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THURSDAY MORNING FEBRUARY 24 1916

VOL. XXXVI.—No. 12,988

300,000 GERMANS ATTACK FRENCH LINES

Enemy Raider Has Captured Or Sunken Six More Allied Ships GERMAN PRIZE AT SANTA CRUZ WITH 206 PRISONERS ON BOARD

Survivors of British Steamers Flemenco, Horace, Clan Mactavish, Barque Edinburg and Belgian Steamer Luxembourg on Westburn - Raider Believed to Be Moewe.

GERMAN FLEET IS SOON TO VENTURE INTO OPEN? Indications Point to Big Naval, Aerial and Military Offensive, With Aim of Forcing Peace and Impressing Neutrals.

TRADE POLICY QUARREL ENDED AT MANCHESTER Resolution Demanding Commercial Blockade After War, Has Been Withdrawn.

GERMANS START BIG ACTION IN ATTEMPT TO TAKE VERDUN Seven Teuton Army Corps Thrown Into Combat on Twenty-five Mile Front After Extensive Preparations - Fighting of Yesterday Resulted in Draw.

the Newest for Women

York, copies from some other skirts; taffetas; combination silk and serge; Georgette crepe over tapes, panners, tunic or, black or navy. Sizes 12 to 16. 25.00

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WEAR. military, Chin-Chin and velvet finishings; white, black and white. 7.95 to 25.00

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LONDON, Feb. 23, 10.25 p.m.—A despatch received from Santa Cruz, Tenerife (Canary Islands), says the British steamer Westburn has put in there for repairs, flying the German flag, and with a prize crew of seven men and one officer. The officer is believed to belong to the German raider Moewe.

In addition to her own crew there are 206 prisoners taken from various British vessels, on the Westburn. The Westburn left Liverpool Jan 21 for Buenos Aires.

Prisoners from Six Ships. The Westburn is a vessel of 3,000 tons. She was built in 1893 and is owned by J. Westall of Sunderland. The prisoners on board came from the British steamers Flemenco, Horace, Clan Mactavish, and Cambridge, the Belgian steamer Edinburg and the Belgian steamer Luxembourg.

The Flemenco left Newport, Eng., for Valparaiso, Jan. 21, and the Horace left Buenos Aires, Jan. 23, for Liverpool. The Luxembourg was on a voyage from Newport for Buenos Aires, having departed for the South American port, Jan. 15. The barque Edinburg sailed from Rangoon, India, Sept. 21, for Liverpool. The Luxembourg and the Flemenco had been placed on the overdue list.

The Cambridge cannot be identified. Steamers Apparently Sunk. The fact that the steamer Westburn has among the prisoners on board men from the British steamer Clan Mactavish, which was sunk after an exciting battle by the German raider Moewe of the west coast of Africa, in January, seemingly would indicate that the steamer was attacked and captured.

The Moewe, which captured the British steamer, was later taken into Hampton Roads by a German prize crew, in addition to her own crew.

NEW YORK, Feb. 23.—A special London cable to The Tribune says: "A high naval authority told today of a belief, widely held in admiralty circles, that the German fleet may make a dash for the open sea at any time now, giving as a reason for this, not only the pressure of political opinion in Germany, but the innumerable reports all pointing to the preparation of a combined German naval, aerial and military offensive, with the object of forcing peace and impressing neutrals."

Vice-Admiral Reinhardt Scheer has been appointed commander of the German battle fleet, in succession to Admiral Von Pohl, who is retiring on account of ill-health.

APPLIES FOR NEW TRIAL OF ACTION FOR LIBEL

W. T. R. Preston Wants to Upset Previous Verdict Over Strathcona's Life.

Canadian Associated Press Cable. LONDON, Feb. 23.—W. T. R. Preston's book on the life of Lord Strathcona is still furnishing material for litigation. The author is now applying to the appeal court for a new trial of his action against the newspaper. Preston argued that he was taken by surprise by the questions put to him at the trial concerning matters which had been the subject of investigation at Ottawa. He claimed that he was misled by the newspaper's own investigation, and that it was misleading to the public. The arguments will be continued tomorrow.

MANCHESTER, Feb. 23.—At a resumption today of the annual meeting of the chamber of commerce, the president announced that in consequence of the vote of the members of the chamber to refer back to the directors their memorandum in favor of free trade, 30 of the 33 directors would resign if the opposition persisted. The leaders of the opposition, therefore, announced themselves as satisfied to withdraw their amendments advocating a commercial blockade of Germany and Austria after the war, reserving a declaration of their policy for a future occasion.

LONDON, Feb. 23.—Troops belonging to seven German army corps (about 300,000 men) under Crown Prince Frederick William, are engaged along a 25-mile front north of Verdun in a desperate effort to drive back the French defending forces, probably with the capture of the great fortress of Verdun in view.

W. F. Maclean Supports Turf's Resolution for Abolition of Duties. GOVERNMENT FIRM Rogers and Meighen Contend Move Would Endanger National Policy.

OTTAWA, Ont., Feb. 23.—By a vote of 44 to 77, the house of commons today negatived a resolution offered by J. G. Turf, the Liberal member for Assiniboia, calling for the abolition of the customs duty upon wheat, wheat products and potatoes. Such action would automatically accept the offer contained in the United States Tariff Act for free trade between the two countries so far as these products were concerned. The vote was a party vote, except that W. F. Maclean (South York), supported the tariff resolution. The debate which began last week was resumed in the lobby by Hon. Robert Rogers. Speeches in favor of the resolution were delivered by Messrs. Thompson (Qu'Appelle), Currie (Dauphin) and Hughes (Kinross, P.E.I.). Hon. Mr. Rogers, Solicitor General Meighen and Mr. Boulay (Rimouski), opposed the resolution.

There had been very heavy fighting for a considerable period in this district of the French war zone, but within the last few days the attacks of the Germans have taken on added strength. The battle line has been extended and now reaches from Malincourt on the west to Etain on the east, with Verdun in the centre, only a few miles southward.

The Germans claim to have made important advances, and to some extent these are admitted by the French war office, which describes the battle as one of increasing intensity, but admits little progress by the enemy in today's fighting.

While at some points the French were unable to resist the onslaught of the attacking forces, along much of the front, according to the Paris communications, the fighting was sustained and very heavy losses were

inflicted on the Germans, the struggle on the whole being about a draw. Important Action. The French official version of the fighting says: "In the region to the north of Verdun the German attacks, as was foreseen, developed into a very important action, for which powerful preparations were made."

"The battle continued today with increasing intensity, and was energetically withstood by our troops, who inflicted extremely heavy losses on the enemy. The bombardment with shells of heavy calibre was uninterrupted, and our counter-attacks were equally successful. It extended along a front of nearly forty kilometres (25 miles), from Malincourt as far as the region opposite Etain."

"The actions of the German infantry were carried out by very heavy effective, comprising troops of seven different army corps, who followed each other during the course of the day between Brabant-sur-Meuse and Ormes. At the approach to the Village of Haumont the enemy was not able, notwithstanding his efforts, to dislodge our positions. In the Bois des Caures, of which we hold the greater part, our counter-attacks stopped the enemy's offensive."

"To the east of the Bois des Caures the Germans were able to penetrate the Westburn, following a series of bloody encounters."

"To the north of Ormes the enemy's attacks against our line at Herbebois were answered by our counter-attacks. There were no infantry attacks on the left bank of the Meuse, nor between Ormes and Fromey."

"In Assac yesterday, at the end of the day the enemy attacked our positions to the southeast of the Caspach wood, southwest of Aitkirch. An immediate counter-attack drove him out from the greater part of advanced sections where he had gained a footing."

Reoccupied Wood. The French official statement this afternoon said that the Germans had commenced a violent offensive around Verdun, from the right bank of the Meuse River to the Herbo woods, by attacking the French with many infantry regiments on a 15-mile front. The French reoccupied Caures wood, which they evacuated yesterday. The violent assault of the army of the crown prince was begun by a rolling fire on Sunday, that was continued Monday morning, afternoon and night. The French brought up reserves to meet the expected attack, and these regained some of the lost ground in immediate counter-attacks. Entire German battalions were annihilated in the fierce struggle.

The Germans claimed in their official communique today that they had captured over six miles of French trenches north of Verdun, had penetrated the French lines to a maximum depth of two miles, and had taken 3000 prisoners. The British front was quiet, except for a few minor encounters of the German lines near Ypres.

WAR SUMMARY: Today's Events Reviewed

FIGHTING on the front north of Verdun, the increasing in intensity and strength, resulted in about a draw yesterday, the French checking the hostile offensive in the Caures wood, forcing the enemy backwards there, and clinging tenaciously and successfully to the approach to Haumont Village, while the Germans were able to penetrate the Wavrille wood following a series of bloody encounters. Probably in order to weaken the pressure which the French were beginning to exert against the positions which they had carried, the Germans extended their engagement to a front of 25 miles. On part of this stretch of lines, no infantry attacks were made, only bombardments. The battle has developed into an important action, into which the Germans have thrown no fewer than seven army corps, or about 300,000 men. They were energetically withstood by the French infantry. No interruption took place in the German bombardment with heavy shells, while the French artillery energetically responded, developing a violence equal to the foe. The action extended from Melancourt to a point opposite Etain. Heavy waves of German infantry were thrown against the French positions between Brabant-sur-Meuse and Ormes.

Thus, according to the French version of the fighting, the enemy was stayed everywhere, and even thrown back in some places, except at the Wavrille wood, where they would not have such a good field for their artillery. It is said in the despatches that the object of the Germans was to get to Verdun. They may desire some success to counteract the effects of the capture of Erzerum and to raise the credit of the Hohenzollerns, for the army of the crown prince, which is making the attacks, has not moved an inch forward in permanent gains in the past year. The action seems, however, to be more of a local one, the primary object being to capture and retain a salient which they had overrun yesterday. When the French started to rush forward reinforcements, the Germans would extend their attacks on a front of 25 miles to relieve the strong counter-pressure which was being brought into play to shove their lines back.

The immediate object of attack, therefore, may not be Verdun, but the getting into position for some general offensive later on when the front permits advances of all arms. Fearing and believing that the allies will make a decisive effort against them in the spring, the Germans may simply desire to get their lines adjusted in such a manner as to deliver a counter blow when the allies get going with some chance of success.

LONDON STANDARD PLANT WITHDRAWN FROM SALE

Only Fifty Thousand Dollars Bid for Historic Newspaper and Goodwill.

LONDON, Feb. 23.—(10.35 p.m.)—The Standard newspaper plant in Europe was sold yesterday when the official receiver offered it at auction. The highest bid was for the plant, \$50,000. As neither bid approached the minimum fixed by the court, the property was withdrawn.

MORE ECONOMY URGED UPON WEALTHY CLASSES

Dismissal of Servants and General Reduction in Scale of Living Advocated.

LONDON, Feb. 23.—The national war economy committee, which yesterday urged abstention from motoring for pleasure, issued tonight a series of new recommendations. These include the cutting down of domestic servants, male and female, and a general reduction in the scale of living in the larger houses, having garages and hot-houses, so as to liberate this labor for war purposes.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY TRIES TO STEADY UP EXCHANGE

Adoption of Germany's Method Shows Realization of Critical Situation.

VIENNA, Feb. 23, via Berlin and London, 8.30 p.m.—Austria-Hungary has initiated measures certifying and regulating foreign exchange operations on the same lines as those adopted by Germany. Banks are required to place all incoming exchange at the disposal of the central institution, while requests for foreign drafts are only granted on proof that their purchase is necessary and advantageous to the general interest.

GERMANS BOMBARDING RUSSIANS NEAR DVINSK

Violent Artillery Engagement is Opened in Lake Region to Prepare for Advance.

Special Cable to The Toronto World. LONDON, Feb. 23.—The Germans have opened a violent artillery bombardment on the Russian lines in the lake region near Dvinsk, which is expected in some quarters to be intended as a preparation for the launching of a new offensive. On this supposition, the attacks in France are intended as a blind, the Germans rather wishing to get beyond the Riga lines before the general spring breaking up stops further their actions for weeks, and perhaps renders their present lines untenable. Heavy artillery actions are reported from the Riga sector.

PEACE PLEAS IN HOUSE FAIL TO MOVE PREMIER

Philip Snowden and Charles Phillips Trevelyan Rebuked by Mr. Asquith.

Not to Sheath Sword Till Belgium and Serbia are Restored.

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The two cabinet ministers in stating the proposition of the government contained that the adoption of free trade between the United States and the United States duty upon Canadian wheat, then congress at any time could do.

SERB KING'S OBSTINACY IS ANGERING AUSTRIA

Threat Made That Montenegro Will be Treated in Ruthless Manner.

AMSTERDAM, via London, Feb. 23, 7.57 p.m.—A despatch from Budapest quotes The Pesther Lloyd as stating that the Austrian Government has decided to force the Serb king to surrender if, after the lapse of a week, he does not withdraw his troops, ignoring all enquiries addressed to him by the Austrian Government.

HUNDRED SHIPS READY TO SMASH FOE'S FLEET

British Battle Cruisers With Surrounding Squadron Wait With Steam Up.

LONDON, Feb. 23.—Speed, with sufficient gunpowder to cause the necessary destruction, is now the cardinal principle of British naval strategy, and battle cruisers, an unknown quantity at the beginning of the war, have proven this principle to be a satisfactory one. Every man aboard the battle cruiser fleet, which was visited this week in the North Sea by a correspondent of the Associated Press. New battle cruisers before the war were not exactly objects of pride to their officers and crews. On account of their voracity with which they consumed coal, service on them was not popular, and a government harassed with demands for a reduction in naval expenditure had no reason to favor these refinements of the super-dreadnought school. To prove that the battle cruiser has redeemed its unfortunate early reputation, it is only necessary to point to the activity of this type of fighting craft since the war began. Battle cruisers brought Von Spee's career to a full stop, and they were the only big ships which succeeded in getting into the North Sea against the British fleet. So it is not surprising that these monsters, the biggest fighting machines ever put together under one flag, appeared at the opening of the war, the battle cruisers now form the nucleus of Great Britain's first line fleet of naval defence. There are many new ships among the light cruisers attached to the squadron, but virtually every battle cruiser in it has been "blooded," to use the navy's equivalent for the army's "baptism of fire" and the sailors, maintaining them show the pride and poise of veterans. When the mist lifted for a few minutes, as the correspondent says, the control bridge of one of the battle cruisers, the fastest fleet capable of actual offensive operations ever gathered together under one flag, appeared in view. There were more than 100 warships in the fleet, arranged in squadrons with battle cruisers, surrounded by their screen of faithful destroyers, occupying the place of honor but with every gun, aimed to the humble, rusty, but virtually necessary colliers, on the mark for a flying start if the German fleet is signaled.

HUGHES LAUDS WAR SERVICES OF COL. CURRIE

Latter's Movements Confused With Those of Brig. Gen. Currie. NOT STANDING IN WAY Hughes Says He Could Not Make Recommendation for Honors.

By a Staff Reporter. OTTAWA, Feb. 23.—On the orders of the day, Sir Sam Hughes, rising to a question of privilege, referred to the statement made in the house yesterday by Col. John A. Currie (North Simcoe) to the effect that the two men who stood between any honors he was entitled to in connection with the battle of St. Julien were General Alderson and the minister of militia. The minister said that he had no authority to promote any officer in the field, or any mentioned in the despatches, or recommended for decorations, or the Dominion Government had no such power nor the British Government for that matter. Everything of that kind resulted with the field marshal or commander in chief, and quite properly too. It would be intolerable to have politicians, hundreds of thousands of miles away, interfering in such matters. Case of Mistaken Identity. The minister, after referring to Col. Currie as a gallant officer, brave and fearless, took up the rumors derogatory to him, which had been referred to yesterday by Col. Currie. These were to the effect that he had been in the rear of the British lines three miles back at the time of the battle of St. Julien, and also that he had been seen in the Town of Ypres. As a matter of fact, the officer seen in both places was Brigadier-General Currie, whose duties required him to be in both places. The minister added that he had written to General Turner respecting Col. Currie's case, but had as yet received no reply. There could be no doubt whatever but that Col. Currie had done his full duty at St. Julien. SOLDIER STOLE RING. KINGSTON, Ont., Feb. 23.—In police court Joseph Corbelle, Toronto, pleaded guilty to stealing a \$400 ring from Capt. T. D. Binwood of Halifax, runway instructor at Teste Du Pont barracks, and was remanded for sentence by Magistrate Farrell.

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