

SIR SAM HUGHES GOING TO THE FRONT

The St. John Standard,

NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA.

OPERA HOUSE
TODAY--2.30--7 and 9
CANADA'S
FIGHTING FORCES

THE WEATHER.

Maritime—Strong west and north-west winds, fair and colder with snow flurries.

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MONDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 28, 1916

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FRENCH REGAIN LOST BUT AT VERDUN AND DELIVER SLEDGE-HAMMER BLOWS

STEADILY DRIVING HUN BACK FROM DOUAUMONT DESPITE HIS SPASMODIC RALLIES

French Not Only Recover Ground Lost But Push Germans Beyond Their Original Stand—British Extending Line to Keep Front Intact—Struggle at Verdun Developing Into Ghastly and Bloody Slaughter With French Holding Their Own.

Special to The Standard.

Ottawa, Feb. 27.—The French line is now being concentrated at Verdun, and the British line is being extended several miles to keep the line intact. The outer fort of Verdun has been recaptured by the French. These facts were cabled late last night and today to the Canadian government by Sir Max Aitken, the official representative of the government at the battle front in Flanders.

The first cable which was received by General Sir Sam Hughes, and which he promptly communicated to the Duke of Connaught, Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, stated that early yesterday the Germans had captured an outer fort of Verdun, but that later in the day the French had recaptured it. The cable said:

"ENEMY THIS MORNING CAPTURED OUTER FORT OF VERDUN. AFTERNOON RECAPTURED BY FRENCH. BATTLE HAS SETTLED INTO GHASTLY AND BLOODY SLAUGHTER."

General Hughes received another official cable from Sir Max Aitken this afternoon which conveyed the most encouraging news. The cable states that the French are now "steadily driving the enemy past Douaumont despite his spasmodic rallies."

BRITISH EXTENDING THEIR LINE.

This second cable contains nothing regarding the re-occupation of the fort of Douaumont, but the wording of the cable, said General Hughes tonight, indicates that the outer fort is probably a mass of ruins. "It begins to look," said the minister of militia, "as though the French had got the Hun trimmed all along the line."

A cable received by Sir Robert Borden from the British headquarters states that the French line is now being concentrated at Verdun, and that the British line is being extended to preserve the connection. The cable also conveys the information that at Verdun there are massed twenty German divisions, and that opposed to them are fifteen French divisions. The premier's cable also indicates the success of the French forces.

Recover Lost Ground.

Paris, Feb. 26.—The official statement issued by the war office tonight of the sanguinary struggle which has been going on around Fort Douaumont, it describes as "an advance element of the old defensive organization of the fortress of Verdun," and declares that the position captured this morning by the Germans was recaptured again by the French troops, who advanced beyond that point and have resisted all attempts to drive them back.

The text of the statement follows: "In Artois mine fighting has been in progress. We exploded two mines, one to the west of the road to Lille and the second to the east of Neuville-St. Vaast, under a tunnel occupied by the enemy."

"In Champagne we completely repulsed an attack by the enemy against a salient carried by us to the south of St. Marie-Ay. The total number of prisoners taken by us in this affair has reached 340, of whom nine are officers and thirty-six non-commissioned officers."

"Destructive fires have been carried out against the German works to the north of Verdun, Tourbe, and in the region of Mont Tatu."

"In the region to the north of Verdun the bombardment continues without cessation, and to the west of the Meuse. To these attacks of the enemy our troops have replied by counter-attacks carried out with vigor at the various points assailed on our front."

"All the new attempts of the Germans in the region of Champagne-Neuville and on La Cote Du Poivre, where we are solidly established have been repulsed."

"A furious struggle has been in progress around Fort Douaumont which is an advance element of the old defensive organization of Verdun fortress. The position captured this morning by the enemy, after several fruitless assaults cost him extremely heavy losses, was reached again and gone beyond by our troops which all the attempts of the enemy have not been able to push back."

"To the northeast of St. Mihiel our heavy artillery bombarded enemy positions and depots near Vigneulles. The Germans have fired several shells of large caliber in the direction of Nancy."

"Today in the region of Verdun, Adjutant Navarre, in a monoplane, beat down with machine gun two German aeroplanes, this achievement making five enemy aeroplanes brought down by this pilot. The enemy machines fell in our lines. Two aviators manning them were killed, while two others were made prisoners."

"On the same day one of our squadrons, composed of nine bombers, dropped 144 shells on the Sablon Railway station at Metz. Another of our squadrons bombarded the enemy establishments at Chamblay, northwest of Pont-A-Mousson."

The Belgian official communication reads: "The artillery actions were very spirited today on our front, particularly in the region to the north of Dixmude. Our batteries carried out destructive fires on the enemy works at Mercken."

German Attacks Ease Down Except at Fort Douaumont.

Paris, Feb. 27.—Except around Fort Douaumont, the French war office reports some abatement of the German attacks to the north of Verdun. To the east and west of the Douaumont position, the French troops are closely pressing the Germans which were able to gain a footing in these sections, and which, the war office further reports, are maintaining themselves with difficulty.

The French deny that the Germans have occupied the Cote De Talou. The official communication reads as follows:

"Between Solsous and Rheims destructive fires have been carried out on the enemy works in front of Veszel, and to the east of Troyon."

"In the region to the north of Verdun, following the violent actions of the preceding days, there has been some abatement in the efforts of the enemy in course of the day, except between the height of Douaumont and the plateau to the north of the village of Vaux, where a strong attack, carried out against our positions, was repulsed."

"To the east and west of the position of Douaumont, the slopes of which are covered with German bodies, our troops are pressing closely the enemy detachments, which were able to gain a foothold there and who are maintaining themselves with difficulty."

"According to the latest reports the Cote De Talou, rendered untenable as well for us as by the enemy by the bombardment of the two artillery, is

EVENTS IN THE WAR ZONES AS REVIEWED IN SHORT METRE

The great battle centering around Verdun, in which half a million men are engaged, is still being fought, at some points, with the same fury as characterized it several days ago.

Champ Neuville, to the west, and the fortified works of Douaumont, to the east of Fort Douaumont, have been captured by the Germans. Berlin also claims to have captured the Cote De Talou, to the west of Douaumont, but, according to the French official statement, the artillery fire coming from both sides has rendered this position untenable for either French or Germans.

The French are hurling attack after attack upon the Douaumont position held by the Germans, who are declared to be maintaining themselves with difficulty, but in the Woivre region, to the east of Verdun, the French advanced posts have been withdrawn.

Large reinforcements are being brought up, probably by both forces, and it is reported that the British lines are being extended in Belgium and France in order that French troops may be released for the Verdun battle.

Attack in Vosges Falls Through.

In the Vosges mountains also the Germans started a heavy offensive southeast of Celles, but it was completely checked by the French. On the other extreme end of the line, around Ypres, a British attack was repulsed by the Germans.

Between Solsous and Rheims a vigorous bombardment has been carried out against the German positions. Germany has instructed the ambassador at Washington to inform the American government that the assurance regarding the future conduct of submarine warfare will apply only to merchantmen of a peaceful character.

From Berlin no authoritative statement can be obtained regarding the date on which Germany's announced intention to sink armed merchantmen without warning will be operative although it is reported by Germany that the previously announced date, March 1, will be adhered to.

Fort occupied by any of the adversary forces.

"In the Woivre the enemy has come in contact with our advance posts in the direction of Blanzes and Moranville, where their efforts to debouch towards Hill 235 failed."

"In the Vosges there was an artillery duel at Hartmanns-Werkkopf. We took under our fire and dispersed an enemy detachment in the region of Senones."

British Beat Back Enemy.

London, Feb. 27.—The British official statement on the campaign in Flanders reads: "Last night we repulsed a small attack on our trenches north of the Ypres-Comines Canal. On the other hand the artillery on both sides has been active about Houthulst, Armentieres and Ypres."

Germany Denies It.

Berlin, Feb. 27, via London.—French attempts to recapture Fort Douaumont, one of the Verdun defenses, have been repulsed, says the official statement, issued today by the German army headquarters. The statement announces the capture of the French towns of Champ Neuville and Hardaumont.

The number of unwounded French prisoners taken by the Germans, it added, has reached a total of 16,909.

40 LOST WHEN STEAMER STRIKES MINE OFF DOVER

Most of Victims Women and Children—Boat Which Went to Rescue Also Sunk—Loss of Other Ships Increases Death Toll.

Dover, Feb. 27.—The steamship Matola, a 12,431 ton vessel, belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental line, struck a mine and sank within an hour, two miles off Dover today. More than forty persons were drowned or killed as a result of the accident.

The Matola left Tilbury only yesterday for Bombay, with mail, 119 passengers, of all classes, aboard and a crew numbering about 20, most of them Lascars.

The steamer has just passed Admiralty Pier at Dover, and was opposite Shakespeare Cliff, when an explosion shook her from end to end. She listed immediately to port. High seas were running, and the captain, realizing that great damage had been done to the after part of his vessel, tried to run her ashore, but the engine room was swamped and the ship became unmanageable. The plight of the vessel was observed and danger of craft of them, the British tanker Empress of Fort William, 2,181 tons, struck another mine and sank nearby.

The Empress was carrying 119 passengers and crew off. All the boats had already been swung out before she struck, as a precaution against accident, and all those aboard had sufficient time to put on lifebelts. Instruction in the use of which had been given the previous evening.

Boat after boat and a number of persons were sent away but several were picked up by the surrounding craft. It was at first thought that all had been saved, but later, bodies were washed ashore, and their number was gradually added to during the day.

Owing to the fact that Dover is under strict military law, it was possible to obtain only meagre details from those rescued. The captain said that both passengers and crew behaved splendidly.

The passengers were, for the most part, British officials in the Indian service, the most prominent being Judge Oldfield, of the Indian High Court.

Only one of the crew of the Empress of Fort William was drowned.

Forty-four Bodies Recovered.

Up to midnight the bodies landed from the Matola included eighteen men, eleven women and four children, in addition to eleven Lascars. Among the dead are Mrs. McLeod, wife of General McLeod, the military attaché at London, who was killed at 10.30 in the morning that the disaster occurred. The Matola was steaming down the channel, children playing on the deck and most of the passengers carrying lifebelts in their hands. Suddenly a terrific explosion blew in the side of the second saloon, and twenty minutes later the Matola sank.

Just before she went to the bottom the vessel turned turtle, and for a few seconds the keel was visible above the surface. According to eye-witnesses there was a second explosion, women under the water the vessel righted itself, the masts became visible, and then she went down.

The captain and officers stuck by the ship to the last. Though all were saved, not one of them left the ship in the boat; they were all picked out of the water.

Several children were blown to pieces, and the deck was covered with wreckage and wounded, but there was no sign of a panic.

Only a few boats could be lowered, and the heavy sea made the rescue work difficult. The majority of the saved were on rafts. Most of the children lost their lives owing to the fact that one boat already in the water drifted under another which was being lowered and capsized.

The captain remained on the bridge until thrown into the water by the last turch of the ship.

British Steamer Affre. London, Feb. 27.—The British steamer ship Suezier, from New York Feb. 11, for Havre, has been abandoned after at sea, according to a despatch to Lloyds from Lishtrahull, Ireland. All the members of the crew are reported to have been taken off by another steamer.

ROMANIA TO REMAIN A SPECTATOR?

Report, Which Comes Through Berlin, Says Bucharest Government Decided to Remain Outside the Ring.

Bucharest, Feb. 19, by courier to Berlin, Feb. 26 (12.23 p. m.)—The chances of Roumania being engaged in the war on either side exist no longer, according to the leaders of the responsible Roumanian parties, though it is not wholly out of the question that at the last minute Roumania may take part in the struggle to secure for herself territorial advantages at the expense of the belligerent whose defeat appears to be certain.

This is the quintessence of statements made to the Associated Press in a number of interviews with leaders of public thought and affairs. Those Roumanians who in the past have advocated action against the central group now say that the military situation in Europe is uninviting to Roumanians, while in other quarters it is still maintained that joining the Central Powers would be the best policy for this country. Nobody here expects that anything short of a military cataclysm will range Roumania on either side of the war.

Paris, Feb. 27.—Paris is extraordinarily calm in the presence of the great battle now in progress around Verdun. There are no indications of alarm or nervousness, but only sober confidence in the result prevails.

The desire among those who know the defensive strength of the lines seems to be that the attacks should continue, for, they argue, they losses on the German side would be in proportion to the efforts.

The whole front, from the Neph Sea to Switzerland, is on the alert, and all leaves of absence has been recalled. The French maximum effort has not yet been made. The total French losses, in killed, wounded and prisoners since the Verdun battle began, it was authoritatively stated this evening, have been less than the German official communication claims in prisoners. The Temps military review, which is usually written by General De La Croix, sums the situation up thus:

"The battle being fought is extremely serious. Even should the heights of Poivre and the Vauchoux be taken, the enemy would find us perhaps stronger on the Froidere-Houaumont line, from which begins the defenses, properly speaking, of the fortress, covered with trenches and batteries. This is a slice by the Germans: it is a battle against one of our armies in the garden at Verdun, and its forts don't figure in these combats as a support. The big guns of the enemy might destroy the fort of Douaumont without destroying anything more than an inert block of cement."

"The snow has not caused any diminution of the attacks, because they cannot be suspended. They must be continued to the end. The troops engaged would be unable to remain idle along in the territory captured while awaiting better weather conditions."

PREMIER GOING TO ENGLAND, CANADA'S WAR MINISTER TO THE BATTLE FRONT

Special to The Standard.

Ottawa, Feb. 27.—It was learned in official circles tonight that General Sir Sam Hughes will be at the battle front at the end of May or the beginning of June. General Hughes refused to say in what capacity he would see service, when he was approached tonight by The Standard, but it is well known that he has been invited to go to Europe by the highest authorities in Great Britain. It is known that a "feeler" was sent to the Canadian government several months ago to discover if General Hughes would consent to go, and if the Canadian government would consent to spare him from the important work he is doing in this country.

Nothing further concerning the matter was learned until it became known yesterday that he had accepted the invitation and that he had on once made arrangements for proceeding to England and Flanders. It is characteristic of the energetic actions of the minister of militia that every detail was attended to in a few hours, even to the passports of himself and his staff.

Among those who will proceed with him to the war are Capt. Harold Daly, of Winnipeg, son of the late Hon. T. M. Daly, and Capt. John Bassett, a member of the parliamentary press gallery. Premier Borden to England.

Sir Robert Borden is going to England in the late spring. He may go at the same time as General Hughes and it is possible that he may remain in the old country for the larger part of the summer.

When the prime minister is in Europe he will visit the Canadian troops in Flanders, or wherever they may be then.

Keep Peace at Cost of All But Humanity and Justice, Wilson Says

Washington, Feb. 27.—President Wilson told members and guests at a Gridiron Club dinner last night that America ought to keep out of the European war, "at the sacrifice of everything, except this single thing upon which her character and her history are founded, her sense of humanity and justice."

The address was confidential since the speech at the dinner of the Gridiron Club, composed of newspaper correspondents, are not reported. It was made public tonight, however, with the consent of the President and the club, because many of those who heard urged that it should go to the country.

The president spoke of the nation's affairs with unusual gravity. His hearers including several hundred members of congress, government officials, business men and correspondents, were brought to their feet, cheering, when he concluded with these words: "I would be just as much ashamed to be rash as I would be to be coward. Valor is self respecting. Valor is circumspect. Valor strikes only when it is right to strike. Valor withholds itself from all small implications and entanglements and waits for the great opportunities when the sword will flash as if it carried the light of Heaven upon its blade."

AUSTRIANS TAKE DURAZZO, ALBANIAN PORT

Vienna, via London, Feb. 27.—Austro-Hungarian troops occupied the Albanian port of Durazzo this morning, according to an official announcement issued today at the Austrian war office.

Berlin, via Sayville, Feb. 26.—The official statement from Austro-Hungarian headquarters today says that the Austro-Hungarian troops have advanced as far as the Isthmus to the east and north of Durazzo.

Huns' Losses Enormous.

Amsterdam, Feb. 26, via London, 4.37 p. m.—The Germans have gathered a considerable number of troops in Flanders and artillery reinforcements have been continuously arriving since December, according to the Echo Belge.

Not less than eighteen attacks were made recently by the Germans against the narrow front at Steenstraete, on the Comines Canal, south of Hill No. 160, declares the newspaper. Only two attacks had any success, but the German losses must have been heavy, it adds, it being estimated that the killed and wounded totalled 17,000.

A thaw would render the situation worse, and it must already be painful.

The Temps refers to the possibility of the attacks continuing for two weeks, and adds: "Let us continue to have complete and unshakable confidence in the final issue."

Ottawa Outclassed. Toronto, Feb. 27.—Toronto's so far outclassed Ottawa last night in the H. A. game at the arena that the spectators had little chance to enthruse. The score was 9 to 2.

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French People Look On Outcome Calmly and With Confidence

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SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS ROUT A TURK COLUMN

Amsterdam, via London, Feb. 27.—Allied airmen have attacked and destroyed the railway station and damaged the tunnel at Bleyberg, according to the Echo Belge.

London, Feb. 27.—A Turkish column was attacked and routed by South African troops yesterday at Azagra, Egypt, according to a British official statement issued tonight, which adds that the fleeing Turks are being pursued.

Petrograd, via London, Feb. 27.—The official communication issued today from general headquarters follows: "Western front: A lively artillery and rifle duel occurred in the Riga action. The activity of our artillery is reported to have been successful. Our scouts carried out a daring raid near Zade, southeast of Friedlandstadt. Without firing a shot they attacked some German positions and bayoneted numerous Germans."

"Near Iloukist an obstinate struggle for the possession of some trenches continued: "Caucasus front: During the last few days our detachments have been vigorously pursuing the Turks in a fierce snowstorm, our soldiers some times being up to their chests in snow."

"In Persia our troops dislodged the enemy from a series of positions and occupied Kermanshah."

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