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TUESDAY MORNING MARCH 27 1917—TWELVE PAGES

VOL. XXXVII.—No. 13,285

Senate Reading Room
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SENATE P O OTTAWA

LAGNICOURT, FOLEMBRAY AND LA FEUILLEE TAKEN

GERMAN ARROGANCE IS BROKEN THEY REALIZE THAT ALL IS LOST

Priest of Voyennes Tells Graphic Story of Enemy's Occupation and Early Boasts of Making Slaves of the French, Followed by Hasty Retreat Before Advancing Allies.

From a Staff Correspondent of The Associated Press.

British Headquarters in France, March 26, via London.—This is the story of the priest of Voyennes, Monsieur le Cure Caron, who stood today in the shadow of the still hot walls of his church, which had been set alight by the Germans the day they slipped away from this plain little village perched above the valley of the Somme. Flashes of passionate protest mingled with a spirit of proud resignation in his recital of the life at Voyennes during the 2½ years of German control—a civil imprisonment, which ended Monday last when thru field glasses from the loft of his presbytery the priest, who was also acting mayor, saw four khaki-clad horsemen on the road and knew that the Germans had gone and British relief was at hand.

A few minutes later a French cavalry patrol appeared, and the allies had formed a new link in the pursuit of the common foe. Today the booming of the guns in this pursuit could be heard over a stretch of 80 battle miles.

The cure told how a few narrow scars in the earth, known as German trenches, ribbons of barbed wire behind them and a bit of shell torn waste called "No man's Land" had isolated a section of the French people from their country as effectually as if they had been suddenly transplanted to another hemisphere. He told how in Voyennes women, children and old men lived and toiled for the invaders in utter ignorance of what was going on in the world about them, just as other thousands still shut within the German lines are living, toiling and wondering today. They were told long ago that their beautiful Paris was to fall within a week and would be pillaged and burned.

Declared Paris Dead.

Later they were told: "Paris is dead," and the Germans added insult to injury, the old priest explained, by pronouncing it "Paris," instead of "Paree."

The inhabitants of Voyennes submitted to enemy domination with heads erect and a patient calmness that the Germans could not understand. "We would break your pride," Prussian officers declared, "and make you slaves. All France shall be at our feet."

Pale, drawn and old, as was the cure, never the less he seemed imbued with sudden, defiant strength as he raised himself to his full height and continued:

"I told them that never again would France yield to such a foe. They taunted us and said they would crush Europe in a few months. We replied that France would fight five years and more if necessary. Sometimes they laughed scornfully at this, but lately they could not contain their fury that the war was lasting so long."

People Suffered Much

"And did the people suffer much?" he was asked.

"Ah yes," he replied. "Our food did not last long. Then we had to work for the Germans and take what they gave us. Sometimes it was so bad that even the cats refused to eat it. Then the Americans began to feed us, and that saved thousands of lives. Our people are very grateful.

"But let us not dwell on the physical side today, but speak of the mental and moral anguish we endured, for it seemed like the span of a hundred years. It has left us all but imbecillic. I scarce can keep my vagrant thoughts together."

Last Sunday when early mass was over, the German commandant at Voyennes appeared at the church with a party of soldiers bearing petrol cans. He bluntly told the priest that he was tired of the war and as one means of bringing the end nearer, he was going to burn the church. The priest thought it was a cruel jest until he was escorted to his house and held there. He was compelled to look on impotently while the inflammable liquid was sprayed about and the torch applied in a dozen places. Of all the ancient interior, only the wooden crucifix against the alter wall, by strange freak, escaped the flames. Late at night the Germans rode away. Not another building in all Voyennes was touched.

German Spirit Breaks.

"But," said the old priest, "I lived to see the German spirit break, from the unspeakable arrogance of their first onslaught and threat toward the parish, until a few days ago an officer met me in the street and said: 'Father, we are lost. I have done much in this war that rests heavily on my conscience, but I have done it under orders. I dare not disobey.'

"I told him that he surely would be absolved, for he was not to blame. There were others of higher station who must make answer to their God.

"When the Germans first came, the commander sought me and said that the people of Voyennes had fired on his troops and that reparations would be demanded. It was the same old story, and I told him it was a lie; that we had no firearms; that if shots were fired it was done by German troops as an excuse to make us suffer. The commander did not carry out his threat. We have had many commanders since then, and, one and all, they have ruled their men with a discipline of iron. Some of the officers treated their subordinates like dogs. They said the men were their slaves, as the French would be. I saw an officer one day, without reason whatever, cuff his orderly so hard that the man's eye was black for a week. The soldier's only reply was to click his heels together and come to salute.

Soldiers Helpless.

"Some of the villagers asked the men why they submitted to such treatment. They replied that they were helpless now as part of a military machine, but when the war was over their time would come. For a long time now the German soldiers had no coffee, and their rations have been growing less and less. I tell you that when the war is ended there will be a reckoning, and Germany will know a blood-red revolution. The best commander we had was the one before the last, who spent 15 years in America and married an American girl. He spared us much. For two years and a half we have been out of the world, and will probably never catch up.

"The Germans distributed a paper they printed, called The Gazette des Ardennes, but we would not read its extravagant falsehoods and accusations against our country. One day we obtained a French paper. We knew then that Paris had not fallen and would not fall. We knew the glory of Verdun.

Heard Battle of Somme.

"We knew last autumn of the battles of the Somme, for we saw wounded Germans coming back until the roads seemed choked with mangled men. We saw other thousands going back to the trenches after a brief rest and heard them cry out 'Jesus, have mercy! Jesus save us!'

"We heard wounded men tell of the maddening fire of the British and French guns, and we heard the tumult of those guns ourselves. Our situation, too, was maddening—we, who could noly be saved by our brothers' devastation of our beautiful France. Many of our girls were taken from time to time. Now all women able to work and having no children dependent on them, have been carried away slaves to Germany. We pray that they may suffer no sadder fate."

Unbroken Cannonading Along Canadian Front

Battle of Open Fields Has Picturesque Features, But Sights Are Peaceful to Remarkable Degree—Enemy's Positions Plainly Visible.

At the Front, Sunday Morning, March 25, via London, March 26.—The battle of the open fields is more picturesque than that of the mixed position, but the people back home whose sons are doing their share all around this spot to make the enemy sorry that he invaded France, and who at this moment in 10,000 churches are praying for their safety, may be interested in the sights and sounds of a modern battlefield. The sights are peaceful to a marvelous degree. From the height on which the situation of our army is at present one can see the promised land straight ahead, where the towers of a cathedral well within the German lines are plainly visible.

A ridge which stretches to the right is scarred with trenches, our own and the enemy's. The ruins of a village within our lines look utterly wretched, tho the shellfire blends harmoniously in the grey-green of the early spring, more like the decaying relic of the middle ages than that before the war which sheltered two thousand people. In all this spacious landscape, extending several miles north and south, no human being is visible in the roads or fields. Soaring nearby, singing as he rises, and far above him the only sign of the grim meaning of this empty countryside, three British planes wing their way over the town to the enemy front in pursuit of Germans who were lately over our lines, the drone of whose engines is still plainly audible. They look like clumps of trees, curiously gaunt, but are too far distant to show the scars of frequent bombardment.

Looking over the landscape a deaf man, unaware of where he was, would see little abnormal, save the strange absence of man and beast, and the presence of at least half a dozen observation balloons and seven or eight aeroplanes, patrolling the front; site, a deceptive means of judging what is afoot. The roar of the great guns is continuous. There is more weight of projectiles used by the enemy and ourselves along this narrow front today than was used at Waterloo or any of the great battles of the past. Many of the guns are of the calibre of nine inches and over, and the explosion of shells from them is like the setting off of a blast in a quarry. Mingled with the roar of the heavy artillery is the lighter sound of the field guns, and the sharp fusillade of our anti-aircraft guns firing at German planes, and theirs at ours. With the drone of aircraft and the rat-tat-tat of the machine guns could our deaf man hear, he would have no doubt of all that tens of thousands of men, invisible to the eye, were doing their very best to kill one another, while the lark still soars and sings.

The thing seems monstrous, incredible, but the casualty lists prove that death is reaping a harvest in this seemingly deserted countryside. One of the recent achievements of the enemy of which he, doubtless, is proud, has been to destroy a part of the famous old abbey towers, one of the few relics of the middle ages remaining on this part of the battle front.

Stewart Lyon.

CANADIAN RAIDERS HAVE STIFF FIGHT

Troops Go Over Parapet, Forcing Germans to Give Way.

Canadian Headquarters in France, via London, March 26.—Sunday weather, with its drying winds, permitted the resumption of activity on the Canadian front this morning with one of those typical raids which keep Fritz wakeful and anxious. The enemy were on the alert, and a stiff fight took place when a raiding party went across into the Huns' territory. The enemy finally gave way, and as he fell back was caught under the barrage of our guns and suffered what is believed to be material losses. No prisoners were taken by the Canadians on this occasion.

The Germans on the front opposite us are hard fighters. They even begin to organize raids of their own, and the other night they reached a small outpost held by three men. They killed one and carried off the other two.

The news about Bapaume ridge aroused intense interest in the Canadian corps. Speculation has been rife as to the probable point north of Bapaume on which the enemy will pivot his retirement.

The death of the Duchess of Connaught is regretted by all the Canadian officers. Prince Arthur left the front for England on leave of absence when the condition of the duchess became serious.

Stewart Lyon.

FERVOR FOR THE WAR RUNS HIGH IN RUSSIA

Volynsky Guards March to Tauride Palace to Express Loyalty.

London, March 26.—The Volusky Guards, first regiment which declared for the revolution, marched Monday to the Tauride Palace to express loyalty to the government and the necessity of carrying on the war to a victorious end, says a Reuter Petrograd despatch. The guards carried a number of red banners and their band played the "Marseillaise." Among the inscriptions on the banners were: "Don't betray your comrades in the trenches," "Make shells."

A great crowd of peasants, soldiers and workmen went singing and cheering to the house of the late Count Tolstoi at Yasnaya Poliana and sent a deputation to greet the widowed countess in behalf of the Russian people. The countess was asked to come out with the portrait of Count Tolstoi, and she complied. Thereupon all knelt and chanted.

In South York.

South York wants to win the war more than anything else.

South York thinks the only way to win the war is by conscription.

South York is wondering if there is any way of getting conscription other than by a national government to that end, as in England.

DINEEN'S FUR SALE.

Store open at 10 o'clock this morning, with an array of bargains in furs, millinery and blouses and men's hats, unparalleled in the history of retail selling in Toronto. Prices are lower than half the actual cost. Dineen's, 140 Yonge street.

LATE NEWS BULLETINS

Russian War Minister at Riga

London, March 26.—Reuter's Petrograd correspondent announces the arrival of Alexander J. Guchkoff, Russian minister of war, at Riga.

French Loan Heavily Subscribed.

Paris, March 26.—The credit foncier new loan of 600,000,000 francs, 5½ per cents., issued at 280 francs 40 centimes for a 300 francs bond, closed today. The subscriptions exceed 4,000,000,000 francs.

Prussian Prince's Injuries Fatal

London, March 27.—The Daily Express says it learns that Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia, who was reported in a Madrid despatch as having been shot down by artillery while flying in an aeroplane over the British lines near Peronne, has died of his injuries.

Argentina Bars Grain Exports

Buenos Aires, March 26.—A presidential decree just issued forbids the exportation from Argentina of grain and flour. The object of the measure is to assure stocks necessary for the country.

U. S. TO HELP ALLIES BY PRODUCING FOOD

Increased Output Regarded as One of Most Important Means.

Washington, March 26.—Government officials look upon the speeding up of the foodstuffs production in the United States as one of the most important means of assisting in the war against Germany should the United States take an active part.

"Of the most important two things that this country could do for its allies in case of war—namely, to finance and to feed them—perhaps the more important is to maintain a steady flow of foodstuffs to their shores," says an authorized statement by Assistant Secretary Vrooman of the department of agriculture. It looks, the statement adds, as tho it would be a good business stroke for the farmer this spring to sow his normal oats acreage to spring wheat, and "it is certain that it would be a valuable step in the direction of national agricultural preparedness."

In order that the farmer may be protected in case of over-production the department will ask that congress take the necessary action.

BRITISH CARRY OUT RAID EAST OF LAKE DOIRAN

French Retake Trench Occupied By Foe North of Monastir.

Paris, March 26.—A French official communication says:

Eastern theatre: Yesterday east of Lake Doiran a raid by the British troops permitted them to bring back prisoners. In the region of Monastir the enemy having caused the evacuation on March 24, by means of jets of liquid flame of one of our trenches, which he occupied, was later driven out by a counter-attack.

"There was intermittent cannonading along the front on March 26."

NATURAL RESOURCES MUST BE SHIELDED

Foreign Control of British Dominions' Raw Material is Dangerous.

REQUIRE FULL SURVEY

Final Report of Imperial Commission Deals With Many Problems.

London, March 26.—via Reuter's Ottawa agency.—The final report of the dominions commission which has just been issued sets forth numerous conclusions and recommendations which it brings to the notice of the imperial and dominion governments. It declares, regarding the scientific development of natural resources, that it is vital that the empire be placed in a position enabling it to resist any pressure which a foreign power or a group of powers, could exercise in time of peace or war thru control of essential raw materials and commodities.

It recommends that a complete survey should accordingly be made of the ratio between empire production and empire requirements of such materials.

New Sources of Supply.

With reference to such materials and commodities as are mainly produced and controlled outside of the

(Concluded on Page 2, Column 4).

LOAN OVER-SUBSCRIBED BY A HUNDRED MILLION

Hon. W. T. White Particularly Grateful With Large Number of Small Subscriptions—Canada's Greatest Achievement Next to Mobilizing Army.

By a Staff Reporter.

Ottawa, March 26.—The third Canadian war loan has been a third magnificent success. It has been oversubscribed by one hundred million dollars. The loan was issued on March 12, and in less than a fortnight applications aggregating over $250,000,000 reached the minister of finance. As a result the banks will not receive any part of their sixty millions of subscriptions.

The following official statement was issued by the minister of finance:

"While it will be some days before all applications in the mails and now on their way from all parts of Canada will come to hand, we are able to announce officially that the loan has been oversubscribed by one hundred million dollars. This means that the banks will receive no part of their sixty millions of subscriptions, and that the other large subscriptions will be substantially scaled down on allotment. This will make for a very strong financial and market situation as Canadian liquid bank funds will be conserved for the general purposes of the community and the unsatisfied demand for the loan should more than maintain the issue price. Applications will aggregate over forty thousand, and it is particularly gratifying to note the increasing number of small subscriptions.

Great Achievement.

"The result is a most notable and significant success for the Canadian people. In the eyes of the outside world it will be regarded as our greatest achievement of the war, next to mobilizing our army and sending it overseas. It will immensely enhance our financial prestige and strengthen our credit should we later have recourse to foreign money markets. One thing it has demonstrated and that is that Canada, if she chooses, can do her own war financing among her own people. That is to say, it is within our power to be self-contained financially. If the people of Canada will continue to save money we shall finish the war with the greater part of our debt held by Canadians. This would constitute a very strong position, which we should strive to our utmost to attain. The government is, of course, greatly gratified at the outcome.

"There is a great difference between having this loan an accomplished fact behind us instead of an uncertain problem for the future.

Confidence Justified.

"If the government had not the greatest confidence in the Canadian people we should never have reached the determination to launch the loan at a time when the most powerful interests in New York hesitated to bring out the most attractive governmental issues which had long been awaiting flotation. We relied, first upon the patriotism of the Canadian people, without which the issue could have been only a partial or fragmentary success. We relied, secondly, upon the intrinsic merit of the securities, and the attractiveness of the rate at which they were offered. No one participating in this issue will ever have cause to regret his action. Our most sincere thanks are due to the people including the provincial governments, municipalities, insurance and fraternal societies, trust and loan companies and other financial, commercial and industrial establishments who so nobly supported the issue. Especially, do we feel that we should thank the press whose editorial support was valuable beyond monetary computation, the brokers who rendered magnificent service employing their most efficient organization both in Canada and the United States, and making lavish expenditure of moneys in public advertising and upon private propaganda reaching all sections of the community, and the chartered banks whose managers at over three thousand offices thruout Canada used their best endeavors to make the issue a success. It all comes back to the starting point that the Canadians are a wonderful people, capable of any national achievement. With them the bigger the undertaking, the greater the certainty of success."

FRENCH CAPTURE TWO BIG TOWNS AND BRITISH ONE

Important Progress South of the Oise, Despite Spirited Resistance By Germans—British Troops Take Village By Strong Attack—Bombing Assault By Enemy Near Cambrai is Dispersed.

PARIS, March 26.—Tho strongly opposed by the Germans, the French troops today occupied the Towns of Folembray and La Feuillee, south of the Coucy forest, says the official statement issued by the war office tonight.

Progress has also been made by the French north of Soissons, in the neighborhood of Vregny. The text reads:

North of the Somme there have been no essential changes. Between the Somme and the Oise our artillery dispersed enemy assemblies between Benay and Urvillers (St. Quentin sector).

South of the Oise we made important progress in the Bassee Foret de Coucy. Notwithstanding the difficulties in terrain and the spirited resistance of the enemy our troops occupied Folembray and La Feuillee.

North of Soissons we made progress in the region of Vregny.

Belgian communication: Last night a Belgian detachment entered German trenches near Steenstraete. After inflicting losses on the enemy and destroying his works the detachment returned to the Belgian lines with some prisoners. Spirited artillery actions occurred today in the direction of Dixmude and Steenstraete."

British Take Lagnicourt.

The British this morning attacked and captured the Village of Lagnicourt, according to the official report from British headquarters in France this evening. North of the Bapaume-Cambrai road 30 prisoners and a machine gun were taken. During the afternoon the Germans delivered counter-attacks from the east and northeast. The attacks, the statement says, were repulsed. The text reads:

This morning we attacked and captured the Village of Lagnicourt, north of the Bapaume-Cambrai road. We took thirty prisoners and a machine gun. During the afternoon the enemy delivered determined counter-attacks from the east and northeast, but were driven off.

Another bombing attack made by the enemy during the night upon our post north of Beaumetz-lez-Cambrai was repulsed. Parties of the enemy, who endeavored to approach our lines in the neighborhood of Fauquissart and east of Ypres, were dispersed by our machine gun fire.

There was considerable artillery activity today by both sides.

East of Neuville St. Vaast and Armentieres there was much fighting in the air yesterday, in the course of which two German machines were brought down and three others were driven down damaged. Seven of our machines are missing.

Official Account of Fighting.

Writing from the French front on Sunday a correspondent for the Associated Press says:

French troops had a chance today to show their dash and skill in semi-open fighting and took ample advantage of it. At the southern pivot of the so-called Hindenburg line, which is supposed to be about at Nailly, they came to grips on several occasions with the Germans, who attempted to make a stand on the edge of the Crouy Plateau, which is a strong offshoot of the still larger Laon Plateau. The Associated Press correspondent watched today's engagement from a nearby height and saw the French soldiers gradually push away the German opposition and attain the points they were seeking to occupy with a precision little short of marvelous. The French had kept close on the heels of the retiring Germans since they quit Soissons, never giving them a moment's respite until the pursuers occupied the sort of triangle formed by the three points of Crouy, Missy-Sur-Aisne and Pont Rouge, on the Maubeuge road. At the last named the Germans evidently expected to cease their retirement, as was shown by their abandoning the useless work of sawing down fruit trees.

French Incensed.

It was this wanton devastation by the Germans in the country around Soissons and other places which so incensed the French infantry, composed mostly of peasants and farmers, that they could scarcely be restrained from a desperate rush forward after the retreating foe. But prudence prevailed and careful handling enabled them eventually to capture from the Germans many positions which had been prepared for stern defence, such as Vuillery and Pont Rouge.

As the correspondent watched the countryside over which the attacking troops were proceeding not a vestige could be seen of the advancing men on foot. They trickled thru under cover of the brushwood until they had assembled in sufficient strength and near enough for striking a blow. Meanwhile German airmen circled overhead unable to locate them. Then an inferno of artillery fire broke forth from the French guns, after which a final spurt by the infantry carried the position, which on this occasion was a big farm house near Margival. This was held in the face of desperate counter-attacks.

The Germans themselves had few trenches in this vicinity, relying for the most part on organized centres of resistance and their heavy artillery.

Still Shells Soissons.

The correspondent had come up from Soissons thru a territory laid waste as had been the countryside everywhere else where the Germans had been forced to vacuate. Soissons itself is still bombarded almost daily and the final effort, before the Germans left the adjacent trenches on March 18, was an endeavor to set fire to the town and the much-battered cathedral. The latter was showered with incendiary shells, but these died out without affecting the heavy stone roof. The remainder of the cathedral had been much damaged during the previous bombardment and a German officer's diary found in an abandoned battery position shows that the attempt to destroy it was methodical.

The French troops are enthusiastic over their recent successes in open warfare in this vicinity, one of the most brilliant feats of which was the capture of Pont Rouge by famous Alpine rifle corps.

The Villages beyond Ribecourt, in the direction of Noyon, were completely destroyed on the eve of the rapid flight of the Germans. Of Bailly there remains nothing but a mass of ruins. Only a few agricultural implements escaped the systematic destruction.

Leaving this little village the first houses can be seen at Carlepont.