

Referendum to be on Straight Majority Basis Mexican Bandits Raid a United States Town Germany Declares War Against Portugal

FRENCH LINE WEST OF THE MEUSE IS IN A BETTER POSITION NOW

Is in Advance of First Line of Resistance --Bethincourt Attacked by the Enemy Troops, but They Were Beaten Off.

By Special Wire to the Courier.

Paris, March 8.—The official statement published last night has done much to relieve the tension which had been caused in the public mind by the expectation of a great onslaught on the main French defenses on the west bank of the Meuse. French and public are now more than ever convinced that the Germans will not be able to take Verdun.

FLANK ATTACK TOO LATE

Military observers expressed the belief that the Germans originally intended a frontal attack on Verdun, which was to be accompanied by two flank attacks, one in the Woëvre, not meant to be pushed home and the other on the west bank of the Meuse, which might develop into the main attack. Desiring, however, to justify a premature announcement of the capture of Douaumont, the Crown Prince kept 300,000 men on the right bank of the river.

100,000 SHELLS IN 12 HOURS

Artillery men on both sides are living up to the reputation already established for the battle of Verdun as the greatest artillery battle of the war. Many sectors of the French front on Sunday and Monday last, received an average of 100,000 shells in twelve hours. Whole woods were reduced to kindling material. The little river at Forges disappeared, having been dammed in half a dozen places, and 29 feet of the crest of hill 213, near Forges was blown away.

ATTACKED FROM THREE SIDES

The first attack on Bethincourt made on Tuesday, was preceded by six hours terrific bombardment. Then the infantry came on from three sides along the road from Gercourt to Bethincourt, from Forges village and from the slopes of hill 265. French officers estimate that the attacking forces were not fewer than 20,000. Fifteen different battalions were identified. All day long the Germans fought to gain a footing in the important village of Bethincourt by both sides. When night fell the last attacking column was thrown back by the French, who fought with great determination against hostile forces double their number. The position on Cote de L'Oie was similar. At Germans were held in check as long as daylight lasted. However, sheltering themselves in ravines in Corbeaux wood, they managed to force a way up a narrow lane leading to Comieres wood, which stands on the top of the ridge, linking L'Oie and Mort Homme hills, only to be driven out by a French counter-attack on Wednesday. The German losses in officers is particularly heavy, according to statements made by prisoners and German officers up to the ranks of general by orders from the Emperor, leading their men into action, in-

stead of following them. This sight had not been witnessed, it is said, for many months.

ZEPPELS ARE BUSY

Zepplins active behind the French lines, endeavoring to strike at communications. On Tuesday they appeared over Revigny station, with the evident intention of destroying a trainload of munitions. The station agent, named Plancon, with the help of a station hand, with great coolness and dexterity, coupled up seventy cars composing the train, and got them off to a place of safety. Bombs exploding all round, but none striking the target. For this the station agent was decorated with the military cross.

Paris, March 8.—As a result of yesterday's operations, the French line west of the Meuse, in the Verdun battle zone, has been improved by the capture of Douaumont, the northern part of Comieres, to the upper end of Cote de L'Oie, and the advance in the first line of resistance constituted by positions running from Mort Homme hill to the south of Comieres. This is considered as a considerable improvement in the French position in that section. The faith of the public in the solidity of the line west of the Meuse, is regarded as justified by the result of the first day's serious attack. The whole front yesterday was copiously shelled by the German heavy artillery, but only against positions in the French line.

SAW VILLA LEADING MEN

Several American citizens in Columbus declared they personally saw Villa directing his men, and a portmanteau discovered by a trooper contained Villa's personal papers. The attack was a surprise. Villa was supposed to have been 44 miles away, having last night caused a telegram to be sent indicating his presence at a ranch at Nogales.

HANGED THREE PRISONERS

Prior to the attack, the Villa bandits hanged three Americans whom they had held as prisoners for some days, according to information received here. Their bodies were burned, the report said.

WON BACK THE WOOD

Encouraged by their successful resistance, the Frenchmen won back Corbeaux wood which they had lost the day before. It was considered the day before that the situation remained in the French, but the situation remained undecided.

In conjunction with the attack to the west of the river, the Germans made another determined effort to carry Douaumont plateau, but they only succeeded in restoring the situation as it was on Monday, without accomplishing any new progress. At the same time the Germans increased the vigor of their action in the Woëvre district. When the operations began the Germans had from Etain to seven miles. Fresnes had for some days been partially enveloped by the Germans who, at Manheulles on the north and Champlon on the south, had rendered the position a difficult one to hold. It was finally taken with heavy loss by the Germans.

Five Hundred Bandits Made Attack on Columbus N.M. This Morning Killing Number of Civilians and Five Soldiers

BY SPECIAL WIRE TO THE COURIER.

COLUMBUS, N.M., March 9.—Five hundred Villa bandits attacked this point at 4.30 this morning, killed a number of civilians, men and women, and held possession of the town for an hour and a half. Driven off by three troops of Thirteenth Cavalry, they retreated at 8 o'clock, leaving part of the town in flames. A large number of Mexicans were killed. Their bodies dotted the street, where they had been posted picking off Americans as they emerged pellmell out of dwellings and hotels. There appeared to be no wounded. Several guests were burned to death in the Central Hotel, which was one of the first buildings fired by Villa's men.

Washington Hears the News.

WASHINGTON, March 9.—First reports of the Mexican raid on Columbus, N.M., were received at the White House while President Wilson was having his first conference with Newton D. Baker, the new Secretary of War. Officials admitted that the raid put a very serious aspect on the Mexican situation. While the policy of the administration so far has been to look to the Carranza forces to deal with the bandits, some officials declared to-day that it was a grave question whether such a raid as that on Columbus was not sufficient evidence of the inability of the Carranza Government to deal with the situation to warrant sending American troops over the line.

Five American Soldiers Killed.

EL PASO, March 9.—Five American soldiers were killed in the battle at Columbus, N.M., with Mexican bandits, according to a message received early to-day at the general offices of the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad in El Paso.

Columbus, N.M., March 9.—Five hundred Mexican bandits, believed to have been led by Francisco Villa, crossed the international border under cover of darkness early to-day and attacked this town, killing a dozen or more American men and women, including at least five United States soldiers.

When dawn came the retreat of the Villa men was under way. Villa himself apparently had left earlier when the snipers were driven off. In the streets lay the bodies of a number of Mexican dead, a number of Mexican wounded were removed to the post hospital. During the fighting, many families barricaded themselves within their homes.

THE DEAD.

Nine civilians and six United States troops were known dead at an early hour to-day. The civilian dead: L. R. Ritchie, hotel proprietor; Walton Walker, United States Customs rider; Milton James, Mrs. Milton James; J. S. Dean, C. Miller, druggist; unidentified chauffeur; J. J. Moore, merchant; W. R. Walker, guest, Central Hotel.

American soldiers killed: Frank Kendall, Sergeant M. A. Dobbs, Corporal Paul Simon, Sergeant John Nievegelt, Corporal Harry Wiswall and Fred A. Griffen.

ATTACKED AT MIDNIGHT

El Paso, Texas, March 9.—The bandits attacked the town shortly after midnight, according to railroad officials, and set fire to many buildings. American soldiers fired upon them and the battle followed. Only three-

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RECRUITING STARTS For the 215th Battalion—Excellent Bandmaster is Chosen.

All was hustle at the headquarters of the 215th Battalion, the Old Y. M. C. A. building this morning, when recruiting started for Lt. Col. Harry Cocksutt's Battalion. All the indications point to a large response. Mr. Andrews, J. P., was busy swearing in those offering.

BANDMASTER SELECTED.

Lt. Col. Cocksutt to-day appointed as Bandmaster of the 215th Battalion Lieut. R. Glidden, Bandmaster of the 57th Battalion, Peterborough. Lt. Glidden is one of the finest bandmasters in Ontario, and the 21st is to be congratulated on securing his services. He comes here with the highest recommendation of Lt. Slater of the 8th Highlanders, Toronto, probably the best judge of bands and bandmasters in Canada. Under Lt. Glidden the 215th Battalion band has earned for itself far more than a local reputation and he undoubtedly will give the 215th Battalion one of the best bands in the Overseas forces.

COURIER'S DAILY CARTOON



PROHIBITION VOTE WILL BE ON STRAIGHT MAJORITY BASIS

Premier Hearst So Told Great Deputation of Temperance Workers Yesterday—Manhood Suffrage Vote.

Toronto, March 9.—The Committee of One Hundred led a small army of temperance enthusiasts to the portals of the Parliament Buildings yesterday. The temperance battalions brought with them a drayload of petitions signed by nearly 350,000 British subjects of voting age, and the Prime Minister showed no disposition to minimize their importance as an evidence of public sentiment.

"As this action has anticipated the presentation of this petition, and as the measure proposed is in harmony with our alternate proposition, we are in the happy position of being able to congratulate the Government upon their decision, and to pledge them our earnest support during the progress of the bill through the House," read the address. Further references expressed the hope that a majority vote would decide the issue.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT.

MENT.

After thanking the deputation for their kindly references to himself, the Prime Minister turned his attention at once to the matter in hand, referring to the immense petition presented as very tangible evidence of the strong feeling of the people of Ontario for legislative action along the lines indicated.

"The Government" continued the Prime Minister, "has come to the conclusion that a large proportion of our people desire, and desire earnestly, further legislative action on this question at the present time, and the decision the Government has come to is endorsed and emphasized by the petition you have presented to-day."

"The Government has opportunity of getting the feeling of the people that are not open to the general public and during the past twelve months, ever since I have been Premier of this province, and before that, the Government has been making a very careful study of all matters relating to this subject so closely identified with the welfare and prosperity of this great Province of Ontario," said Hon. Mr. Hearst, proceeding to refer to the votes on local option and the Canada Temperance Act, and the investigations of the Ontario License Board. In respect to the board of the Prime Minister stated that he appreciated the expressed approval of its work. The objects the Government had in mind when the board was appointed had been decided by many people a year ago, but to-day everyone admitted that forward step could not be taken to-day that could not have been taken but for the work of the commission.

The Prime Minister called upon the temperance workers to support the Government to the fullest extent, not only now, but when the time came to enforce legislation. The man who simply signed such a petition as that presented, and then sat back and did not do his duty as a citizen, and was not being fair to the Government of the cause in which he was interested.

"This Government," he said, "has

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German Fleet, Escorted by Zeppelins, and Painted War Gray, Out in the North Sea

Before Last Air Raid Small Enemy Fleet Was Going to Make a Dash on England, But Thought Otherwise After Seeing Dispositions of British Fleet.

London, March 9.—The morning newspapers publish from their correspondents in Holland such details as are available regarding the recent activity of the German fleet in the North Sea. According to these accounts the fleet included about fifty craft of all descriptions, from the most modern dreadnoughts down to the old-fashioned torpedo boats. The fleet was escorted by two Zeppelins which served as scouts to prevent a surprise attack by hostile vessels. One trawler sighted this fleet, 165 miles due west of the mouth of the Elbe. Another saw it 35 miles northwest of Ymuiden. All the German ships were painted a war gray and were invisible at a short distance. Heavy clouds of smoke frequently hid them completely.

One Dutch trawler is quoted as having made the following report: "During the recent air raid on England a Zeppelin was seen sailing in advance of three cruisers and a fleet of destroyers and submarines, which were believed to have the intention of making a dash for English waters. The Zeppelin, however, made certain discoveries regarding the watchfulness of the British fleet and the German squadron hastily withdrew."

IS AFFECTING TRADE.

Rotterdam, March 9, via London.—Only three steamships entered the waterway here between Monday and Wednesday of the present week. This is the lowest figure of incoming ship movements since the beginning of the war and is believed to be due to the activity of the German fleet in the North Sea.

Austrian Warships Ready to Dash to the Black Sea

By Special Wire to the Courier.

Rome, March 8, via Paris, March 9.—Two of the most powerful of Austrian dreadnoughts are being prepared in a Dalmatian port, The Tribuna says, with the intention of repeating the exploit of the former German vessels Goeben and Breslau and forcing the allies blockade of the Adriatic, in order to reach the Dardanelles and bring assistance to Turkey in the Black Sea, as the situation of the latter is growing desperate owing to Russian naval supremacy in those waters. For this reason the news papers, the floating mines which obstructed the Dardanelles have been swept up by the Turks and the Ger-

mans in order to clear a way for the Austrian battleships which are expected.

War With Portugal.

By Special Wire to the Courier.

BERLIN, March 9.—(By wireless to Sayville)—Germany declared war on Portugal at 3.30 o'clock yesterday afternoon and handed his passports to the Portuguese minister. In Philadelphia 1000 women are at work making munitions of war.

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