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The Toronto World

MONDAY MORNING, MARCH 5 1917—TWELVE PAGES

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VOL. XXXVII.—No. 13,263

RUSSIANS TAKE HAMADAN AND VILLAGE NEAR BIJAR

Offensive in Persia Results in Turks Being Driven From Two Places With Heavy Losses.

Petrograd, March 4, via London.—The capture of Hamadan, in Persia, slightly more than 100 miles from the Mesopotamian border, was officially announced by the war office today. The town was taken from the Turks on March 2. Russian troops also are on the offensive further northwest, and have captured the village within two miles of Bizar, eighty miles northwest of Hamadan and about the same distance from the border. The official statement reads:

"Caucasus front: In Persia our detachments assumed the offensive in the direction of Bizar and occupied the village of Khanakali, two miles southwest of Bizar.
"As the result of operations in the Hamadan region the town of Hamadan was captured by our troops on March 2. "Western front: In the neighborhood of the little town of Krevo we made a gas attack which caused alarm in the enemy trenches.

Rumanian front: There has been reciprocal firing activity.
"The capture of Hamadan by the Russians may mean that the czar's troops will again attempt an advance into Mesopotamia from Persia, to aid the British in their advance up the Tigris toward Bagdad. Hamadan, which is 240 miles northeast of Bagdad has been the center of much fighting between the Russians and Turks. In April, 1915, it was occupied by Turkish troops, but in December, 1915, it was taken by the Russians, who continued their advance westward toward the Turkish frontier, later capturing Kermanshah and Khanikin, on the Persian border, 180 miles northeast of Bagdad.

Following the capture of Kut-el-Amara by the Turks, in April, 1916, the Russians were forced to retreat from the Persian border and were driven back thru Kermanshah to Hamadan, which was evacuated early in August, 1916. Since then there has been much fighting in the Hamadan region and Turkish official statements late in December and early in January said that the Russians had been repulsed in attacks near Hamadan. Hamadan has a population of 40,000.

FIGHT BIG ACTIONS ON BALKAN FRONT

Italian Troops Destroy German Trenches About Hill Ten-Fifty.

AVIATORS WORK HARD

Heavy Snowfalls on Sector Between Vardar and Lake Presba.

Special Cable to The Toronto World.
Paris, March 4.—Italian troops fought some violent actions at Hill 1050 on the Balkan front yesterday. German trenches and brought back prisoners, according to a French official communication issued today. A heavy snowfall on the Vardar, as far as Lake Presba, impedes operations on that sector.
The official communication follows: "Eastern theatre: Artillery activity was displayed along the whole front, especially at the Cerina bend. Patrol encounters occurred at Majidz and Monastir. Violent actions at Hill 1050, carried out by the Italian troops, resulted in the shattering of enemy trenches and the bringing back of prisoners. Enemy counter-attacks were repulsed with serious losses. "There has been a heavy snowfall from the Vardar as far as Lake Presba. From Feb. 27 the aviators have been particularly active."

WAR SUMMARY THE DAY'S EVENTS REVIEWED

FIELD MARSHAL HAIG is still keeping up his advance north of the Ancre on a wide front, and in the past two days he has pressed the Germans back north of Puisieux-au-Mont and east of Gommecourt, on a front of five and two miles, in two offensive operations. First he showed his men forward on the five-mile front to a depth of about 450 yards, and the next day followed up this success by swinging forward his left in this sector east of Gommecourt on a two-mile front, to a depth of 1200 yards. The Germans offered stubborn resistance to the British movement on the wider front, while the British official communication says that they yielded ground on the narrower front.

Besides making progress north of the Ancre the British also made some progress north of the Somme, southeast of Sully-Salliel and east of Bouchavesnes. In this region they captured yesterday the German first line and support trenches on a front of 1200 yards, taking 173 prisoners. This advance has a certain correspondence with the recent advance east of Sully-Salliel and it has probably as its object the turning of the Germans out of the Neuville-St. Vaast Wood.

The British advances north of the Ancre are having the effect of sharpening the Arras salient, the great bulge created in the German lines from the front immediately to the south and intersected by the Ancre. The original German trenches, of course, run north and south, while the British, from the northern bank of the Ancre, are now also able to fire due north, and thus the enemy will have to endure a fire from his front

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 1 and 2.)

Lieut.-Col. Samuel G. Beckett



Commander of the 75th Battalion, who is reported killed in action in a cable received from a friend of the family in England.

LIEUT.-COL. BECKETT REPORTED KILLED

Cable to Friends Here States Commander of Toronto Battalion is Dead.

Lieut.-Col. Samuel G. Beckett, commander of the 75th Battalion, which went overseas from Toronto the latter part of April, 1916, has been killed in action in France, according to official information contained in a cablegram received by Major Jeffrey Bull, Meredith crescent, Saturday night from his brother, W. Perkins Bull, K.C., of London, England. The death of Major Langstaff of the same battalion was also announced in the cablegram. Lacking official confirmation of Col. Beckett's death, relatives and friends in Toronto base their hope that the report is untrue on the fact that a second cablegram received by Major Bull stated that the report of Major Langstaff's death was erroneous. Major Bull is a member of the 75th Battalion. Col. Beckett and several children are in Liphook, Surrey, England. The only other immediate relative of Col. Beckett is a sister, Miss Lucy M. Coak of Toronto. Other relatives and friends living here refused last night to concede the truth of the sad news until authoritative verification is forthcoming. Col. Beckett ranked with the few most prominent and able military officers which Toronto and even Canada has produced in the present struggle abroad. That he was efficient and an authority on military tactics, particularly cavalry manoeuvres, was attested when he was chosen one of the few officers who left here commanding battalions to take his regiment to France. He had innumerable friends in Toronto. Col. Beckett was always a student of military matters. He joined "The Company of the Queen's Own about 25 years ago, later joining the 86th Battalion and still later serving with the Missisquoi Horse. He organized the 75th Battalion. The colonel was 48 years old, was born in Toronto and was the son of Edward Beckett, pioneer iron foundry owner. He graduated from Cornell University in Pennsylvania in architecture. He was married to Miss Maud, which lasted twenty years. Close friends of Col. Beckett were Major T. L. Church and R. L. Defries.

WILSON'S PLANS OBSTRUCTED BY FEW SENATORS

La Follette and Eleven Others Brazenly Defy Will of Majority.

BITTERLY DENOUNCED Wilson Expects Special Session Opening Today Will Mend Situation.

Washington, March 4.—Twelve senators, led by Senator LaFollette and encouraged by Senator Stone, Democratic chairman of the foreign relations committee, in a filibuster, denounced by President Wilson's spokesman as the most reprehensible in the history of any civilized nation, defied the will of an overwhelming majority in congress up to the last minute today and denied to the president the few authorizations for arm American merchant ships to meet the German submarine menace.

President Wilson tonight informed the country in a statement that he is without power to arm merchant ships and take other steps to meet the German submarine menace. He said that he had called to meet tomorrow an extra session of congress, the president says, is required to clothe him with authority, but it is useless to call one who will not meet under the present rules, which permit a small minority to keep an overwhelming majority from acting.

The president proposes, therefore, that the special session of the senate which he has called to meet tomorrow, revise the rules "to supply the means of action and save the country from disaster." "Save from Disaster," the president in his statement, "representing no opinion but their own, have rendered their votes under the present rules, which permit a small group of supporters refused a majority of their colleagues an opportunity to vote on the armed neutrality bill." (Continued on Page 7, Column 3.)

Our Victory War Loan

After the Titan stroke of the victory loan in Great Britain, the Canadian nation can do much larger to the outlook, but Canada has a duty relatively just as important, and in comparative magnitude as great as the thousand billions of dollars of the United States. The victory loan is to be launched, and it depends how loyal and faithful we are to our national life whether we shall come out of this emergency as a nation that is better than we are. The money saved should be loaned to the government. It will be used for the purpose of production, and will flow down to lower lands and fertilize all the spreading fields of our national activities. There is no other way to bring again the golden year.

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- Complete display of all makes and styles of men's hats for the spring, 1917, season. W. & D. Dineen Company, Limited, 140 Yonge street, corner Temperance street.

BRITISH THRUST COMPELS FURTHER ENEMY RETREAT

French Airmen Throw Bombs On German Blast Furnaces

One Aerial Squadron Also Drops Quantities of Explosives on Hun Powder Magazine, Hangars, and Railway Station.

Special Cable to The Toronto World.
Paris, March 4.—French aeroplanes fleets threw bombs on German blast furnaces at Woelfling, in the region of Sarrebruck, and also on the powder magazine at Bons, besides on other points. A French official communication on the aeroplane raids says: "Aviation—Three of our bombing squadrons dropped projectiles on the hangars at Frescati, the powder magazine at Bons, blast furnaces at Woelfling, in the region of Sarrebruck, and on the railroad station at Delme (Lorraine)."

GIANT STEAMER SUNK BY SUB, SAYS BERLIN

Transport Larger Than Lusitania With Five Hundred Colonial Troops Aboard Reported Torpedoed in Mediterranean.

Berlin, March 4, by wireless to Sayville, March 4.—An armed transport steamer of 34,494 tons, with about 500 colonial troops, artillery and horses on board, was sunk by a German submarine in the Mediterranean on Feb. 24, the admiralty announced today. Some of the troops on board were lost. A troop-laden transport of about 5000 tons was sunk on Feb. 25, it was also announced.

Largest Vessel Sunk

The reported sinking of a vessel of 34,494 tons constitutes a record for the war, the largest vessel previously sunk being the Cunard Lusitania, of 30,395 tons. The vessel, which seems most nearly to answer to the description of the "armed transport" of this size said by the admiralty, was the Italian liner, the Italian steamer Prudenza, 3307 tons, with Indian corn from Argentina to Italy; Swedish steamer Skogland, 2000 tons, with coal from Norfolk to Italy; Greek steamer Proconissos, 3537 tons, from Salonica to Algiers.

DECORATIONS ARE WON BY CANADIAN OFFICERS

Maj. Laws of Mounted Rifles Receives D.S.O. and Military Crosses Are Bestowed on Many Others for Splendid Deeds of Gallantry.

Canadian Associated Press Cable.
London, March 4.—The official Military Gazette makes the following announcements of honors won by Canadians:
Distinguished Service Order: Major Burnett Laws, Mounted Rifles, personally carried out a successful reconnaissance and initiative, advancing with only six men, capturing four mountain guns with two officers and 15 men.
Lieut. Alexander Byars Johnston, Mounted Rifles, showed marked courage and initiative, advancing with only six men, capturing four mountain guns with two officers and 15 men.
Lieut. Charles Stuart Martin, Infantry, led a party in a successful raid with great gallantry, and succeeded in capturing two un wounded prisoners and previously carried out several dangerous patrols.

BRITISH DESTROYER SUNK ENTIRE CREW PERISHES

Admiralty Says Craft is Believed to Have Struck a Mine.

London, March 4.—A British destroyer was sunk with all hands in the North Sea on Thursday, the admiralty announced today. It is believed she struck a mine.

NEW OATH OF OFFICE IS TAKEN BY WILSON

Washington, March 4.—President Wilson took the oath of office at 12:03 p.m. today, in the presence of the chief justice and some members of the cabinet. There was no ceremony. When President Wilson kissed the Bible after taking the oath of office today his lips touched on this passage: "The Lord is our refuge; a very present help in time of trouble."

Sir Douglas Haig's Men Carry in Two Days' Operations German Positions on Fronts of Five and Two Miles, Despite Stubborn Resistance, North of Ancre—Enemy Also Loses Important Point North of Somme.

London, March 4.—In the past two days, despite a desperate resistance by the Germans, British troops have made two big advances up the Ancre valley, the first one of about 500 yards, on a five-mile front and the second one of about 1200 yards on a two-mile front east of Gommecourt and northeast of Puisieux-au-Mont.

Besides making the foregoing progress in the Ancre valley the British attacked the German lines east of Bouchavesnes, north of the Somme, captured the German front and support trenches on a front of 1200 yards and took 173 prisoners and three machine guns. In this area they repulsed several German counter-attacks with great losses to the enemy.

The continued progress of the British on the Somme, despite the determined attempts of the enemy to stop them, is taken as a good augury for the opening of the spring campaign. The roads will soon become dry and the fighting will become more intense. It is expected to spread on a wide front north and south of the Somme and north of the Ancre.

Stubborn Resistance.

Against stubborn German resistance, British troops today advanced their line north of the Ancre, in France, an average of a quarter of a mile on a front of nearly five miles, says the official statement issued by the war office last night. The British advance was made north of Puisieux-au-Mont and east of Gommecourt.

"During the day our troops made further progress north of Puisieux-au-Mont and east of Gommecourt, and our line has been advanced an average distance of a quarter of a mile on a front of nearly five miles. The enemy offered stubborn resistance.

Beat Off Local Attack.

"A local German counter-attack made against our advanced positions northeast of Gueudecourt last night was stopped by our artillery batteries and rifle fire. An enemy bombing attack forced our troops to evacuate a trench east of Sully-Salliel this morning. An immediate counter-attack was organized, which regained the whole of the lost ground.

"The enemy rushed two of our posts last night northwest of Roye; a few men are missing. Another strong enemy patrol, which attempted to approach our lines east of Givency and La Bassee this morning, was stopped by our rifle fire.

GAIN EAST OF GOMMECOURT.

British troops in their forward movement in the Ancre area in France have made another advance east of Gommecourt along a two-mile front of about two-thirds of a mile, according to the official report from headquarters tonight. Nearly 200 prisoners were captured. The text of the report reads:

"This morning we attacked and captured the enemy's front and support lines east of Bouchavesnes on a front of 1200 yards, taking 173 prisoners and three machine guns. During the day we repulsed with heavy losses several counter attacks.

"East of Gommecourt the enemy continues to yield ground. In this neighborhood we advanced along a two-mile front to an average depth of 1200 yards.

"Six prisoners were taken in a successful raid last night northeast of Ablaincourt. During the last twenty-four hours we have captured a total of 190 prisoners, five machine guns and two trench mortars.

ENEMY LINES ARE SMASHED.

Whatever may be the ultimate strategy lying behind or claimed for the German retirement between Gommecourt and Le Transloy, even most casual inspection of some of the evacuated lines, near Bapaume plainly reveals the immediate reason for their abandonment. They have been smashed to pieces by the incessant and ever increasing British artillery fire.

Communication trenches, built for the purpose of bringing up food and ammunition, have been flattened almost beyond recognition and have long since ceased to serve their purpose. The wide belt of area back of the German lines has been lashed by bursting shells until it had become practically impassable. For hours at a time, often for days, the drumfire of the British guns made it impossible for any man to reach or leave the trenches.

Some of the prisoners recently taken said they had been cut off from food for 48 hours by the barrage back of their trenches.

COULD NOT HOLD LINES.

The British outposts are established well beyond the old German front line positions, and, also from their new retreats, the German guns are constantly sweeping the evacuated territory with violent bombardments, it was possible yesterday to visit and inspect some of the trenches and strong points, which it was all too apparent the Germans could no longer maintain in a defensible condition. The abandoned ground was covered with hundreds of German dead.

Large British burying parties, bravely ignoring German shells and snipers, have been busy for several days clearing up the dead, but the task is still a long way from completion. In front of the old German lines near Le Barque were some bodies which had lain there since last November when the Germans attempted an attack, but were shot down while leaving their trenches. The unceasing artillery and rifle fire had prevented their recovery.

It seems that the Germans must have lost heavily in abandoning their positions, for scores of bodies were encountered beyond the lines—those of freshly fallen men. The Germans are continuing their strong defensive rear guard actions all along the line, but the British appear able to move forward and consolidate the new ground just as rapidly as they desire.

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