

Belgians Under Fire.

Germans Having A tacked Along Their Front. Portuguese Troops Heavily Engaged. New Man Power Bill Involves Extreme Sacrifices. Conscription Will be Applied to Ireland. British Cavalry Get Their Chance.

ANOTHER OFFENSIVE.

LONDON, April 9. (Via Reuter's Ottawa Agency.)—Telegraphing from the British headquarters in France this evening, Reuter's correspondent says the enemy has been shelling us around with of Artillery for several days, employing gas shells very largely. Following a similar outbreak this morning, the Germans at 8 o'clock were seen advancing under cover of a dense mist, which limited the vision to a few hundred yards. Our patrols and sentries immediately opened fire, and the first steps of the utmost promptitude. The bombardment had extended from LaBasse to Fleurba taking in the part of the line held by the Portuguese. The extent of the infantry attack is not yet certain owing to the mist, and communication with the front line being interrupted by gunfire. Our airmen several days ago reported abnormal activity of the enemy behind his lines on this front. Bodies of enemy troops were seen marching, and also many mechanical transports and wagon trains were spotted. The Germans in their shirtings were seen carrying ammunition to the communication trenches, and consequently our gunners maintained an incessant fire on all roads and railways. News of the fighting is at present fragmentary, but the fighting is still progressing between Givency and the LaBasse Road. On the southern flank of the attack the enemy apparently has occupied some of our forward positions, principally east of the village of Leplanin, but on the left flank north of Givency it is reported that the line is holding well. A fierce hand-to-hand struggle is developing between Leplanin and Fleurba, the Portuguese front being heavily attacked east of the hamlet of Pevillon, where the enemy has apparently gained a footing. The weather has cleared, and the airmen are participating. The Germans are heavily shelling towns and villages near the fighting, especially Bethune and Estaires. The Germans are not having it all their own way. At one point we arrested the assailants and took eighty prisoners. The country in this sector is unfavorable for an offensive, our defense forming a pretty deep network.

LOYD GEORGE SPEAKS.

LONDON, April 9. Premier Lloyd George announced to the House of Commons this afternoon that the Irish Convention Report had been laid on the table. Premier Lloyd George told the House of Commons today that when the battle on the Somme commenced the total strength of the German army on the west front was approximately equal to the total of the Entente Allies. Lloyd George said his man-power proposals would involve extreme sacrifice by a part of the population of Great Britain. The Chamberlain battle, he said, was a very small event when compared to the present battle and until the strain had relaxed it would be difficult to find out exactly what had happened. In the course of his speech the British Premier said, "We have now entered the most critical period of the war. There is a lull in the storm, but the hurricane is not yet over. The fate of the Empire, of Europe, and of liberty may depend upon the success with which the last German attack is repulsed and countered." The Premier said the Cabinet had taken every step to hurry reinforcements. The number of guns and prisoners taken had been exaggerated greatly

by the Germans. The Ministry of Munitions, the Premier said, had been able to replace the guns and there were substantial reserves left. The Cabinet was confident the army would be equal to the next encounter. Mr. Lloyd George said the Cabinet had decided to recall General Gough, who was in command of the fifth army, against which the Germans made the principal gains. Until all the circumstances of his retirement were known, however, it would be unfair, he said, to censure him. Having gained an initial success, Mr. Lloyd George went on, the enemy was preparing a great attack and it would be a fatal error to underestimate the gravity of the prospect. In view of the critical period, said the Premier, he proposed to submit to Parliament to-day certain recommendations in order to assist the country and its Allies to weather the storm. He regretted to say that these proposals involved extreme sacrifices on the part of three classes of the population and nothing would justify them except the most extreme necessity and the fact that the nation was fighting for all which was essential and most sacred to the national life. The Germans attacked with 97 divisions approximately 1,150,000 men. The Premier told the House they were relying on the idea that the Allies had no united command and expected to divide the French and British armies. At one time of the battle the situation was critical, the enemy broke through between the third and fifth armies. The situation was retrieved by the magnificent conduct of the troops which retired but were not routed. The Premier said the fight might go on for seven or eight months. For the British army and navy, he stated almost six million men had been already raised. The issue of the great battle might well be determined, Mr. Lloyd George declared, by the dramatic intervention of President Wilson and his action in placing the American troops at the disposal of the Allies. He added that the German attack had stirred up America beyond anything that had been heard. The British reserves had further been drawn on to a considerable extent to make up for wastage. If the battle continued on the same scale the drain on man-power must cause anxiety. When an emergency had arisen which made it necessary to put men of 50 and boys of 18 into the fight for liberty, he declared it was not possible to exclude Ireland from conscription by a Parliament in which Ireland was represented and which had committed the country to the war without a dissenting voice. The character of the quarrel in which the country was engaged, he said, was as much Irish as English. When Mr. Lloyd George referred to Ireland, Alfred Brine, Nationalist member from Dublin, shouted, "We won't have Conscription in Ireland." (An uproar followed.) The report of the Irish Convention was adopted by a majority only and therefore the Government would take the responsibility, he said, for such proposals for self-government as were violent controversy. It would be some weeks before force-enrollment in Ireland began, he continued. One Nationalist cried, "It will never begin." Michael Flavin, Nationalist member from Kerry, said, "You come across and try to take us." Another Nationalist exclaimed, "It is a declaration of war against Ireland." Mr. Lloyd George told the Nationalists that Conscription and self-government would not go together, but that each must be taken on its merits. After the Premier had

delivered his address, Premier Asquith said that if, as he believed, the gravest peril which ever had menaced the Empire was now confronting it, there was no sacrifice Parliament was not prepared to make. He appealed to the Premier to give a little time for the consideration of the bill.

SANGUINARY FIGHTING.

WITH THE FRENCH ARMY IN FRANCE, April 7.—Though twenty-five divisions have been used up by the Germans in the last four days in an effort to break through the French line and reach the railroad running south from Amiens, all attacks have been checked by the wonderful resistance of the French, some of whom were thrown into the line as soon as they arrived on the battlefield. The Germans are obtaining only insignificant gains compared with the number of troops engaged which is at least three times more than the number of French defenders. The cheerfulness and confidence with which the French troops go into action is most remarkable. They feel they are better than the enemy and make light of the German superiority in numbers. The French command continues to work on the principle of using the smallest number of troops to stay the German rush, thus retaining the reserves for possible attacks some place else. Powerful mortars made their appearance behind the German infantry, but up to this time have not influenced the situation to any extent and in some cases the guns have been unable to approach within an effective range. On the other hand an enormous number of machine guns pour a most intense barrage into the French lines and at the same time German infantry make efforts under cover of this fire to get close to the French line in small groups and establish pockets from which to leap forward at the proper moment. This procedure was quickly neutralized by the French, and the Germans are now resuming massed attacks in which their men come under the direct fire of the French machine guns, rifle, grenades and 75's, which inflict terrible losses. The 75's do terrific execution, cutting wide lanes through the enemy ranks. The enemy commanders appeared to pay little attention to the slaughter, their aim being to reach the objective, whatever the cost. Late last night the enemy again attacked in the region of Grivences but was repulsed sanguinarily and forced back to their own lines with greatly diminished numbers. Further south in the vicinity of Noyon, they at first succeeded in entering the French positions, but later, after the most severe fighting, they were compelled to retire, leaving the situation unchanged. Mont Renaud, near Noyon, saw repeated attacks from the Germans throughout Saturday, but they were equally where the French barred the German advance through the Oise Valley toward Compiègne and Paris. When the Germans first swept down from Noyon the hill changed hands repeatedly. The ground thereabouts shows striking evidence of the fearful nature of the battle in the number of German bodies that can be seen. Since March 30th the French have not budged, in fact they have gained some ground on the northern slopes of the hill. The Germans occupied two hills overlooking Mount Renaud, which possesses little strategic value, although they afford a view of what is going on in Noyon and slightly beyond that town. Further eastward along the Oise the French fell back Saturday from the dangerous salient north of Amigny, fighting all the way. They retreated to better positions which had been prepared along the course of the Allette River.

THE CAVALRY'S GOOD WORK. WITH THE BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE, April 8.—No finer chapter has been provided from the story of the British defence since the German offensive began than that furnished by the cavalry. Never during the present war had horsemen been given the chance which they had in this more or less open warfare and they made the most of it. They have been here, there and everywhere filling in gaps, strengthening the lines and covering the retirement of the infantry. They have been brilliant and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it, despite the gruelling engagements. The con-

ponent saw long lines of cavalry on the road yesterday. They were battle worn and plainly showed the marks of hard fighting, and more than one trooper led a riderless horse. But the men's heads were up and their glances directed defiant circles while the horses cowered as though they too were ready for trouble. In the first three days of the German drive the cavalry fought mostly on foot and did valuable work. It was dismounted cavalry that held the Clezy-Ham line on March 22nd while the infantry withdrew. There was terrific fighting here. One party of dragoons was cut off all night during which they were out in the open battling for their lives. Finally they cut their way through the German lines at Jussey by main force. On the twenty-third the cavalry came into its own, for the horses were brought forward and the troopers began a series of spectacular feats. When Noyon was first threatened cavalry was sent to hold the line of the Oise west of the town. The British infantry was forced to fall back on the 26th and the cavalry was led back also with the intention of occupying the ridge near the village of Porquerucourt in the vicinity of Noyon. A race developed between the horsemen and the enemy infantry across the rolling ground. The Germans reached the northern part of the wood but the cavalry arrived on the other side about the same time and went rushing through the forest against the Germans. An intense fight at close quarters ensued and the cavalry was doing great execution when the order came for them to fall back in order to cover the retirement of the infantry which had succumbed to pressure at other points. The troops withdrew from their wood and brought up the rear, pausing often to fight rear guard actions with the hotly pressing enemy.

THE AMERICAN SURPRISE.

LONDON, April 9. All London was talking to-day about the latest war rumour the landing in England last night of an American airplane from a non-stop flight from New York with twelve passengers. The authorities declared there was no basis for the story, but this denial served merely to give it additional currency. According to the popular version this is the "big surprise" which Premier Lloyd-George said last week that the Americans would soon give the Germans.

HUN LOSSES.

WITH THE AMERICAN ARMIES IN FRANCE, April 8.—An American officer who has just returned from the battle field of Northern France, where he has been virtually since the beginning of the German offensive, estimates that thus far the Germans have lost at least 300,000 men in killed, wounded and missing. This officer formerly was in the British army and is familiar with all the conditions.

AERIAL ACTIVITY.

LONDON, April 9. The official statement on aerial operations last night says, "The visibility was good throughout yesterday and Sunday and several good targets were engaged by our low flying machines whose pilots dropped two tons of bombs and fired a great many rounds upon hostile troops and transports. On the battlefield south of the Somme the hostile aircraft were active. Six enemy machines were brought down in the air fighting and nine were driven out of control, two were shot down by our anti-aircraft guns. Four of our machines are missing. During the night five and a half tons of bombs were dropped on the Douai Railway station and Bapaume."

MERELY A LOCAL INCIDENT.

LONDON, April 9. A Reuter despatch from Moscow says the Japanese diplomatic mission has issued a statement guaranteeing that the landing of Japanese forces at Vladivostok is purely a local incident and declaring that its object will soon be fulfilled.

TAKES HIS SEAT.

LONDON, April 9. (Via Reuter's Ottawa Agency)—The ex-Premier of Newfoundland, Baron Morris, was introduced in the House of Lords to-day by Lords Desborough and Beaverbrook.

A LIE IS A LIE.

PARIS, April 9. The office of Premier Clemenceau has issued the following statement: "A diluted lie is still a lie. Count Czernin told a lie when he said that sometime before the German offensive began Premier Clemenceau caused him to be asked if he was ready to open negotiations and upon what basis. As to the passage in the manuscript note of Count Reverte when he says he acted for Austria to obtain from France peace proposals the text is authentic and Count Czernin has not endeavored to dispute it. To hide his confusion he tries to maintain that the conversation was resumed at the request of Clemenceau. Unfortunately for him there is a fact which reduces his allegation to nothing, namely, that Clemenceau was apprised of the matter on November 18, 1917, that is to say the day after he took over the Ministry of War. The communication from the intermediary is dated November 10th and intended for his pre-



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decessor. For Count Czernin's contention to be true Mr. Clemenceau would have had to take the initiative in the question if he was Premier. Thus Count Czernin is categorically contradicted by facts.

HOME RULE BILL FORECASTED.

LONDON, April 9. Several of the morning newspapers say that there is reason to believe that Premier Lloyd-George intends to fore-shadow in his speech to-day the introduction of a Home Rule measure which would set up an Irish parliament at Dublin with due safeguards for the Protestant minority and a compromise on the much discussed customs question. According to one paper the new bill also is expected to include military service and an executive responsible to the Irish parliament, but with no control over naval, army and foreign affairs.

PROMOTION BY SELECTION.

LONDON, April 9. King George has signed a Royal warrant providing that promotions to the rank of general in the British army shall be by selection instead of by seniority. "This, it is said, will make it possible for a young officer who shows brilliant abilities as a leader to jump over the heads of seniors in the service."

PASHA MAKES REVELATIONS.

PARIS, April 9. Revelations of the highest importance are said by the Matin to have been made by Bol Pasha. The newspaper asserts Bol has made only a beginning of what he has said and another important case in connection with the German propaganda in France is about to develop.

VISITS ITALIAN FRONT.

ITALIAN HEADQUARTERS IN NORTHERN ITALY, April 8.—(By the Associated Press)—Premier Orlando has just completed a tour of four days along the Italian mountain and river fronts. He visited most of the corps and division headquarters and conferred with commanders on the military situation on the various sectors. The Premier received from all an impression of strong confidence prevailing in all ranks. The commanders spoke of the high morale of the troops and the dependable qualities they are constantly showing.

HALIFAX COAL MERCHANT DIES. HALIFAX, April 9. George E. Boak, a well-known coal merchant of this city, and enthusiastic

rotarian, died suddenly this morning at his home here. He was a son of the late Sir Robert Boak.

PROMINENT PHYSICIAN DEAD.

ST. JOHN, N. B., April 8. Dr. Boyle Travers died Saturday in his 94th year. He was one of St. John's most prominent physicians and the oldest in his profession in New Brunswick. He had been 65 years in active practice.

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