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FRIDAY MORNING JUNE 8 1917—FOURTEEN PAGES

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BRITISH OPEN GREAT JUNE OFFENSIVE WITH FIVE TO LILLE ON 10-MILE FRONT

Most Terrific Bombardment Ever Seen Precedes Attack Resulting in Capture of Powerfully Fortified Messines-Wytschaete Ridge, Followed Immediately by Carrying Germans' Rearward Positions on Five-Mile Front East of Oosttaverne—Whole Face of Country Changed by Mine Explosion, 5,000 Prisoners Counted and More Are Coming In.

COALITION CABINET WILL CALL ELECTION IN FALL

Laurier, Repudiated by Constitutional Liberals, Will Probably Resign Leadership—Pardee, Graham, Carvell, A. K. Maclean and Four Other Liberals Invited to Enter Cabinet—Liberal Caucus Today.

Ottawa, June 7.—A sign of relief went up this morning from members of both sides of the house when the correspondence between the party leaders was made public. The big coalition was, perhaps, too big for the ordinary M. P. to grasp, and it was, perhaps, the less welcome because it involved an immediate appeal to the people. The Conservatives at once gathered in caucus and cheered Sir Robert Borden to the echo. It was indeed, a glory hallelujah caucus. Everyone present voted for conscription upon the acceptance of the secretary of state, Hon. Mr. Severyn, minister of inland revenue, and several other Conservative members from the Province of Quebec. Sir Robert had no caucus, but gathered together in groups to discuss the situation during the day, and tonight the Conservatives were jubilant with their opponents correspondingly depressed. The Liberals, however, are to have a caucus tomorrow.

This will be the event of the session, because it is more than likely that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will tender his resignation upon the acceptance of his resignation will indicate the line of cleavage which now threatens to divide the Liberal party into hostile factions, with conscription as the bone of contention. On this account Sir Robert Borden, with the assent of Sir Harry, has decided upon a unionist government to consist of eight Conservatives and eight Liberals, but to be presided over by himself; that is, he will be the directing mind and have the casting vote.

This morning Hon. W. J. Hanna appeared in Ottawa and was at once greeted with a F. P. Pardee, chief Liberal whip. Later the two gentlemen conferred with Sir Robert Borden, and the World is in a position to state that Mr. Pardee was offered a portfolio and refused the same, still insisting upon his intention to resign and give his general support to the war policy of the administration.

Overtures to Liberals.
This is the first stone in the road that the triumphal government chariot has struck so far. The government plan this morning was to elect in the cabinet Mr. Pardee, Hon. Geo. P. Graham, Frank Carvell and A. K. Maclean of Halifax. These four were then to select four other Liberals in or out of parliament, thus making up the eight Liberals in a unionist cabinet of 16. Up to night the other three gentlemen just named had not received any summons from the prime minister, and it is supposed that they will attend the Liberal caucus in the morning. Mr. Graham, it is said, has severed his connection with The Montreal Herald but this does not necessarily mean that he is going into the government.

Election in October.
Government supporters are confident they can carry the conscription bill through parliament, and many of them think that they will also secure an election by parliamentary term, but those close to Sir Robert Borden say that it is his intention to dissolve parliament and have an election some time in October. If he decides upon an election, parliament will probably be kept in session during the dog days in order to pass a federal franchise act.

ANOTHER PHOTO FOUND ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Mrs. M. Spinks, 15 Rebecca street, wife of Pte. J. Spinks, sent this photograph to the World with the information that it was found somewhere in France by her husband, who sent it to her and asked that it be put in The World. If anyone knows whom it belongs to they can get it from Mrs. Spinks.

CONSCRIPTION MEASURE BEFORE HOUSE MONDAY

Galleries Crowded in Expectation of Dramatic Deliverances Speedily Empty When White Speaks on Insurance Bill—W. F. Maclean Urges State-Owned Cable.

Ottawa, June 7.—Altho the correspondence between Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, summing up the long negotiations between them for a coalition government was made public this morning, the report was current that both party leaders would state their position on opening of the house this afternoon. The result was an attendance of members and visitors almost without precedent. On the floor of the chamber was seated a party from government houses and a number of distinguished visitors, including veterans of the war, while the galleries were crowded to suffocation.

Galleries Soon Cleared.
When Sir Robert Borden rose upon the order of the day everyone leaned eagerly forward to hear the expected announcement, but the prime minister merely gave notice that on Monday next he would move the first reading of the conscription bill. Sir Wilfrid Laurier asked when the bill would be read the second time, and Sir Robert replied that he wished to go forward with the measure as quickly as possible. Then the deputy clerk read the first order of the day, which happened to be a bill to amend the insurance act. Sir Thomas White proceeded to address the house, explaining at some length the intricacies of the privy council's recent decision declaring ultra vires the most important clauses in the insurance act of 1910. Then the ladies of government were made a hurried exit, followed by nearly all the distinguished visitors on the floor of the chamber, and the finance minister's exposition was proceeded by the noise made by the sorely disappointed crowd that hurried away from the galleries.

Urges State-Owned Cable.
Later in the day the House discussed the breakdown of the Paulson Wireless Company, with whom the government had made a contract in 1913, and whose works are being taken over by the Marconi Company. W. F. Maclean (South York) recalled his prediction made in 1913 that the company would not be able to carry out its contract, and regretted that the Dominion Government at that time had not seriously addressed itself to task of procuring a state-owned cable line between Canada and the mother country. He urged the government to

By R. T. Small, Staff Correspondent of the Associated Press.
WITH the British armies in France, June 7, via London, June 8.—The British armies struck today on a new front and won a victory which supplements the successes at Arras during the past two months. The Germans, the apparently aware that the blow was coming and seemingly prepared to meet it, were driven from their nearly three years' hold on Messines Ridge, opposite poor old Ypres, the last remnant of an important Belgian town, which, with the help of the French and British in turn, has held out against all the massed attacks the Germans could fling against it, including the first great surprise of poison gas as a means of supposed civilized warfare.

Ypres in a sense was avenged today for Messines Ridge has been the vantage point from which the Germans have poured torrents of shells into the stricken city. The British also wiped off an old score against the Germans for their hold the ridge in October, 1914, and with very thin forces, and practically no artillery fought bloody, but costly, to hold it when the Prussian troops massed their modern and overpowering weapons of war against it.

Today's attack lacked many of the elements of surprise which accompanied the battle of Arras and the successful storming of Vimy ridge. There has been no doubt for three weeks past as to the intentions of the British. The Germans knew that a big push was to be made against Messines, and they had plenty of time to prepare for the defence of that place. Prisoners taken today, however, declared that the bombardment of Vimy was child's play compared with the gunfire turned upon Messines Ridge.

Carry Ten-mile Front.
This fire reached its climax just as dawn was greying the eastern skies and while the full moon was still suspended high in the heavens. Today's successes, won along about a ten-mile front from Observatory Ridge, southeast of Ypres, to Ploegsteert Wood, east of Armentieres, proved another triumph for British artillery supremacy. As the fighting was wholly on Belgian soil, however, the Belgian artillery stationed some distance north of the actual line, aided with a violent bombardment of the German positions within range of its varied calibre weapons.

Messines Ridge is a low-lying promontory, extending along the greater part of today's fighting front. It is an insignificant bit of ground to look at from below. At its greatest height it rises barely seventy metres above the sea level. The surrounding country is so low and flat, however, that Messines had an observation value practically incalculable. It was a position which dominated the northern half of the British line in the west, and no operations of a large character could be planned without its possession.

Seventy metres is not a great height, but when you have been sitting at twenty or thirty metres with the enemy looking down at you and pouring shot and shell incessantly about you, possession of the higher ground means a victory of supreme importance.

Lloyd George Got Up To Hear Explosions

British Premier Knew Exact Time for Opening of Attack and Heard Detonations from Mines 130 Miles Away.

LONDON, June 7.—The tremendous explosions which opened the British attack on Wytschaete Road were heard by David Lloyd George, the British premier, who was staying for the night at his residence, Walton Heath. Plans for the attack had been made in the premier's study, and he was in the house when the attack was intended to open it.

Accordingly, on retiring last night, Mr. Lloyd George gave orders to be called at 3 o'clock this morning, on the chance of being able to hear the explosions. The premier and other members of his household clearly heard the tremendous detonations, as also did persons at the premier's official residence in London, who supposed they were the sounds of heavy guns until later they learned from the despatches that they came from the explosion of mines.

There has been good fighting throughout the day, altho the artillery success had made the infantry assaults comparatively easy. Late today the Germans were reported massing in two flanking positions apparently for heavy counter-attacks. The British gunnery, however, had brought their guns far forward on the ridge and were prepared.

It was a day of intense heat and the sun worked steadily to the west. The attack went forward with clock-like regularity. At noon 2,500 prisoners had been counted and it was fully expected the they would reach 5,000. The British casualties were slight. Three out of four of the casualties were reported to be walking cases, who would return to duty in a few days.

Tribute to Plumer.
Today's victory was a tribute to the British army commanded by General Sir Herbert C. O. Plumer. This army has had the defence of the famous Ypres salient ever since the salient was created. The army has set in the shadow during the brilliant phases of the Somme and Arras offensives, but at last has come into its own. The preparations for today's show had been made carefully and deliberately. Each move was worked out to the last minute detail of the itinerary of each of the tanks. The tanks, by the way, had a field day. The attack began at dawn and the setting was as picturesque as can well be imagined. The day before had been hot and sultry. Toward evening there was a series of thunderstorms which extended well into the night, the lightning mingling with the flashes of the guns, but the thunder being virtually unheeded amid the din of the cannon. The full moon struggled continuously to break through the heavy clouds which scudded across the velvety night sky. On the way to the front were all the familiar pictures of the war, endless trains of motor trucks, all varieties of horse transport, including old-fashioned wagons which had been handed down from civil war days, and British soldiers marching to battle in the shadow of the stars. In the last night's humidity most of the soldiers were tramping along bareheaded, both to don the steel caps until compelled to do so.

this final terrific bombardment began. It had seemed that the battle of the Somme attained the ultimate in the close assembly of war weapons, but this sudden outpouring on Messines Ridge was beyond all calculation. The lighter field guns far forward set up a perfect curtain fire, under which the assaulting troops pushed on steadily to their allotted goals. Farther back the deep-throated heavies began to pour out torrents of high explosive shells on the German trenches and communications, while still other guns—enough to win an ordinary battle—confined themselves solely to the task of deluging German gunners in baths of gas fired in shells of every conceivable calibre.

Gas Gas Gunners.
The effect of this counter-battery work was appreciated until late in the day, when the infantry sent back word that their progress had been hampered by the enemy's artillery. Their casualties amounted to virtually nothing.

Great black observation balloons had stolen skyward in the din of the battle. In the wood back of the windmill spring birds, awakened by the deafening clamor, had begun to sing joyously. Like many children, who have come into the consciousness of being in the midst of the war, these birds regarded the appalling noise of the battle as a normal condition of life.

The Official Report.
The British troops made a second drive and carried the Village of Oosttaverne and the German positions east of the village over an extent of five miles. It is officially announced tonight.

The German casualties were very heavy and the British took more than 5,000 prisoners, many guns, trench mortars and machine guns. The text of the statement reads: "Our operations south of Ypres have been continued methodically throughout the day and have been attended by complete success."

The British captured important trench positions all the way from Observatory Ridge, southeast of Ypres, to Ploegsteert Wood north of Armentieres. More than 1,000,000 pounds of high explosives was blown up under the German forward positions. This is the most gigantic mining operation in the history of the war, spread panic among the Germans.

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