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**Semi-Weekly Telegraph and The News**

ST. JOHN, N. B., APRIL 5, 1916.

**WAR COMMENT.**

The British government recently permitted several American correspondents to visit the British army on the western front. The New York Herald correspondent presents, in the course of a long cablegram, these conclusions as a result of what he saw:

"First—That France and Great Britain are indissolubly united as a result of their joint sacrifices.

"Second—That the soldiers of the French and British armies, from the generalissimo down to 'Tommy' and the 'Polly' are sworn friends.

"Third—That the British army to-day is a mighty machine, becoming mightier hourly, a marvel of efficiency, and that behind it, as it continues to grow, more forward and fiercer, is a marvellously organized, developed in less than twenty months, which provides the best of foodstuffs for the inner man and warm clothing and all other essentials for the outer man, the whole of it is ever forwarding troops, guns, munitions and other accessories against that great hour when the final 'great push' comes that will end the war.

The British and Canadians are now holding eighty miles of the western front, compared with forty last summer, according to the Toronto Star. It says the official statement issued last Friday indicates that Sir Douglas Haig has again lengthened his line. 'The British,' says the Star, 'are now occupying the front opposite Soches, as well as opposite Arras. They now hold trenches on the west slope of Hill 70, north of Loos, and also on Hill 140 on the south side of the Lens salient. Places like Ablain, Carency, and Notre Dame de Lorette which the French captured last year as the result of bitter fighting are now defended by British troops. It is not clear whether the British have taken over Neuville and the famous Labyrinth, but it would not be surprising if they have done so. The British are known to hold about eighty miles of line, or twice as much as they held last July. A British statement refers to artillery activity at various points which it says caused a big explosion in the enemy lines.' We may hear more about that explosion in the days to come.

Germany's Balkan commander, Field Marshal Von Mackensen, is leaving for Turkey to put new life in the Turkish army. Late despatches bring the information that he will make every effort to prevent the disheartened Turks from concluding a separate peace with the Allies. A Rome despatch also says that Von Mackensen is planning to lead a Turkish army to the relief of Trebizond, now beleaguered by the Russians. There are nearly 100,000 Turks in the beleaguered city, and the garrison is short of food and ammunition and suffering severely. Military critics do not believe that Von Mackensen will be able to prevent the Russians from capturing Trebizond, if, indeed, he succeeds in getting near the city before it is forced to capitulate.

The Germans have not yet abandoned their attempts to take Verdun. From their terrific onslaught in massed formation at Malancourt it is clear that they are willing to make further heavy sacrifices of men in their efforts to pierce the French line. The French appear confident, however, and it is not believed that more important positions are in real danger. The outcome of the present fighting in the Verdun territory is awaited with keen interest.

The correspondent of a London newspaper writing from the Suez Canal, declares that the canal and Egypt are perfectly secure from Turkish attack. He does not even think that the enemy has the faintest prospect of sending a force large enough to make any impression on the defenses which have been prepared. He points out that Great Britain has made a vast expenditure in money and labor to secure the freedom of the waterway connecting the seas of east and west and that a quarter of a million of the enemy have less chance to take the canal and invade Egypt to-day than 15,000 Turks would have had thirteen months ago. These preparations, he says, involve an expenditure which is 'an insurance premium that no home or colonial Briton will grudge.' In order for the enemy to get anywhere he would have to cross a practically wasteless waste with nothing to sustain an army except what he could carry from his base a hundred miles away.

The British, this writer says, have

constructed numerous light railways on the eastern side of the canal and have laid an elaborate system of pipe lines for the water supply, and he adds: 'Unless the Turks make similar arrangements over ten times the mileage, they cannot bring an army equal in numbers to what they have to meet, nor keep them opposite our lines for more than two days, even without a shot being fired at them.'

An English military observer, who is now with the French army at the front, writes to the London World that France is raising and training a large colonial army for use on the western front this summer. 'Up to the present,' he says, 'no fewer than 600,000 native troops have been raised by our ally for service in the various campaigns. The majority came from Northern Africa, and many have already fought in France and Gallipoli. A considerable force, which has been engaged in the Cameroons, is now liberated for service in France. Forty thousand men were obtained from Morocco, while even Indo-China has supplied between forty and fifty thousand men. Most of these have been employed for relief work in the French garrisons, but they have also been used for industrial purposes, notably in making aeroplanes, frames and munitions generally. It affords a striking commentary on the single-hearted patriotism of the French nation that there has been no trades union interference with the importation of foreign labor. I wonder how it would be accepted in Great Britain!'

**THE VALLEY RAILWAY.**

The net result of Friday night's long discussion at the Board of Trade, over the Valley Railway question, is that those present, ask to be shown that the St. John river cannot be bridged before they will consider any proposition to adopt the west side route, which would make the Valley Railway an adjunct of the C. P. R. and blast the hopes of St. John of ever getting its rightful share of the traffic of the National Transcontinental.

Mr. W. Frank Hatheway proved absolutely that the west side scheme was indefensible so long as there was any chance at all of crossing the river and entering St. John by the eastern route, and Mr. W. E. Foster so utterly demolished the arguments of Mr. Thomson that there was really nothing more to be said except to attempt to belabor the issue or make personal insinuations.

It will be noted that of the five speakers who championed the eastern route, four were Conservatives and only one a Liberal, which ought to dispose of the suggestion that an attempt was being made to play the game of politics. The only political move in the game was the vote passed around yesterday to the Conservative ward workers to be on hand last night. They were there, but they declined to endorse the west side scheme till all the cards were placed on the table. And in that they showed a great deal more public spirit than some of their would-be leaders.

Mr. Hatheway's amendment was voted down because the citizens did not feel that they or the city council should bear the expense of the new surveys. If Mr. Thomson's amendment had been brought to a vote it would have been overwhelmingly defeated; but since Mayor Frink's amendment put the matter squarely up to the provincial government, the majority appeared to feel that the government should be given an opportunity to explain their position—if they cared to do so.

There were two distinctly opposite reasons put forward by the advocates of the west side route. One was that the St. John river could not be bridged, and this has not been established. The other, and it was hinted at rather than asserted, was that the provincial government had found the Valley Railway too big a load and had asked the federal government to agree to take it over, and Mr. Guellet did the rest.

The announcement by Mr. Foster that in reply to Hon. William Pugsley in parliament Sir Robert Borden had replied that the agreement between the Dominion government and the Grand Trunk Pacific was only temporary, completely changed the situation, so far as the argument that government operation of the line alters the relation of the National Transcontinental to St. John is concerned. There is no reason to believe that the Grand Trunk will not assume the operation of the whole line, and in that event would want to reach St. John and its own Courtney Bay terminals by the direct east side route. The more the people of St. John study the matter the more they will see the importance of standing out for the redemption of the pledges of both governments, and the making of St. John the terminal port of another transcontinental system. That means the Robtway route for the Valley Railway. Let us stand by that, and refuse to consent to any alternative scheme. In the meantime the provincial government is given an opportunity to show its hand.

**THE SHELL CHARGES.**

Sir Robert Borden has made a partial surrender on the shell charges and has ordered Sir Sam Hughes to return to Canada for an investigation into the false contracts made by the shell committee with the American Ammunition Company and the International Arms & Fuse Company, and the cartridge shell contract made by the shell committee with the Edwards Valve Company. While this is a backdown from the high stand taken by the Premier when the charges were first made it is by no means satisfactory to the people of this country.

The opposition asked for an investigation into very grave charges made by Hon. Dr. Pugsley, Mr. Carvell, Mr. Kite and others, involving the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars by the

shell committee and a sheer wastage of more than \$80,000,000. An inquiry by a parliamentary committee with full authority to go to the bottom of things was demanded. This Sir Robert Borden has been afraid to grant. The investigation which he now agrees to involves only about \$100,000 of the \$80,000,000 which Dr. Pugsley declares could be shown by a full and free investigation to have been wasted.

These things must be brought out and Premier Borden is only delaying the evil day. The people know what is going on and they refuse to be fooled by half-way measures. Mr. Borden's backdown is a victory for the public opinion of the country. But it would have been much better for Mr. Borden and his party in the long run had the Premier agreed to the sort of investigation that public opinion demands.

**RACKING MR. STEWART.**

The government stood squarely behind A. J. H. Stewart when Mr. Dugal attempted to move in the Legislature yesterday that the member for Gloucester, who was condemned by Mr. Commissioner Chandler, was not a fit and proper person to sit as a representative of the people in the House. When Mr. Dugal pointed out that the commissioner's report had been referred to many times in the Legislature and had been quoted from by more than one occasion, Premier Clark argued that as the report had not been formally submitted to the House it could not properly be discussed.

Premier Clark and his followers expect to get away with this sort of thing? The Chandler report was submitted to the people months ago by Attorney-General Baxter acting on the instructions of Premier Clark. It ought to have been formally presented to the Legislature as soon as that body convened. But the fact that it was held back was no good reason for refusing to permit Mr. Dugal to make his motion. The people know what the report says, and they are being forced to the conclusion that Premier Clark, his colleagues in the government and his followers in the Legislature have chosen to shoulder Mr. Stewart's political sins as they shouldered the political sins of Mr. Fleming. Will they whitewash Mr. Stewart in the dying hours of the session just as they whitewashed Mr. Fleming?

No wonder Mr. Dugal wants to know what the people think about it. The people will give their answer to that question when the proper time comes.

**A FLAT REFUSAL.**

The Entente Allies have given through the British Embassy at Washington, a firm but courteous answer to the 'tentative suggestion' made at Washington that they agree that all their merchant vessels should go unarmed 'on condition that Germany and Austria agree not to allow their submarines to attack them without warning.' As expected, the answer to this suggestion is a flat refusal to agree to any such thing.

Great Britain and France have very properly taken the position that no reliance could be placed upon the observance of such an agreement by German submarine commanders as Germany has repeatedly broken its word to neutrals and belligerents alike. It would seem that the Washington suggestion was in rather poor taste. This is the view taken by more than one influential American newspaper. The New York Journal of Commerce declares that 'Germany would have no more scruple about observing new agreements than it has shown with reference to old ones to which she was a party.' The Journal contends that the position of the Allies is a perfectly sound one and that 'the tentative suggestion itself, whatever its motive, was hardly short of being absurd and its acceptance would come quite as near being so.'

This view will be accepted by the civilized world. There will be no disarming of merchant vessels. Germany's second submarine campaign has been no more successful than the one launched earlier in the war by Von Tirpitz. The greatest sufferers from these activities have been the neutrals. Some large British and French steamers have been sent to the bottom, but they represent a very small portion of the total tonnage which has constant been moved through the war zone. So far as any real effect upon the progress of the war is concerned, the high seas have been a complete failure. It has shocked humanity and branded the Austro-Germans as murderers and pirates, but it has been of no military or naval advantage to the Huns.

**THE FIGHTING AIRMEN.**

The world has known no more daring combatants than the aviators who are engaged in this war. In daylight and in darkness these men of the air are busy scouting over the enemy's positions, most of the time under heavy fire, or riding some strategic base. Every feature of their work is full of risk and highly dangerous. They know when they ascend that they take their lives in their hands, and it is very rarely that a midling force returns without leaving behind some member of its own company dead or a prisoner within the enemy's lines.

Neither side has a monopoly of heroes in this branch of the service. If the German and Austrian aviators are less gallant in their conduct, if they delight in murderous deeds and the widespread killing of helpless women and children, it is because they have been so trained and are obeying the instructions of the Huns who rule in Berlin. It is not because they are less brave than their opponents in the armies of the Allies. The records of the war show that scores of aviators on both sides have made the supreme sacrifice without the slightest hesitation, meeting death thousands of feet in the air in brave attempts to

clean important information for their armies in the field or to fight their way through opposing lines of ships. The operations of the seaplanes which Great Britain is using with such good effect call for wonderful skill and daring on the part of the pilots in charge. Tremendous difficulties, in the face of successful raids on German ships, have made the task of the seaplanes a heroic one. The work is to destroy or cripple the Zeppelins and the Zepplin hangars, and if the Germans ever make a combined sea and air attack on the British fleet the seaplanes may be depended upon to take a thrilling part against the hostile air machines.

The dangerous duties of the flying corps are not generally appreciated because so little news regarding heroic exploits at the front is permitted to be published. But historians will give them a proud place in the annals of the war.

**THE CRISIS AT OTTAWA.**

Is the Borden government going to try to save itself by limiting the scope of the shell inquiry and throwing Sir Hughes overboard? The country has heard enough evidence to prove that the complete inquiry demanded by Sir Wilfrid and his followers is quite as necessary as the partial inquiry which Sir Robert Borden has been forced to concede. As to Sir Sam, whatever may be his fate, the government must accept responsibility for what he did and failed to do.

Testimony as to the gravity of the crisis at Ottawa is to be seen in many Conservative newspapers. Perhaps the most significant comment is that of the Toronto News, the principal government newspaper in Ontario, the editor of which is Sir John Willison. In a conspicuous first-page pronouncement upon the Ottawa revelations the News says:

'According to our despatches there is a tense situation at Ottawa. For many weeks there have been disturbing rumors in Parliament and in the public mind as to the dealings of Colonel J. Wesley Allison with contracts for munitions. These rumors have had additional force owing to the intimate private relations which exist between Allison and the Minister of Militia.'

'We hear from Ottawa that the government and the Conservative party are meeting upon the Minister of Militia and the dealings of Colonel J. Wesley Allison with contracts for munitions. These rumors have had additional force owing to the intimate private relations which exist between Allison and the Minister of Militia.'

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is held and strongly supported by Mr. Roosevelt, who is using the Mexican arguments in support of his policy of complete preparedness. On the surface it is the popular view, but there are many thoughtful people in the United States who are inclined to give Mr. Wilson some credit for his Mexican policy. While they do not relish the President's spineless attitude with respect to the German outrages and may not even go so far as to support his Mexican policy in detail, they are conscious nevertheless of the fact that a Mexican war would be a very serious and costly business for the United States. There is no doubt that if a United States army were sent into Mexico it would be a long time before that army could be withdrawn. In other words, it is questionable whether the results attained at such a high cost in blood and money would justify interference. The force now in Mexican territory in pursuit of Villa is merely a punitive one, and in no sense regarded as an army sent against the Mexican nation.

**PLAIN TALK FOR BORDEN.**

The Conservative Toronto Telegram puts the responsibility for the activities of Colonel J. Wesley Allison squarely upon Sir Robert Borden himself. It says: 'Whereabouts of Colonel J. Wesley Allison are only important to this country because Sir Robert Borden failed to occupy the right sort of whereabouts when Colonel J. Wesley Allison was establishing his intimacy with the government of which Sir Robert Borden is the head. The premiership of Canada, the leadership of the Conservative party, the position of Sir Robert Borden in the country, the right sort of whereabouts when Colonel J. Wesley Allison was establishing his intimacy with the government of which Sir Robert Borden is the head. The premiership of Canada, the leadership of the Conservative party, the position of Sir Robert Borden in the country, the right sort of whereabouts when Colonel J. Wesley Allison was establishing his intimacy with the government of which Sir Robert Borden is the head. 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