

No New Schedule for Street Railway on April 1.

LAST EDITION

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Tomorrow's Weather—Fair and Cool.

LONDON, ONTARIO, MONDAY, MARCH 30, 1914. TWELVE PAGES

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PRICE TWO CENTS.

Premier Asquith Takes Portfolio of Secretary of War—Alleged Abductors Found Technically Guilty and Receive Suspended Sentence—Lloyd George III—Churchill Reviews British Naval Situation—Coal Strike Imminent in England—Villa's Sympathizers Anxious.

SECRETARY OF WAR RESIGNS, ASQUITH TAKES UP POSITION

Premier's Action Comes as Surprise, But He Is Frantically Cheered as He Leaves House, Until His Re-election—Generals Definitely Resign.

DRAMATIC SCENE IN THE HOUSE

[Canadian Press.] London, March 30.—Col. John Seely, secretary of war, resigned his portfolio in the British cabinet today, and his resignation was accepted by the Premier.

Premier Asquith himself decided to take the secretaryship of war in place of Col. Seely.

Sir John French, chief of the imperial general staff of the British army, and Sir John Ewart, adjutant-general to the forces, definitely resigned from the service today. The first intimation received by members of Parliament that Col. Seely had definitely retired from the cabinet was when he entered the House and took a seat in the back benches instead of among his late colleagues.

The cause. The paragraph which caused the crisis was contained in a memorandum written to Brig.-Gen. Hubert Gough and contained the following: "The Government must retain its right to use all the forces of the crown in Ireland or elsewhere to maintain order and support the civil power in the ordinary execution of their duty, but it has no intention whatever of taking advantage of this right in order to crush political opposition to the policy or the principles of the home rule bill."

These guarantees were afterwards repudiated by the cabinet, and this was taken as a rebuff by Field Marshal Sir John French, who, as head of the imperial general staff, was virtual commander-in-chief of the army, and by Sir John Ewart, the adjutant-general to the forces.

General Resign.

The two generals immediately resigned, and all efforts made by the King, the Premier, and the other ministers failed to induce them to change their minds. Their resignations were made definite today.

Premier Takes Position. Premier Asquith's further announcement that he himself would take up the portfolio of secretary for war came in the nature of a surprise. Having announced his intention to take up the office, he declared he would retire from the House of Commons in accordance with the law "until it pleases my constituents to sanction my return."

Gets Ovation. The Premier then dramatically walked out of the chamber amid frantic cheers from the Liberals, the Nationalists and the Labor members, the whole body of whom rose to their feet and waved handkerchiefs and papers as he left.

Mr. Asquith having accepted "an office of profit under the crown" must now return to his constituency of East Fife, Scotland, for re-election. On the last occasion he received 5,149 votes against the 3,350 of his Unionist opponent, and was thus returned by a majority of 1,799.

When Premier Asquith entered the House today he was greeted with a great ovation from the members on the Ministerial side. He shortly afterwards rose before the crowded chamber to make his promised statement on the army crisis.

Statement Given. The Premier said that after full consideration of the situation, and after much consultation with Field Marshal French and Adj.-Gen. Ewart had persisted in their desire to be relieved of their offices, and in the public interest he "deeply deplored the decision of these gallant officers, and I cannot speak too warmly or gratefully of the ability, loyalty and devotion with which they have served the state and the army, and will, I hope, continue to serve."

The Prime Minister told the House that Col. Seely had informed him to his great regret, that he felt bound to take the same course and resign from the secretaryship of war.

Very Reluctant.

Mr. Asquith then sprang his sensation on the House. He said: "In the circumstances and after much consideration I have taken the step only with the greatest reluctance in what I believe to be a great public emergency."

That the Premier's announcement was a complete surprise was evident on every hand. The members on the Ministerial side of the House were momentarily struck dumb, but then they jumped onto their seats and broke out in wild hurrahs.

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SILENCE OF VILLA CAUSE OF ANXIETY TO SYMPATHIZERS

Rumors of Reinforcements For Torreon Defender Received With Misgiving.

ARE REBELS IN DANGER?

Magnificent Federal Defence Surprises Rebels—Is Mystery to All.

[Canadian Press.] Chihuahua, Mexico, March 30.—For seven days Francisco Villa, military leader of the Constitutional revolution, has waged his battle against Torreon. For six days the fight has been the bitterest and the loss of life the heaviest in the recent history of Mexico, judging from the meager press dispatches received from the front, and the stories of slaughter told today by many of the 533 wounded veterans of Torreon, who are interned in hospitals here.

Constitutionalist sympathizers and rebel officers in Chihuahua again have become anxious as to the fate of their military leader and the remnants of the 12,000 men who marched to Torreon with him to engage in the revolution's first decisive battle. No word from Villa came early today to relieve the anxiety which obtained throughout Chihuahua. Reports that heavy reinforcements were hastening to relieve General Refugio Velasco, the Federal commander at Torreon, who has made such a resourceful resistance against the rebels, were received here with misgivings. But it is the fact that no news of General Villa's progress has come through for many hours, that is responsible for the greatest anxiety as to the fate. When advantage has been with the rebel leader in the past, free access to telegraphic communication was given to newspaper correspondents at the front, but when he met reverses Villa would allow no news sent over the wires.

Army officers here fear that Villa and his army are in a difficult and perhaps dangerous position. The many days of almost constant aggressive warfare at Gomez Palacio and the city of Torreon, it is thought, have exhausted both men and supplies. From stories told by the wounded, the rebel vanguard ran into a trap at Gomez Palacio which cost them dearly in men and ammunition. But spurred by the seemingly irresistible energy of General Villa, the soldiers wrested victory from what looked like defeat and carried their fight to the very heart of Torreon.

Splendid Defence. Those familiar with the geography of Torreon and its vicinity cannot understand how General Velasco has been able to withstand the vigorous attack by a numerical superior force as long as he has, he having been driven, according to report, to the very southern edge of the city. The only solution which presents itself is that General Velasco and his men had succeeded in holding the roundhouse and railroad buildings in spite of the artillery fire which Villa might have been able to direct against them.

Some Optimists. There are those optimistic enough to believe that General Villa has driven the rebels from the stronghold and is pursuing them down the valley to the south, with the intention of so demoralizing the Federal forces that the result in the end will be a complete victory for the revolution. This theory is discounted, however, because of the fact that no news of General Villa's progress has come through for many hours, that is responsible for the greatest anxiety as to the fate. When advantage has been with the rebel leader in the past, free access to telegraphic communication was given to newspaper correspondents at the front, but when he met reverses Villa would allow no news sent over the wires.

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TAKES RESPONSIBILITY OF WAR SECRETARYSHIP ON HIS OWN SHOULDERS

Will Take Up Question of It on Courthouse Site With County.

CRITICIZES POLICE FORCE

Controller Coles, Referring to Stopping Fire Truck, Says Officers Are Over Official.

[Canadian Press.] London, March 30.—William Ewart Gladstone was the last British statesman who could make popular reading with a speech expounding the annual budget of Government appropriations. Winston Spencer Churchill has done the same thing for the naval estimates. The First Lord of the Admiralty compelled the House of Commons to listen for two and a half hours, while he gave a review of the latest achievements in naval science, so interesting that even the "little navy" men kept their seats to the end.

Battle between great modern ironclads the First Lord described as "more like a battle between two eggshells striking each other with hammers, than two men in armor striking at each other with heavy swords. The offensive power of modern warships is out of proportion to their defensive power. Never was the disproportion so marked. In the light of that illustration the awful importance of good gunnery must come home to us. In order to remove the danger of hitting hard and keeping on hitting, and the necessity of spending money in arriving at the highest possible efficiency."

Leads in Flying. Mr. Churchill believes that the British navy leads the world in flying. His personal exploits in that direction have been criticised as foolhardy for one of his position. He promised to give his fellow-members unique exhibition later in the session by bringing a fleet of airships over the Parliament buildings. "If the House will take it kindly," he remarked, "in order to remove the danger of hitting hard and keeping on hitting, and the necessity of spending money in arriving at the highest possible efficiency."

Admiralty now possesses fifteen airships, ten of which are large vessels of over forty-five miles an hour speed, with 62 seaplanes and 41 ordinary aeroplanes. Mr. Churchill declared his belief in the future of the aeroplane, but admitted that the airship had advantages in the greater radius of action, being able to remain aloft 48 hours; in greater carrying capacity and efficiency of flight work.

Increase Predicted. There are 20 officers and 120 pilots who have received certificates of proficiency from the Aero Club. Attached to the flying service altogether are 156 officers and 500 men, and he predicted that the numbers would reach 180 officers and 1,400 men before the end of the year. When he came to the Admiralty two and a half years ago there were nine machines. Five stations have been equipped along the coast, with full arrangements for housing machines and quarters for officers and men, and two more are under construction. Special seaplane vessels are being built.

Wireless on Seaplanes. "Of course, the heavy seaplanes which we are developing now, the First Lord said, "will carry formidable explosives, which could be dropped on transports. They carry wireless telegraphy, which enables them to signal 120 miles effectively, and they have been quite recently able even to receive a message while in the air."

Where Does Oil Come From? On the vital question of the navy's steps to introduce oil as fuel for warships and to secure sufficient supplies thereof, the First Lord's explanations were noteworthy, principally for what he refused to say. The Government maintains the greatest secrecy concerning the location of the oil reserves, as well as the sources of supply. The sum of \$7,700,000 was Continued on Page Nine.

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