became chief of staff, but at the outbreak of the war Field Marshal French was appointed to command the expeditionary army.

ALLIES PREPARED AGAINST ANY MOVE OF THE ENEMY

Germans Satisfied with Results in East Likely to Make Bid for Victory on Western Front where They are Concentrating Large Forces—Threat of Russian Invasion Through Roumania a Serious Problem for Enemy.

FORD'S PEACE SHIP TAKEN TO KIRKWALL

Presumably to be Examined—British Foreign Office Has No Details.

Kirkwall, Dec. 15.—The steamship Oscar II, having on board the Ford peace party arrived here this morning.

London, Dec. 15.—At both the foreign office and the American embassy it was stated this afternoon that the despatch from Kirkwall announcing the arrival there of the steamer Oscar II, with the Henry Ford peace party on board, was the first news received in London concerning the steamer. At the American embassy confirmation was obtained later that the Oscar II had been taken into Kirkwall. It was said this was presumably in order that the steamer might be examined. No further details were obtainable at the embassy.

HON. MR. BOWSER NEW PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Sir Robert McBride Resigns to Accept Post of Agent General for Province in London.

Victoria, B. C., Dec. 15.—It was officially announced today that J. H. Turner, the aged agent general for British Columbia in London, has resigned, and will leave that office December 31. He will be succeeded by Sir Robert McBride, who was appointed to that position today.

Sir Richard McBride today resigned his seat in the legislature, and being succeeded in the premiership by Hon. W. J. Bowser. Hon. Mr. Young, provincial secretary also resigned from the cabinet.

The new administration will be composed as follows: Premier and Attorney-General, W. J. Bowser; Minister of Finance, A. C. Flummerfelt; Minister of Public Works, C. E. Tisdall; Minister of Lands, W. R. Ross; Provincial Secretary, Thomas Taylor; Minister of mines, Lorne Campbell.

There will be no election until the Spring, after a session of the legislature.

Tribute to Sir Richard From Hon. Mr. Burrell. Special to The Standard. Ottawa, Dec. 15.—Hon. Martin Burrell, the federal minister from British Columbia, expressed regret tonight that Sir Richard McBride had severed such a long connection with the province.

He said he had known of Sir Richard's intention for some time. However, he felt that the ex-premier would do good service in Great Britain as agent-general for his province. He had many friends in England, where he had been a frequent visitor.

Mr. Burrell had words of praise regarding the selection of Lorne Campbell as minister of lands and mines. "He is a most capable man," said the minister of agriculture, "and should do valuable work for British Columbia."

London, Dec. 15.—With the Anglo-French forces safely across the Greek frontier and close to their strongly fortified base at Saloniki, where reinforcements are arriving daily, the second phase of the Balkan campaign, which opened with the Teutonic invasion of the Serbian frontier, and the defeat of her army has closed and the people of the belligerent countries are anxiously waiting for the next move.

It seems fairly well settled that the Bulgarians do not intend to invade Greece, an action which would likely cause dissensions in that country, which already is uneasy over the Bulgarian occupation of Monastir. Also it is not believed that the Austrians and Germans have sufficient troops available to attack the Entente Allies.

The speculation naturally has to do with the Germans and their intentions. They are variously reported to be concentrated near Monastir and Doiran and on the Roumanian border and as preparing for an attempt to drive the Entente Allies from the Gallipoli peninsula. All these reports lack confirmation.

One thing seems certain to the military observers—that the Germans will have to keep a close watch on the Roumanian side, not only because of the danger of that country entering the war against them, but to meet the threat of a Russian invasion through Roumania, which, although nothing has been said of it recently, has not been lost sight of.

May Strike in West. Wherever the Germans move they will find the Entente Allies prepared. Saloniki is being made stronger daily, and has the backing of warships, as also has the Gallipoli peninsula, where the Entente positions likewise have been strengthened. The Russians are believed, by the military authorities, to be able to cope with an army the Teutonic powers can collect on the Roumanian border, while Egypt, which is said to be another of their objectives, also has been placed in a state of defense.

There are many persons who believe that the Germans purpose to rest on their laurels in the near east for the time being, and make a bid for victory on the western front. Persistent reports come from Holland of the concentration of German armies in Belgium and Luxembourg, with the intention of striking a blow as soon as the ground permits of it. At the present moment the greater part of the country is a sea of mud, in which it will be suicide for an army to attempt an offensive.

The reported concentration of Germans doubtless accounts for the many air raids which the Entente Allies are making behind the German lines in an effort to upset the movement of troops, and destroy shelters, camps and the supplies of munitions which are necessary for an offensive.

General Townshend reports the repulse of further Turkish attacks against the British positions at Kut-el-Amara.

There have been no changes in the situation on any of the fronts.

Russian Report. Petrograd via London, Dec. 15.—The official communication issued today says: "Western (Russian) front: Near Uskull, an enemy aeroplane dropped bombs. In the region of Jacobstadt the artillery duel has increased in violence. In Riga district our artillery, at several points, dispersed Germans engaged in fortifying their positions."

"On the Dniester, in the district of Ualeczka, north of Ozaleszki, scouts of one of our cavalry regiments encountered enemy scouts wearing Russian tunics and caps. On being halted by our scouts, the enemy opened fire, to which our scouts replied, partly exterminating and partly dispersing the disguised Austrians."

"Caucasian front: On the Hamadan road, our troops continue the pursuit of the Turco-German forces. A detachment of the inhabitants of Hamadan and influential Khans have come from Hamadan to ask our troops for protection against rebels."

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GEN. ALDERSON'S TRIBUTE TO CANADA'S FALLEN HEROES

London, Dec. 15, (Gazette Cable).—General Alderson, commanding the Canadian forces at the front, recently had occasion to commend the spirit and bravery of the men in action, and in referring to their dead he declared his belief that a just God would admit each fallen hero to Heaven, no matter what his past life had been, since he died to preserve those blessings which the incarnation had brought to humanity.

"So far as the commander is concerned, his course is clear. The admiralty has received his report, and sees no reason to find any fault with his course of action."

"It should be remembered that Austria's fleet is her favorite child. Its honor and prestige are treasured to the highest degree. The government might possibly yield points in a matter affecting the army, but disavowal of an act of an Austrian naval officer is hardly thinkable in any but abnormal circumstances. I am certain that it would have to be a very extreme case, indeed, which could justify, in the eyes of all Austrians, any humiliation of a naval officer at the behest of a foreign power."

SHOW FIFTY PER CENT. FOR CHURCH UNION. Toronto, Dec. 15.—According to figures compiled by the church authorities here 67.5 per cent. of presbyteries of the Presbyterian church in Canada have given a majority of 22,770 for union with the Methodist and Congregational churches. The vote was: For 15,174; against 22,602.

The number of congregations giving this vote was 903 of which 618 gave majorities for union.