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FIRST PHASE OF GREAT BATTLE H/S TURNED IN FAVOR OF THE FRENCH

Nivelle Rushing Up Troops to Break Line Before Germans Can Consolidate Defense —Critics Believe Few Days Will Decide

The initial phase of the tremendous battle which has opened in northern France has apparently turned in favor of the French who are reported to have forced their way across the Ailette River, and the Crozat Canal at several points.

Along these waterways the Germans elected to make their first stand in defense of La Fere, toward which General Nivelle is rushing his advance troops in a desperate effort to break the Hindenburg line before the German defense is consolidated.

Farther south, the French are attempting to batter their way toward Laon but between them and the goal lie the great forests of Coucy and St. Gobain and the comparatively meagre advances reported from Paris indicate that the issue is still very much in doubt. Some ground has been gained northeast of Soissons but the fact that the French report having inflicted "very heavy losses on the Germans is an intimation that the invaders are holding this section in force.

STAND ON LILLE-LOAN LINE

French refugees from the devastated wilderness over which the retiring Germans have passed and their evidence to the accumulating proof that Field Marshal Von Hindenburg's purpose is to give battle to his pursuers on a line running from Lille to Laon. This means that, in the event of the French failing to break through at La Fere, a further withdrawal of the Germans is due to take place on the British front. The sharp salient running from Arras to Cambrai must be evacuated and, in spite of this assumption, London reports explosions and incendiary fires in the district about Arras. This additional retirement would mean the evacuation of about 500 more square miles of French territory, including the great coal mines around Lens.

The whole question at present appears to be whether the Allies can move their heavy artillery fast enough so as to strike a smashing blow at the Germans before the latter can effectively organize their positions. Military critics in Paris and London believe that a few days will decide this question.

HEAVY WORK LAST NIGHT

Paris, March 23.—A violent attack was made by the Germans last night north of St. Simon, in the region of east of Ham. Today's war office announcement says the Germans gained some ground at the beginning but were counter-attacked immediately and driven back as far as Beraucourt Le Grand, three miles northeast of St. Simon.

The statement follows:—"North of St. Simon the enemy made a violent attack last night on our positions near the village of Artemps.

"Our troops were thrown back slightly at first, but immediately counter-attacked with vigor and succeeded in driving the enemy as far as Seraucourt-Le-Grand.

"There was heavy artillery fighting between the Somme and the Oise. South of the Oise further detachments crossed the Ailette. There was intermittent cannonading in the hill region.

"North of Soissons we made new progress. It is now learned that the attack made by the enemy against the Vregny-Chivres front was extremely violent. The Germans hurled an entire regiment at a single point. Two of our companies of chasseurs, momentarily isolated, succeeded after violent fighting in disengaging themselves and returning with prisoners. The losses inflicted on the enemy in the course of these fruitless attacks were very heavy.

"Several surprise attacks of the enemy, northwest of Rheims, near Maisons-De-Champagne, in Avocourt Wood and in the region of St. Mihiel, were repulsed by our fire. A German pursuit airplane, an Albatross, was brought down yesterday in our lines in the region of Vezelise."

Enemy Reports.

Berlin, March 23, (via Sayville)—Heavy losses were inflicted by the Germans yesterday upon French troops who had crossed the Somme-Crozat Canal in the vicinity of St. Simon, so army headquarters announced today. "The French were repulsed and 280 prisoners and several machine guns were taken."

"One of our airships on Tuesday night effectively bombed British establishments near Murdos on the Island of Lemnos, and returned undamaged to its base."

On the Russo-Galician front, the war office reports there was no increase in military activity.

Berlin, March 23 (via Sayville)—The war office reports today that the French offensive on the Macedonian front is dying down. The report says:

"Except for one partial attack in the narrow strip of land between Presba and Ochrida Lakes and the harassing fire of the French near Monastir quiet prevails."

WANT TO OPEN STREET

Robertson, Foster & Smith, Ltd., have applied to the commissioner of public works for permission to excavate in front of their store in Dock street to install a fire-proof vault for the storage of books of record, etc. It is to be eight feet long and eight feet wide. The request will be submitted at the next meeting of the common council when the matter of rental rates will be taken up, etc.

RUSSIANS WIN VICTORY OVER TURKISH FORCE

Petrograd, March 23—Russian troops pushing west from Kermanshah in Persia have reached a point less than forty-five miles from the Mesopotamian border. The war office announced today that after a Turkish army had been beaten in a sixteen-hour battle outside of Kerind, the Turks had retreated to the vicinity of Kerind and made another stand there.

Another Russian column has attacked the Turks along the Shirwan River, a tributary of the Diala, about midway between Kermanshah and Sakkiz, from which last point another Russian army has been pushing southwestward into Mesopotamia. The Russians also have won a new success near Lake Van, in southern Turkish Armenia.

Petrograd, March 23—Via London—By numerous counter-attacks the Russians have repaired the breach made in their lines by the Germans near the Beresina River, east of Lida, on the Russian front, in a recent attack.

SASKATCHEWAN LIBERALS TO HOLD CONVENTION NEXT WEEK

Moosejaw, Sask., March 23—A provincial Liberal convention will be held here on March 28 and 29 with 800 delegates expected.

FOR COMFORT STATIONS

Commissioner Fisher is looking up data in connection with public comfort stations. He feels that one is needed in this city at a central place, presumably Market square. Whether or not it will materialize, he said, depends upon circumstances. When asked as to the feasibility of having a subterranean station, he said he feared that would be out of the question.

Girl Chums Kill Each Other In Booth In Cafe

Portsmouth, N. H., March 23—Two young women held revolvers at each other's temples and fired, both dropped dead, in a booth in the Portsmouth Cafe last night. They had previously registered at the Rockingham Hotel as Ethel Stanton and Rose King, of Wellesley, Mass. In a traveling bag left at the hotel by the King girl was found a letter referring to an agreement between the two girls to commit suicide and asking that they be buried together. The letter, signed "Peggy," was addressed to Mrs. E. I. Spaulding of Newton Centre, Mass. The police communicated with Mrs. Spaulding and learned that "Rose King" was her daughter. Miss Spaulding was a graduate of the Newton High School. She was prominent in athletics and had served as captain of the high school girls' hockey team.

A note addressed to C. S. Malsbury, Cincinnati, was found in the Stanton girl's bag.

The girls, each about twenty years of age, had been in the booth for more than two hours before other diners were startled to hear two shots. They rushed to the booth and found the girls lying dead on the floor.

MORE AMERICAN LIVES TAKEN BY GERMAN PIRATES

Steamship Healdton Sent Down By Submarine

PROBABLY SCORE KILLED

Reports Vary From Fourteen to Thirty-four — Another Matter for Wilson's Address to Congress at Session on April 2

Amsterdam, March 23—The Handelsblad says there are only six Americans among the survivors of the Healdton, an American steamer torpedoed by the Germans.

London, March 23—A Rotterdam despatch to the Daily Telegraph, says that it is reported there that thirty-four of the men on the Healdton were either killed when the vessel was attacked or drowned subsequently. A torpedo, which penetrated the engine room is said to have been responsible for the death of thirteen of the men.

London, March 23.—A Reuter's despatch from the Hague says that Captain Christopher, commander of the Healdton lifeboat, with seven occupants, was picked up by a Dutch destroyer.

The foregoing despatch may be possibly another version of an Amsterdam despatch received last night stating that a boat with seven Healdton survivors had reached the Dutch island of Terschelling in the North Sea. Conflicting reports in regard to the numbers of these who lost their lives when the Healdton was sunk by a submarine vary from fourteen to thirty-four.

Washington, March 23—The sinking of the American steamer Healdton with the probable loss of a score or more of her crew, many of whom were Americans, while another grave addition to the long list of German aggressions against the commerce of this country, cannot, it was said today, cause any immediate change in the situation between the United States and Germany. That a virtual state of war already exists and that government officials believe that they are doing everything possible to prepare the nation to meet that condition. The destruction of the Healdton, however, will be included by President Wilson in his summary of German attacks on American commerce when he goes before Congress at the extraordinary session on April 2.

The Heraldton was a Standard oil ship from Philadelphia for Rotterdam with a cargo of oil. She was torpedoed without warning at 8.15 on the evening of March 21, twenty-five miles north of Terschelling, Holland. The vessel was not armed.

EFFECT OF THE ENTRY OF THE U.S. INTO WORLD WAR

London Papers Discuss It—Chiefly Noticeable on the Sea and Most Welcome by Allies

London, March 23—The Times, commenting on the prospect of the United States entering the war, says, regarding a report that has been received here that any American action is likely to be confined to the protection of American and neutral interests on the seas and to assisting the Entente Allies commercially and financially.

"If we may say so, without the slightest suggestion of indiscretion, we have no doubt that it is help of this kind which would be most useful and most welcome to the allies. We should rejoice to see American armies fighting alongside our troops in vindication of righteousness and humanity, but we agree with the president and the American press that such aid, though valuable, would necessarily be delayed beyond the date at which victory will be placed beyond doubt."

The Morning Post expresses the hope that whatever action the United States may take, it will include placing in the United States prize courts all German shipping interned there. The newspaper doubts whether the United States, once in the war, could long maintain the distinction between restricted warfare and a full offensive. It contends that the sea is an essential factor in America's problem, and urges that the sole specific for the submarine menace is to defeat Germany's main fighting forces and control her naval bases.

The Morning Post remarks in this respect that the assumption that the Teutonic fleet cannot be destroyed so long as it remains in port, has not yet been proved and speculates whether it is impossible to devise a method for reaching German ships in port.

"We commend this suggestion to the inventive genius of America," says the newspaper, which adds: "If America will bear her part in exterminating the submarine she will confer the greatest and most enduring benefit of humanity."

The Wheat Market

Chicago, March 23.—Opening wheat prices, which ranged from the same as yesterday's finish to 1¼ higher, with May at 187 to 187½ and July at 157½ to 158, were followed by a slight reaction but then a fresh upturn all around.

ARMED PEACE.

Former Czar Taken To Palace Today And Now Is Prisoner

Tsarskoe Selo, Russia, Mar. 23—On his arrival here today in the custody of four members of the Duma, Nicholas Romanoff, the deposed emperor, was turned over immediately to the Tsarskoe-Selo commander and taken to the Alexandrovsky Palace, where the former Empress Alexandra already was interned.

A special train carrying the former ruler arrived at 1.30 o'clock on the branch line outside Alexandrovsky Park. On leaving the train Nicholas entered an automobile, accompanied by his adjutant, Prince Dolgorokoff, the only courtier of the first rank who accompanied him, and by the four Duma commissioners. They were driven to the palace.

Nicholas was met at the door in the left wing of the palace by Count Benkeldorff, who was his marshal of the court, and is now under arrest. The former ruler held himself erect, looking calm and indifferent, although he stepped from the automobile with nervous haste.

London, March 23—A despatch to the Times from Petrograd says: "Everybody is relieved to learn that the original plan for burying the victims of the revolution in the Winter Palace square has been abandoned, as it would have been unsanitary.

"Work of manufacturing munitions is proceeding well, but there are still difficulties with the workers, especially women, because of a dispute over the number of hours constituting a day's work.

Hague Reports Break-Down Of The Kaiser

London, March 23—Private messages have reached the Hague that Emperor William is suffering from a nervous breakdown. An Exchange Telegraph despatch so reports. His phyhicians are said to have ordered him to take the cure at Homburg.

GOVERNOR AND PREMIER IN FREDERICTON TODAY

Fredericton, March 23.—While the presence of Governor Wood and Premier Murray here has given rise to some political rumors there is nothing definite to report. The premier was about his office this morning attending to departmental matters and appeared quite unconcerned in regard to the future.

The European War Veterans Association last evening decided to celebrate the second anniversary of the battle of Ypres on April 22 by holding a church parade.

The trial of Fred Brown which has been going on behind closed doors since yesterday will likely be finished this evening. A girl witness failed to appear this morning and a bench warrant was issued.

CHANGE IN MAIL.

A parcel post and newspaper mail will close on Saturday afternoon, March 24, at two o'clock instead of six o'clock. There is no change in the hour of closing the letter mail, which remains at seven o'clock p. m.

Phelix and Pherdinand

WEATHER REPORT

Issued by Authority of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, R. F. Stupart, director of meterological service.

Synopsis—The depression which was in the southwest late yesterday, is now centred in Wisconsin with much increased energy. Light rain or snow has fallen over Lake Superior, while the weather is now becoming showery in the Peninsula of Ontario.

Ottawa Valley—Strong southerly winds, becoming showers this evening and tonight with some local thunderstorms. Saturday, showers at first, then clearing.

Milder; Showery

Maritime—Fine today. Saturday increasing southerly winds, milder and becoming showery.

New England forecast—Rain tonight and Saturday, warmer tonight, strong south and southwest winds.

LOAN OVERSUBSCRIBED BY $75,000,000

Ottawa, March 23.—With every indication of an unprecedented success, the lists will close tonight for Canada's third domestic loan of $150,000,000. The loan is fully subscribed and will be extensively oversubscribed, but to what extent cannot, of course, be known until all the returns are in. This will not be until some time next week, but it is believed the total will exceed $225,000,000

WEIGH AND TAG FOWL

Chatham, Ont., March 23.—The city council recently passed a by-law providing that all fowl sold on the local market must be weighed and a tag attached bearing the weight and the name of the seller. Women who come to the market say that they will not observe the new regulation, and will ship their fowl away. It is believed the difference can be smoothed over, and that women will see that they have been losing money on some of their stuff.

BURIED TODAY.

The funeral of John McDonald took place this afternoon from his late residence, 80 Erin street, to the Cathedral, where burial services were conducted by Rev. Francis Walker. Interment was made in the old Catholic cemetery.

The funeral of Mrs. Mary J. McFarlane took place this afternoon from her late residence, 290 Main street. Services were conducted at the house and grave by Rev. Neil J. McLaughlin, and interment was made in Cedar Hill.

A PLEASANT EVENING

Sapphire Rebekah Lodge entertained the visiting committee of I.O.O.F. of St. John, and representatives from brother lodges, Peerless and Pioneer, and several members of the Canadian Buffs last evening. A pleasing programme was rendered by Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Morshon, Mr. Spencer, Misses Gertrude Sparks, Bertha Perkins, Dorothy Oatey, Lena Magnusson, Iva Magnusson, and Miss Gibbs. Luncheon was served and a social half hour brought the evening to a delightful close.

THE STREETS.

Thirty-nine men were employed this morning by the public works department digging gutters and cutting ice off the principal streets where traffic is heavy. Commissioner Fisher said that he felt that he would much sooner save the money for street building, but that it was essential that the men be retained until the streets could be at least made passable. He said that the city engineer will have a scheme in vogue next year which he hopes will do away with the accumulation of so much ice.

Germans Fail In An Attack Made Against Canadian Positions

Enemy Loses Considerably Without Penetrating Dominion Lads' Line—Heavy Hun Artillery Still There

(By Stewart Lyon, correspondent of the Canadian Press.)

Canadian Headquarters in France, March 22—Evidence was supplied this morning by the enemy on the Canadian front that the general retirement south of Arras has not yet extended to the region held by the Canadians. The German guns, which have been returning a spasmodic fire to the increasing volume of our fire, suddenly opened up with great vigor yesterday.

After artillery preparation a raiding attack was made in the early dawn on the Canadians, who took a number of prisoners in a raid on the previous evening. The Canadians were ready for the enemy and a heavy fire was at once directed on the attacking force, which sustained considerable losses without at any point penetrating our lines.

The nature of the enemy's barrage is considered evidence that his artillery is still in position along this part of the front.

Prisoners recently taken profess entire ignorance of any measure looking to a withdrawal. The great events transpiring south of Arras have made most people optimists and once more there is talk about next "Christmas in Canada."

CONFERENCE OF NOVA SCOTIA COAL MEN CALLED FOR NEXT MONTH IN OTTAWA

Ottawa, March 23—Sir George E. Foster has called a conference of Nova Scotia coal mine operators for April 2. The meeting will discuss the whole question of the output of coal this season and the prospects for transportation. The mining output has fallen off greatly owing to the labor situation, many of the men enlisting for service. Ten million tons used to be supplied to St. Lawrence ports. Now much of it has to be secured in the States.

It is hoped to make such arrangements as will greatly increase the mining operations and also provide against transportation congestion.

GERMAN SECRETARY OF INTERIOR AND BERLIN PAPERS ARE AT OUTS

London, March 23.—A quarrel between Dr. Karl Helferrich, German secretary of the interior, and the Berlin newspapers over the government's distribution of print paper has been brought to the attention of the public by the refusal of the newspapers in the German capital, with the exception of the Socialist newspaper Vorwaerts, to print a speech delivered by Dr. Helferrich during the recent budget debate, according to a Berlin despatch forwarded by Reuter's Amsterdam correspondent.

The newspapers declared they were unable to print the secretary's speech owing to the scarcity of paper.

SUBMARINES FAIL TO INTERFERE MUCH WITH FRENCH SHIPPING

Paris, March 23.—The ministery of marine last night issued the following statement of arrival and departures of vessels in and from French ports during the week ended March 18 and of vessels sunk by submarines or mines:

"During the week ended March 18 at midnight, 920 merchantmen of all nations, above 100 tons net, excluding fishing boats, entered French ports and 914 departed.

"Six French merchantmen of more than 1,600 tons gross each and six under 1,600 tons and fifteen fishing boats were sunk by submarines or mines. Three vessels were attacked without success."

POWDER MAGAZINE IN QUEBEC PROVINCE BLOWN UP TODAY

Quebec, March 23—A message from Notre Dame Des Anges, Que., says that a powder magazine was blown up at three o'clock this morning and that four men have been injured, two of them seriously. The magazine was the property of the Weedon Mining Company.

NOT LIKE GERMANS

Paris, March 23.—The Japanese ambassador to France, Keishiro Matsui, speaking at a demonstration held yesterday at the Sorbonne in appreciation of Japan's part in the war, said:

"Japan adhered to the declaration of London of September 4, 1914, whereby the allies agreed not to conclude a separate peace with the Central Powers. Once her word is given, Japan's sense of honor would not allow her to act otherwise. We are not among those for whom such engagements are nothing but scraps of paper."

AUSTRIAN POOR SUFFER GREATLY FOR LACK OF FOOD

Ambassador and Other Americans in Vienna Ready to Leave at Moment's Notice

Geneva, March 23—Two American engineers who have just arrived from Vienna after being delayed for a fortnight at the frontier, say that United States Ambassador Penfield, his staff and many American families have packed their belongings and are ready to leave the Austrian capital at any moment.

The travelers say that Austrians generally believe that war with America is inevitable, but are not much concerned at the prospect. They added that food was very dear, but could be obtained in the hotels. The poorer classes, however, suffer horribly.

POPE DOES NOT SPEAK OF WAR AT CONCISTORY

Rome, March 23—For the first time since the world war began, Pope Benedict, in addressing the private consistory yesterday made no reference to international affairs. Cardinal Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, who left for France immediately after the consistory, said: "The Vatican continues its attitude of absolute impartiality toward all belligerents, but I must frankly confess that I have seen no sign of lack of interest on the part of the Pope for the allies. He has always displayed the greatest desire to lessen the horrors of war and ameliorate the conditions of prisoners as well as to obtain favorable treatment for Belgium.

"The Pope conducts negotiations for the provisioning of Belgium, obtaining German guarantees not to torpedo steamers taking supplies there, as England required. He obtained the internment, in Switzerland, of those who had been prisoners for eighteen months and parents of at least three children. He obtained the exchange of prisoners of war by England, France and Turkey. Latest reports caused the Vatican to hope that its insistence against Belgian deportations will be accepted by Germany and all Belgians will return to their homes.

"The Vatican is arranging to supply Syria and Lebanon, where the population is dying of starvation, with provisions conveyed in neutral steamers, mostly Spanish."

FOUR POWERS RECOGNIZE NEW RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT

London, March 23 — The British, French and Italian ambassadors at Petrograd conveyed to the minister of foreign affairs yesterday an official recognition, by their governments, of the Russian provisional government, says a Reuter's telegram from Petrograd under Thursday's date.

Washington, March 23.—Formal and full recognition, by the United States of the new government of Russia is announced at the state department.

The Moewe Back to Port.

Berlin, March 23—The German admiralty announces that the raider Moewe has returned to a home port, after a second cruise in the Atlantic. It is said that the vessel during this cruise "captured" shipping aggregating 123,100 tons gross.