

THE WEATHER.

Mornings—Strong north and northwest winds; clearing and cool.

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OPERA HOUSE

TODAY MATINEE 2:15

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TREBIZOND, TURKEY'S CHIEF PORT ON BLACK SEA, FALLS TO THE RUSSIANS

SIR SAM HUGHES' STATEMENT IN COMMONS GIVES LIE DIRECT TO GRIT ALLEGATIONS

Minister of Militia's Statement Complete and Comprehensive, Clears Him of Imputations Cast Upon Him by His Traducers and Shows That Best Interests of Canada and Allies Were Safeguarded by His Actions—Determined, However, to Have Matter Probed to Bottom by Commission and Will Leave Conduct of His Department in Hands of Premier During Enquiry.

PREMIER BORDEN SAYS PSEUDO-CHARGES WILL BE THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED AND NO EFFORT ON PART OF GOVERNMENT WILL BE WANTING TO THAT END — COMMISSION WILL BEGIN ITS WORK TODAY.

Special to The Standard.

Ottawa, April 18.—Today will be notable in the records of parliament. Amid a scene of unusual excitement, galleries crowded to excess, hundreds unable to gain admission to the building, and members and everyone expectant, General Sir Sam Hughes faced his accusers. Previous events had been sensational; the Minister of Militia, after being assured by the leader of the opposition and the chief of his henchmen that they knew of nothing of importance to be brought up in the House that would affect him or his course of conduct as minister, and that they knew of absolutely nothing that would make his presence necessary in parliament the General left for the scene of battle in Europe, where the Canadian "boys" as he loves to describe them, were calling for him, and where his presence would relieve to a large extent some of the grave responsibilities of the over-burdened war office.

He was scarcely there when a small knot of political gunmen, with G. W. Kyte of Richmond as their marksman, opened fire on the absent minister. A plausible story was concocted charging nothing, but making statements regarding munitions contracts in the United States serious enough to render it necessary for the government, in the interests of the good name of Canada, to reconsider its decision not to allow a fishing expedition into the operations of the shell committee during the progress of the war. The object of the attack was to besmirch the name of General Hughes, to make political capital while he was away. What cared they that the name of Canada would suffer meanwhile in the eyes of the nations of the world, that the Dominion would stand forth amongst the Allies as a partner whose Minister of Militia even was aiding and abetting, and perhaps also participating in the scramble to make undue profits and rake-offs out of the blood and sacrifice of his fellow Canadians?

When Mr. Kyte made his allegations and insinuations upon the floor of parliament the Premier announced that, despite his previous declaration that there would be no enquiry, there would be a Royal Commission of enquiry. General Hughes was cabled for. He left the work that he had been sent to do. His great services were denied the Empire and the Allies at this most necessary and crucial period, and he returned to Canada.

Gives Lie Direct to Allegations.

Today he gave the lie direct to the allegations—for it must be remembered that there were no charges laid—and he announced that for the time being he would step down from the office of the Minister of Militia while the enquiry was in progress, and that the Prime Minister would administer the affairs of the department until his return. In other words, the country will lose the services of General Hughes while he is compelled to busy himself during the heat and burden of the day saving his own good name, and what is far more important, saving the good name of his native land.

The noble work that General Hughes has done for the cause of liberty has been cut short just when he is needed most by the irresponsible statements in the Commons of a

3,117 NON-COMBATANTS KILLED THROUGH MINES OR SUBMARINES

London, April 18.—Since the outbreak of the war 3,117 non-combatants have lost their lives in maritime disasters due to mines, or to submarines of hostile nations, Walter Rindemann, president of the Board of Trade, said in the House of Commons today. Of these 1,754 were seamen, 188 fishermen and 1,175 passengers.

AUSTRIA'S TURN NOW TO "EXPLAIN"

U. S. Ambassador Penfield at Vienna to Inquire Regarding Sinking of Russian bark Carrying Americans.

Washington, April 18.—Ambassador Penfield at Vienna has been instructed to inquire of the Austrian government regarding the recent attack without warning by an Austrian submarine on the Russian bark Imperator, carrying two Americans, Secretary Lansing said today that his inquiry was similar to that regarding the sinking of the Russian bark carrying the Sunnyside.

CASUALTIES AT ST. ELOI TO DATE 1160

Ottawa, April 18.—Saint Eloi casualties reported up to this afternoon number 1,160, of whom 271 are dead, 93 wounded, 4 missing and 42 ill.

TURKS LOSE SUBMARINE IN BLACK SEA

Struck Mine off Trebizond and Sank—Entire Crew Went to Their Death in Her.

New York, April 18.—An International News Service dispatch from London today says: "A Central News despatch from the Hague states that a Turkish submarine has been destroyed by a mine off Trebizond, in the Black Sea, the entire crew perishing. Four new submarines are reported to have been sent to Turkey from Germany." A Salsolki despatch to the same agency says: "A Bulgarian, convicted of espionage, was executed here today. Another Bulgarian is awaiting trial. They were caught spying on the Allies." "Our valiant troops, after the sanguinary battle of the 14th on the Kara Dere river, pressed the Turks without respite and surmounted incredible obstacles, everywhere breaking the fierce resistance of the enemy. The well combined action of the fleet permitted the execution of most hazardous landing operations and lent its support to its artillery to the troops operating in the coastal region."

member from Nova Scotia, whose services in Canada's cause have yet to be mentioned.

The effect of the statement of the General was immediate. It is perfectly true that even on his own side there had been those who doubted whether he would be able to clear himself completely from the imputations cast upon him, but the doubts were completely dispelled. Not a man upon the right of the Speaker, and very few on the left but showed they were convinced of the absolute innocence of General Hughes, and were glad. But the statement did far more. It showed that the Minister of Militia had acted in the best interests of Canada and the Allies, that no man could have done more than he did and the prompt action he took has done much to aid the allied cause. The first man to congratulate him was Dr. Michael Clarke, the Liberal member for Red Deer.

Several facts stand out prominently as the result of the appearance of General Hughes in the House today. The minister of militia stands higher than ever. Mr. Kyte is practically disgraced, and should forfeit his seat in spite of denials Sir Wilfrid Laurier did see D. A. Thomas, the representative in Canada of David Lloyd George. The Liberals told Sir Sam that nothing would be brought up in his absence. Sir Wilfrid Laurier gave his personal pledge that he knew of nothing to prevent him going to England on duty, and so Sir Wilfrid shares Mr. Kyte's humiliation. Some better class Liberals, like Dr. Clarke, have from the beginning condemned the unfair tactics.

General Hughes made it quite clear that the statements made by Mr. Kyte were untrue. The agreement he spoke of was fabricated and was never in existence, but for mushroom notoriety the member for Richmond was willing to attempt to hoodwink the Canadian people in war times. The minister's statement was complete, comprehensive, and convincing, and people are asking now what is the use of the commission. It is quite clear

that if the Kyte allegations had been made in the presence of the minister of militia, thus giving him an opportunity of replying at once, and explaining the whole situation, no investigation would have been allowed, because it is absolutely unnecessary. The Prime Minister made a splendid cap-sheat to the afternoon's proceedings when he answered with force and earnestness that the whole of these charges made by Mr. Kyte would be probed to the very depths, and in the meantime that he had taken over the work of the minister of militia, heavy though it might be, and adding to his burdens, to enable General Hughes to attend the commission and throw every light that could be thrown on all the charges that Mr. Kyte and his friends may be disposed to put forward. One of Sir Robert's sentences was powerful: "The object of the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, at a very critical time in the history of this country, and of the Empire seemed to me to swell up an enormous sum of supposed profits, and by veiled insinuation to connect the minister of militia with them. It

TURKS UNABLE TO WITHSTAND COMBINED EFFORTS OF RUSSIAN ARMY AND FLEET AT TREBIZOND

Czar's Forces Break Down Most Difficult Obstacles on Land, While Fleet Lend Support, and Most Important Position on Anatolian Coast is Captured.

Petrograd, April 18, via London, 8:33 p. m.—Trebizond, the most important Turkish city on the Black Sea, has been captured by the Russians.

The importance of the Black Sea port was due to its command of the point where the chief trade route from Persia and Central Asia descends to the sea. It is separated from the rest of Asia Minor by a barrier of rugged mountains, 7,000 to 8,000 feet high, which the Russian armies had to traverse.

Since the fall of Erzerum and the capture, three weeks later, of Bitlis the Turks are said to have increased the Trebizond garrison until it contained three complete divisions, or about 54,000 men, and to have done everything possible to strengthen the Black Sea port.

Report Confirmed.

Bulletin—Petrograd, via London, April 18, 10:55 p. m.—The fall of Trebizond to the Russian arms is confirmed in an official communication issued late today.

The statement says: "Trebizond has been taken. The united efforts of our Caucasian army and Black Sea fleet have been crowned by the conquest of this fortified town, the most important position on the Anatolian coast."

700 Yards of Ground Won, Berlin Says.

Berlin, via London, April 18.—French positions in Steinhilber, 700 yards south of Handremont Farm, in the Verdun region, were captured by the Germans in their attack of yesterday, the war office announced today. The Germans took prisoner 1,646 wounded men.

The text of the statement follows: "Western front: Our artillery extensively bombarded British positions in the region of St. Eloi. We easily repulsed a weak hand grenade attack directed during the night against one of the mine craters we had occupied. On both sides of La Bassée Canal and northwest of Loos, spirited hand grenade fighting developed. In the region of Neuville and near Bourvaignes we exploded several mines with good results.

"On the battle field on both sides of the Meuse there were very violent artillery duels. On the right bank of the river our troops from Lower Saxony wrested from the French by storm positions on Steinhilber (Stones Quarry) 700 yards south of Handremont Farm, and on the ridge of hills to the northwest of Phlomot Farm. Forty-two officers, including three staff officers, and 1,646 men were captured unharmed, in addition to fifty wounded men. Their names will be published in the Gazette Des Ardennes, in the same manner as the names of all Frenchmen who have been made prisoner in this war. The names of 711 officers and 38,155 men whom we have taken prisoner since February 21 in the battles in the Meuse district also will be published. The reason is that the French attempt to cast doubt on our reports."

French Statement.

Paris, April 18, 10:46 p. m.—The official communication, issued by the war office tonight, reads: "In the Argonne our artillery was active in the region of Four De Paris, and against the roads and communications of the enemy.

"In the Verdun region bad weather impeded the operations during the course of the day. There was an intermittent bombardment west of the Meuse, in the sector of Hill 304 and to the east in the region south of the Handremont wood, and against our positions between Douaumont and Vaux. No infantry action took place.

"East of St. Mihiel our batteries shelled enemy concentrations near Juvincelle.

"There was slight artillery action, except in the region of Steenstraete, where the bombardment in the afternoon became very violent."

will be probed to the bottom by this commission, and no effort on the part of this government will be wanting to that end. Tomorrow this matter will proceed before the tribunal which has been selected."

COMMISSIONER TEED'S REPORT ON CHARGES AGAINST H. M. BLAIR Tabled in House Yesterday

Mr. Blair Found Guilty of Receiving Stock of Concrete Constructions, but Exonerated of Charge of Receiving Rake-off in Connection with Purchase of Supplies.

Fredericton, April 18.—In his report of the investigation of the charges preferred against Harry M. Blair, of the Board of Works, recently removed from office, which was tabled today, Commissioner Mariner G. Teed finds that Mr. Blair was "guilty of corruptly receiving stock of concrete constructions of the Province, Ltd., for his assistance in obtaining or endeavoring to obtain work or contracts or favorable consideration for that company from the said Department of Public Works."

Commissioner Teed's report in part is as follows: "The charges as alleged in the solemn declaration and as testified to by Mr. Colby are in substance as follows: That the Construction Company Limited, of Ottawa, was a contractor, with the Department of Public Works of the Province for the sandblasting and painting of bridges; that Harry M. Blair, being secretary of the said company, corruptly arranged with Colby, manager of the company, that gasoline and certain other material required for the contract should be purchased from Smith Brothers, or the Smith Foundry Company, at a price where he (Blair) would obtain a refund of profit from the sales; that he (Colby) pursuant to this arrangement purchased gasoline and other material from the Smiths and received a refund which he paid to Blair.

"That Mr. Blair, so being such secretary, corruptly promised that the company should be given other contracts in consideration of which, his or his influence in that behalf, Colby agreed to give and did give to Blair 200 fully paid up shares of the capital stock of the company of the par value of \$100 each, or \$20,000 in all.

"This can scarcely be called a charge but the allegation is to the effect that Mr. Ryan of Fredericton had told Colby that he (Ryan) then being a contractor under the department, had been obliged to pay Mr. Blair right along in connection with the Normal School contract."

"Albert C. Smith, the president and manager of the Smith Foundry Co., was given as part of an arrangement whereby Colby was to have and receive from them a refund of two cents a gallon on the gasoline; also that there was to be a refund allowed on notes, of which 2,500 were purchased, but stated he was unable to give the amount of that rebate. The books of the firm show the goods were charged to the construction company at the 30 cents and paid in full, and the full amount entered on the cash book. The refund paid to Colby was covered up in this way:

"It was entered in the cash disbursed under the head of 'Profit and Loss' and charged to expense and was shown to consist of the following items: "Oct. 21, 1913, \$65.74. "Dec. 17, 1913, \$75.00. "Jan. 16, 1914, \$125.55.

"It was not clear that the whole of the \$75.00 item was paid to Colby. Mr. Albert C. Smith thought part was, but was unable to say how much. From the fact that it seems to be entered up in the same way as the other items, I rather incline to think that the whole of it was so paid. Colby was unable to state how much was paid in the aggregate or the amount of any one payment, but Albert C. Smith stated he thought the total payments were in the vicinity of \$100 and was quite sure they would not amount to \$200.

"Mr. Blair was called and sworn and absolutely contradicted Colby in all material respects in regard to this alleged corrupt arrangement—denied that he ever had received a single dol-

lar or that there was ever any arrangement that he should. "The evidence showed that the gasoline was purchased by the Smiths from the Imperial Oil Co. at St. John for 25 1/2 cents per gallon and so far as the invoice in evidence showed was shipped direct to the construction company at different points in the province. It also appeared that the construction company could itself have bought the gasoline at the same price of 25 1/2 cents. It would therefore be no doubt but that the government paid 4 1/2 cents plus 50 per cent, thereon or nearly 6 per cent, more for the gasoline than should have been paid. The amount on the 2,324 gallons is, of course, not very large, but the principle is all wrong.

"The proof of this charge depends practically upon the sole and unsupported evidence of Colby. He is directly contradicted by Blair in all material matters relative to the alleged agreement and payment, also by Harry Smith and Albert C. Smith as to any knowledge on their part that Blair was to receive or did receive any of the refund as well as to other matters. There is no documentary evidence whatever, and very scanty circumstances to corroborate the statement of Colby of the corrupt agreement and payment. I feel bound to say, however, that the manner in which the witness, Smith gave their evidence was not wholly satisfactory, and there are some things not entirely consistent with their statement, that they had no knowledge or suspicion that the refund was intended for Mr. Blair, but the weight of the evidence is against this charge, and without discussing the creditability of the different witnesses, I beg to say I do not think the charge is sufficiently proved, and I therefore do not find Mr. Blair guilty thereof."

Regarding the alleged presentation of stock, Mr. Teed says: "Colby says the whole \$20,000 was given to Blair, then being secretary of the department, for his influence in securing contracts. Blair, on the other hand, says: 'No, that \$10,000 of the stock was given as part of an arrangement whereupon he was to resign and become manager of the company in the Maritime Provinces.' Colby says there was never any bona fide intention that Blair should be engaged—that there was some 'publicity' talk at Blair's instance for the purpose of assisting in getting him an increase of salary from the government."

"The conclusion is irresistible that Blair, while secretary of the department, was, according to his own story, endeavoring to get contracts by reason of 'affiliations' whatever that means, and by the use of improper means I am bound to believe—of the \$5,000 of stock. It is true there was no success in getting contracts and the stock was never used for such purpose, so far as known, but that does not detract from the infamy of the transaction as contemplated, nor from the corrupt nature of the bargain under which I believe he received the stock.

"I am a little in doubt in my mind as to whether the transaction as stated by Colby or by Blair is the most reprehensible but whichever be credited, it is clear that Blair received the stock while still being secretary and for the purpose of either being influenced himself or of using his influence to aid the stock or a portion of it to procure contracts for the company."

Part of the report relating to Charles Morrissey was published in The Standard together with Mr. Morrissey's letter on Tuesday.