

BRITISH AND FRENCH AGAIN VICTORS IN NORTH FRANCE

THE BRITISH BLOCKADE DECLARED SUCCESS

Long Debate in House of Commons — Lord Robert Cecil, Minister of Blockade, Assure House that Closest Co-operation Existed Between Admiralty and His Department.

London, Mar. 27.—William A. S. Hewins and G. W. Bellairs, Unionist members of the House of Commons, this afternoon raised the question of the effectiveness of the British blockade, and the difficulties of enforcing it, during a debate in the house. Mr. Bellairs said the difficulties had been largely removed when the United States, "the most powerful and most critical neutral," came in on the side of the Entente Allies.

Lord Robert Cecil, minister of blockade, assured the members of the house that the closest co-operation existed between the admiralty and his department. Admiral Sir Dudley De Chair, formerly in command of the blockading squadron in the North Sea, having been appointed to advise him as to the views of the admiralty and the admiralty as to the views of the foreign office.

The Blockade.

Lord Robert, in reviewing all the steps that had been adopted in connection with the blockade, emphasized the value of rationing by an agreement with somebody in a neutral country as more smooth and effective than the compulsory rationing. He said the system of letters of assurance which had been arranged with the United States had been enormously important in smoothing over difficulties with that country, enabling the government to know exactly what was going on concerning exports from the United States to neutrals, and permitting the United States, without unfairness or injustice, to regulate supplies to those neutrals. In his judgment the measures adopted had succeeded completely in stopping overseas importations into enemy countries.

Lord Robert then produced a number of figures which he contended proved there was no leakage. He still felt, however, that everything necessary had not been done to complete the blockade of Germany.

There was the question of home product of border neutrals which was a most difficult subject. He said he had arrived at the conclusion that the

only way to deal with this matter was by securing agreements with neutrals to stop or diminish such trade.

The blockade minister went at great length into the difficulties surrounding any attempt to compel neutral countries to sever all trade relations with Germany. The technical and military positions of those countries had to be considered, he said. Concerning Denmark, Lord Robert said the government believed the agreements with Denmark had been honestly carried out, and that there was no reason to modify the present blockade policy as affecting Denmark.

Lord Robert concluded by saying that it would not be practicable to transfer the administration of the blockade to the admiralty. He had never claimed, he said, that miracles could be achieved with the blockade, but he believed there was a very great shortage of food in Germany and a considerable shortage of other things as a result of the blockade. "I cannot disregard or disbelieve repeated well authenticated statements of food riots," said the blockade minister, "as indicating profound discontent on the part of the German people with the prevailing conditions. I believe the war will only be won on the battlefield, but when we come to the final battle the effect of the blockade will count greatly."

Sir Edward Carson, first lord of the admiralty, characterized the demand that the blockade should be left to the navy, as suggested in the House of Lords by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, retired, as absurd. The cabinet had laid down the policy, and the foreign office by negotiations, and the navy by action, had to carry out that policy. Sir Edward added that the adoption of a doctrine of the seizure of every neutral ship and its cargo would mean that Great Britain should go to war with everybody.

The admiralty, Sir Edward continued, was satisfied with its relations with the foreign office, and the present policy of the cabinet was the only possible policy, having regard to the complications that would ensue if the government adopted a more aggressive attitude toward friendly neutrals. The first sea lord had told him, Sir Edward said, that he was aware of no other system than the existing one of blockading Germany through neutral countries. The admiralty department was in thorough agreement and was working harmoniously with the minister of blockade, and he believed everything possible was being done, Sir Edward concluded.

PLANS OF U. S. TO RECRUIT THE NAVY

Sir Herbert Aimes, Honorary Secretary of Canadian Patriotic League Describes How \$21,000,000 Has Been Collected.

New York, March 27.—Plans to estimate recruiting for the navy and its auxiliary services, making it possible for men who volunteer to feel certain that their dependents and families will be amply cared for while they are serving the nation were discussed here today at "National Service" meetings held by the navy league of the United States.

Sir Herbert B. Aimes, honorary secretary of the Canadian Patriotic Fund, who came here at the invitation of the league, described how \$21,000,000 had been collected and \$14,000,000 more subscribed for a similar cause in the Dominion. It is proposed to raise money for this purpose in this country, should the United States go to war, to be known as the Navy League War Relief Fund.

If the United States had entered the war when Canada did, Sir Herbert said, and had put forth efforts in the same ratio, this country would have enlisted more than 5,000,000 men and sent at least 4,000,000 men overseas to the trenches, while we would have appropriated for war expenditures about \$12,000,000,000.

BLONDIN TO RECRUIT A REGIMENT

Postmaster General to be in Command of 258th Battalion with Headquarters at Montreal.

Ottawa, March 27.—The new battalion which Hon. P. B. Blondin will raise and command will be the 258th, and its headquarters will be at Montreal and Trois Rivières. The regiment will be recruited throughout the province of Quebec. The formal authorization was given the Postmaster General at the cabinet meeting today.

N. B. MAN WOUNDED

Ottawa, March 27.—A 50th Infantry. Wounded—J. H. McDonald, Fraser's Lake, N.S., H. G. Knox, 26 Winter street, St. John, N. B., Edward Marcou, Balmoral, N. B.

THE BRITISH TAKE TWO MORE VILLAGES

Army of King George in Advance Towards Cambrai Occupied Villages of Longavesnes, Lieramout and Equancourt—Cavalry Drive Enemy from Longavesnes

All of Lower Forest of Coucy Has Fallen Into Hands of the French, Together With Villages of Petit Barisis, Verdrueil and Coucy-La-Ville.

London, March 27.—The British in their advance towards Cambrai have occupied the villages of Longavesnes, Lieramout and Equancourt, according to the official report from British headquarters in France tonight. The text reads:

"This morning our cavalry drove the enemy from the villages of Longavesnes, Lieramout and Equancourt, which are now occupied by our troops. A number of prisoners were captured in the course of this operation."

"During the night, the enemy delivered a third attack upon our post north of Beaumetz-La-Cambrai, which was temporarily successful. Early this morning the post was recaptured and our position re-established."

"An enemy raiding party was driven off by our fire last night east of Ploegsteert."

Great French Victory.

Paris, March 27.—All of the lower forest of Coucy has fallen into the hands of the French, together with the villages of Petit Barisis, Verdrueil and Coucy-La-Ville, according to the official statement issued by the war office tonight. This important territory lies to the south of La Fere and west of Leun. The French advance has now reached the western outskirts of the forest of St. Gobain and the upper forest of Coucy.

The text reads: "Between the Somme and the Oise the enemy artillery, violently counter-attacked by our guns, bombarded our positions on the front of Rouppe, Esigny and Benay. Several attempts by the Germans were stopped short by our fire. French successful."

"South of the Oise our troops continued their successful advance. All of the lower forest of Coucy, as well as the villages of Petit Barisis, Verdrueil and Coucy-La-Ville, fell into our possession. Our advance guards have reached several points in the western outskirts of the forest of St. Gobain and the upper forest of Coucy. Our losses were slight in the engagements in this region."

"North of Soissons we made important progress north of Neuville-sur-Margival and northeast of Leuilly. In the Argonne a surprise attack on the German lines in the sector of Solantois enabled us to take about 20 prisoners."

"On the Verdun front the artillery fighting was quite violent in the direction of Hill 304 and north of Bezonvaux. "Belgian communication: Last night the field and trench artillery on both sides was very active along the Yser in the direction of Diamide, Steenstraete and Hel Sas. The Belgian batteries shelled various German assembly areas before the front, and similarly directed successful fires on the enemy works near Blazachoules."

"Eastern theatre: After efficacious artillery preparation a French battalion captured 400 metres of enemy trenches in the direction of Cervaisna-Crest, taking about 100 prisoners. In the German West Wall troops, supported by our artillery, checked a Bulgarian attack. "A German airplane was brought down near Lake Prevala, the pilot and observer being made prisoner."

German Statement.

Berlin, March 27, via Havre.—The occupation by Entente troops of the French town of Roisel, after repeated efforts, is announced by the war office. In the forest between the Oise and Coucy-La-Chateau German troops save way to avoid being outflanked. "Because of the rainy weather on the western front the fighting activity continued small. On the roads from Hapsaume northward engagements occurred on the outpost line of Norquill-Lagincourt and near Equancourt, northeast of Peronne. Roisel, on the Colonne Brook, was occupied by the enemy after he had made repeatedly unsuccessful advances. "In the woods between the Oise and Coucy-La-Chateau stronger French forces encountered our projecting troops, which inflicted losses on the enemy and then gave way before a threatened outflanking movement."

"On the Macedonian front, north-west of Monastir, the French renewed their attack yesterday," says the statement. "Several strong attacks were repulsed in hand-to-hand fighting. "West of Tarnova, the enemy gained a footing in a small trench sector."

HUNS WANT PEACE WITH RUSSIA

London, Mar. 27.—A despatch to the Exchange Telegraph from Amsterdam says:

"According to a Berlin telegram received by the Amsterdam Bourse, Berlin has offered a separate peace to Russia. The terms offered are said to be complete autonomy to Poland, the internationalization of Constantinople, the evacuation by Russia of Austrian territory and a Russian protectorate over Armenia."

TWO BRITISH DESTROYERS WENT DOWN

One Struck Mine—Another Went Down in Collision.

London, Mar. 27.—Two British destroyers have been sunk, one by striking a mine and another after a collision with a steamer was officially announced tonight.

"A British destroyer recently struck a mine in the channel and sank. Four officers and 17 men were saved. "Another of these vessels sank today after a collision with a steamer. One man was lost. There were no other casualties."

ITALIANS REPULSE AUSTRIANS

Rome, Mar. 27, via London.—The war office issued the following statement today: "In the Sugana Valley on Sunday night enemy detachments attempted to approach our positions on the left bank of the Maso Torvent, west of Samone. They were driven off and dispersed by our fire. "Yesterday there was considerable artillery activity on the Julian front. At dusk the bombardment was extremely severe in the section between the Frigido and Dosso Patti. After destroying our defenses the enemy launched two attacks in force, one against Hill 126, where he succeeded in occupying some of our advanced trenches, and the other towards Dosso Patti, which was immediately repulsed. "A squadron of our airplanes dropped bombs on Hutments in the Arsa Valley, in the neighborhood of Gerli with good results. "All our machines returned."

VIENNA FEELS PINCH OF STARVATION

Vienna, via Bern, to Paris, March 27.—Restricted potato rations, whereby each person receives only one pound a week, went into effect today. This quantity will prevail until imports can be increased. It is planned in the near future to restrict potato consumption in Austria so that this product will be apportioned according to the financial status of the consumers.

GERMANS BEING DRIVEN SLOWLY OUT OF FRANCE

British and French Troops Made Additional Important Gains in Northern France — British Nearing St. Quentin Front.

French Gaining.

The gains of the French were made in the region to the south of La Fere, when they drove the Germans completely out of the lower forest of Coucy and also captured the villages of Petit Barisis, Verdrueil and Coucy-La-Ville, bringing the French line in this region to the western outskirts of the forest of St. Gobain and the upper forest of Coucy.

In the Soissons sector further progress was made north of Neuville-sur-Margival and northeast of Leuilly. The German war office admits the capture by the British of the town of Roisel, about eleven miles northwest of St. Quentin, and the falling back of the German forces before the French at several points in the forest region south of La Fere, in order to avoid being outflanked.

Violent artillery fighting in the region of Verdun and at various points in Belgium notably near Dixmude, Sisonstraete and Hel Sas, has been in progress. Russian Front.

On the Russian front, the Russians have been forced to fall back before the Germans south of Baranovich, according to a statement of the Petrograd war office. In the fighting Berlin claims that more than 600 Russians were made prisoner, and four machine guns and seven mine-throwers were captured. Russian attacks near Lutsk, in Volynia, and in Galicia, were repulsed by the Teutonic allies, says Berlin.

PARISIAN OFFICIALS NOT DECEIVED BY MACHINATIONS OF TEUTONS

Class of 1918 May be Called on.

Paris, March 27.—The government's bill providing for the calling out of the 1918 class recruits provoked a lengthy debate in the chamber of deputies today, and a frank explanation by the new minister of war, Paul Painleve on the conditions confronting the Allies.

Abel Ferry, who introduced the measure, said that Germany and Austria had already called out this class. Deputy Deguise opposed the bill on the ground that the government had not given proof that France's allies have made efforts equaling those of France.

M. Painleve, defending the measure, reminded the chamber that while France was entering a decisive phase of the war, "decisive" did not mean "brief." "Successful as is the beginning of the spring campaign, great as is the joy of seeing part of our territory liberated it would be futile to consider the German retreat as renunciation," said the minister. "The retreat is evidently rather by reason of the force of the Anglo-French armies than because of the prudence of their co-ordination than because of weakening on the part of the German army. It is proof of the necessity of their bringing together their military energies. Germany is assembling an army greater numerically and more solidly equipped than ever before. That is the instrument of war over which we must triumph. Certainly the most cruel sacrifice is that of these thousands of young men, who sacrifice themselves before having even lived, in order that the country may be saved."

The minister of war said that the government would fix the date for the class incorporation, it being understood that two-thirds of the troops would be called about April 15, the other third on May 1. M. Painleve was frequently applauded during his address. He said he hoped the chamber would pass the bill, and thus show confidence in the government, without which it would be impossible to carry out the heavy task.

The chamber voted down several amendments and finally passed the bill. "The government will not attempt to carry out its policy, passage of censorship and espionage bills, and provision for the employment of additional secret service agents. No final decision has been reached as to whether financial assistance should be given the Entente Allies, though a strong sentiment for such a step exists among government officials. If this is done the government probably will deal directly with the other governments concerned, and not through agents."

Colonel E. M. House, the President's personal adviser, arrived at the White House tonight from New York. He is expected to stay several days. Senator Hitchcock, a member of the Sen-

GERMANS SUCCESSFUL.

In the Austro-Italian theatre, along the Julian front, the Germans made an attack in force between Doseo Falte and Prigide, and captured a section of Italian trenches on Hill 126. At all other places, however, the attack met with repulse, according to Rome.

About 400 yards of Teutonic Allied trenches have been captured by the French near the Corvaligna Crest in Sochial, Macedonia, together with some 100 prisoners. A Bulgarian attack in the Corva river bend in this region was repulsed.

Two more British torpedo boat destroyers have been sunk—only by striking a mine and the other in a collision. Announcement is made by the British admiralty that the British hospital ship Asturias, which was reported previously by Berlin to have been sunk, was torpedoed without warning. Thirty-one persons were killed in the attack, and 12 persons are still missing from the vessel. The Asturias had no wounded on board at the time, but carried some 300 persons.

Unofficial advice from Amsterdam, quoting a Berlin despatch, says it is rumored in Berlin that Germany has offered peace to Russia.

UNITED STATES STILL PREPARING FOR WAR

No Doubt in Minds of Washington Officials that Whatever Be its Details Action of Congress will be "Both Vigorous and Comprehensive."

Washington, March 27.—With army, navy and industrial preparedness measures to meet German aggression going forward as rapidly as possible, President Wilson and his cabinet today took up consideration of further steps to take the convening of congress in extra session next Monday.

The president has not yet written the message he will deliver Tuesday or Wednesday, and is said to have reached no final conclusion as to just what recommendations to make. Because of possible changes in the situation he is not able to put the address in final shape until the last moment.

Declaration of War.

There is no doubt in the minds of administration officials that whatever may be its details, the policy laid down before congress will be both vigorous and comprehensive. The general opinion, after the cabinet meeting, apparently was that the programme most likely to be followed by congress will include a declaration that a state of war exists between the United States and Germany, an authorization for the president to use the armed forces of the nation to protect his rights, the granting of a large credit to the government to carry out its policy, passage of censorship and espionage bills, and provision for the employment of additional secret service agents.

No final decision has been reached as to whether financial assistance should be given the Entente Allies, though a strong sentiment for such a step exists among government officials. If this is done the government probably will deal directly with the other governments concerned, and not through agents.

Colonel E. M. House, the President's personal adviser, arrived at the White House tonight from New York. He is expected to stay several days. Senator Hitchcock, a member of the Sen-

ate foreign relations committee, conferred with the President during the day and later said that he believed Mr. Wilson still had an open mind regarding recommendations to Congress. Personally, Senator Hitchcock thought the passage of a resolution by Congress endorsing the President's armed neutrality stand would be better than a declaration of war, or a declaration that a state of war exists. Afterwards the statement was authorized at the White House that the President had invited suggestions, but had not committed himself to any course in his talk with Senator Hitchcock.

Senator Hitchcock said he called to impress the President with the western sentiment against "precipitate action."

"I wished the president to know," he explained, "that I believe my own state and most of the people of the western states are most desirous of avoiding a declaration of war, or a declaration that a state of war exists, until no other course remains open. I approve and I believe the country approves of steps taken toward defense—of complete preparations looking to war if it becomes necessary."

Measures growing out of the international situation and left over appropriation bills, it appeared today, will comprise almost the whole legislative programme of the approaching extra session of congress.

While leaders will not attempt to frame a definite programme until after President Wilson's opening address, Senate Democratic leaders today expressed belief that the work of the extraordinary session would be the systematizing of the purchase of supplies of all kinds for the government, in case of active warfare. One suggestion under advisement would give the government authority to fix prices in making purchases.