

The Evening Times Star

VOL. X. No. 89

ST. JOHN N. B., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1915

TEN PAGES—ONE CENT

Was Critical For Allies on The Aisne Last Week; Joffre Hurried To Scene

German Assaults Made Things Serious But Danger Period Passed

in Spirited Fighting, Allies Lose Ground But Regain it—Germans Blow up Trench But Soldiers Jump Into Excavation and Hold it—Russian Reports Favorable

Paris, Jan. 20—It became known today for the first time that the situation upon the Aisne was regarded as so critical as a result of the German assaults last week, that General Joffre, commander-in-chief of the allied armies, hastened there in person to direct operations of the French troops.

Now, however, despite the massing of German reinforcements south and southwest of Laon, the French military authorities are confident that the invaders have shot their bolt north of Soissons, and that the next operations there will see the allies upon the offensive in an effort to retake the ground they have lost.

Great importance is attached here to the French gains in the forest of La Prete, north of Pont a Mouson. The French forces, lying southwest of Metz, have strongly entrenched their positions, and report the repulse of all German counter attacks. Artillery engagements are in progress in Upper Alsace, where hard snow storms and cold weather have interfered with infantry operations.

FRENCH SUMMARY

Paris, Jan. 20—(2:45 p. m.)—The French War Office this afternoon reported as follows:—

"From the sea to the Somme, in the region of Nieuport, there was yesterday a fairly spirited artillery engagement in the course of which the enemy endeavored in vain to destroy our bridge at the mouth of the Yser.

"In the meantime we were successful in demolishing a portion of his defenses at this point; also we were successful at the Union Farm near St. Georges' where the enemy had strongly organized his positions.

"In the sector of Ypres and near Lens, there were, yesterday, artillery exchanges of varying intensity. There was also a very violent bombardment of Blangy, near Arras, but it was not followed by an infantry attack.

"From the Somme to the Argonne, there has been nothing to report, not having been any activity in the sector of Soissons or in the vicinity of Cresnes or near Rheims.

"In the region of Camp De Chalons, as well as to the north of Perthes and of Massiges, our artillery directed a very effective fire on the field works of the enemy.

"In the Argonne, in the forest of L'egrus, the enemy delivered a violent attack upon one of our trenches. Our troops, who for a moment gave way under the shock, later recaptured in two counter attacks all their positions and maintained themselves therein. The first of these attacks gave us a greater part of these positions and the second completed the work.

"At St. Hubert the Germans blew up, by means of a mine, the north-eastern projection of our trenches. Our troops threw themselves into the excavations caused by these explosions and prevented the enemy from taking possession of them.

"To the northwest of Pont-A-Mouson, in the forest of La Prete we established ourselves at a distance of 100 yards in front of the German trenches, captured by us the day before yesterday. At the end of the day (Tuesday) the enemy here delivered a counter attack but without success.

"In the vicinity of Thann there has been artillery engagements in which the advantage rested with us."

RUSSIAN REPORT FAVORABLE

Petrograd, Jan. 20—An official communication by the general staff of the Russian army says:—

"During January 17 and 18, on the right bank of the lower Vistula, a front running from the river to the railroad from Warsaw to Bialystok, a portion of our troops, having come in close contact with the enemy, had a series of collisions of secondary importance.

"Fighting of a more grave character, though having the nature of separate actions, took place in the village of Konopki, where the heavy artillery with which the enemy bombarded us was silenced by the fire of our batteries and near Bodanow and Bojonia, opposite which the enemy occupied well organized defensive positions. Heavy fighting also occurred near Dobryna, where an offensive attempt of the Germans was blocked and the enemy was driven back, sustaining grave losses.

"During the day of January 17, the enemy bombarded, from his positions on the west bank of the Vistula, our lines near Wyszogrod, but our fire, directed upon his front and flank, silenced the German artillery.

"On January 18, the Germans violently cannonaded the village of Vitkovice, and the entrenchments occupied by us on the left bank of the Buzza.

"There is no material change on the other fronts."

AUSTRIA CALLS OUT ALL LANDSTURM

Vienna, via Paris, Jan. 20—Despatches from Budapest state that the governor of Cracow has ordered women, children and men unfit for military service to leave the city and suburbs within forty-eight hours. The men over military age, but who are still active, have been formed into a civic guard. The banks have been transferred to Vienna. Provisions of all kinds, it is said, are scarce in Cracow.

The Austrian War Office has issued an order, calling up all of the landsturm men, up to and including those aged sixty. The order applies throughout the Austrian empire.

ADVANCE BY RUSSIANS SOON?

London, Jan. 20—The Times correspondent with the Russian armies writes from Warsaw that there is a very little change in the position of the opposing armies west of the Vistula and that he is disinclined to believe reports of an impending German retirement.

It is certain, however, that the German fire has slackened on their front during the last ten days, and the same is true of the impetuosity of their attacks. There is always a possibility, too, that pressure on the German flanks in the Vistula may cause withdrawal from this front. Rumors are again current here regarding a pending Russian advance.

DUTCH PATROL BOAT SUNK BY A MINE

The Hague, Jan. 20—The Dutch naval patrol boat, the Tofian, while searching for mines off Nieuw Sluis, struck a mine and disappeared. One officer and nine men were lost and only fragments of their bodies were recovered. A large number of fresh floating mines are reported from all coast places.

But This Is Turkish Report.

Constantinople, Jan. 20—Announcement is made here that during a night attack on the English forts located on the Shal El Arabi River, the Arabi, the enemy was taken by surprise and lost 100 in killed and wounded.

HARD TIME TOWING CAMINO TO HALIFAX

Halifax, N. S., Jan. 20—The task of towing the disabled Belgian relief ship Camino to Halifax is proving a difficult one for the government steamer Lady Laurier and the Kanawha. The marine department today received word that the hawkers attached to the Camino had parted. The Lady Laurier and the Kanawha, however, stood by the Camino all night, and another attempt was made this morning to bring the ship to port.

WORSHIPPERS AND PRIEST DIE IN RUINS OF CHURCH

Building, Shaken By Earthquake, Collapses on 300 or 400 People

ONLY FOUR TAKEN OUT ALIVE

Fewer Than 400 Saved Among Ortucho's 2,500 Inhabitants—Another Church, in Collarneau, Wrecked and Priest and People Killed

Rome, Jan. 20—In Ortucho, a few miles from Gioja-De-Marsi, fewer than 400 people were saved, out of 2,500 when the earthquake came. In the church, there were between 800 and 400 people. The priest and the entire congregation were imprisoned under the ruins as the whole building collapsed. Only four women have since been taken out alive.

Collarneau, 8,000 feet up in the mountains, is one of the towns from which many persons had emigrated to America. Here 1,000 persons out of a population of 1,500 were killed. The priest perished while conducting services at the altar and the worshippers, chiefly women and children, died with him. The church is in ruins, but two statues of saints are still standing unharmed.

London, Jan. 20—A despatch from Lausanne, Switzerland, to the Central News states a slight earthquake occurred at Berne and Zurich last night. The damage was trifling.

Paris, Jan. 20—Athens reports violent earthquakes on Monday in Zante and Cephalonia Islands in the Ionian group.

Belfort, France, Jan. 20—A severe earthquake shook the houses in Belfort on Monday night.

AUSTRALIA WILL DO HER PART WELL

No Limit to Number of Troops Commonwealth Will Send To Front

Melbourne, Australia, Jan. 20 (via London, 12:34 p. m.)—The seat of the commonwealth government has been transferred from Melbourne to Sydney. Minister of Defense Pierce has declared that there is no limit to the number of troops the Australian commonwealth will send to the front.

A German lieutenant has been arrested at Clermont on a charge of espionage. Plans of wireless plants and maps of various parts of Australia were found in his possession.

London, Jan. 20—The high commissioner of Australia in London, Sir George H. Reid, says he is unable to throw any light on the moving of the capital, unless it be connected with the question of defense. Sydney is the main center of the naval and military forces of the commonwealth.

COURT MARTIAL FOR FOUR IN FREDERICTON

Fredricton, N. B., Jan. 20—Four members of the field batteries, under arrest for disciplinary conduct, are being held for district court martial.

About twenty horses have been purchased here for use of the field batteries and turned over to the troops. The buyers are to leave this evening for Woodstock.

WEATHER BULLETIN. Issued by authority of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, R. F. Stewart, director of meteorological service.

Synopsis—The pressure is now lowest over the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and an area of high pressure, with a pronounced cold wave, is spreading into Ontario from the northward. Light snowfalls have occurred in Ontario and Quebec, and heavy rains in the maritime provinces.

Commissioners Cut Them Down

Whittle Estimates In Hours-long Private Session

No Men to be Added to Police Force But Signal System to be Installed—Still in Session at 3 p. m. But Believed Figures Would be Down to Last Year

The city commissioners went without their luncheon today in a last desperate effort to reduce the city assessment to the level of 1914 and remained in private session from 11 o'clock up to the time of going to press. It is understood they were slightly successful in making a reduction to practically what it was last year and as a result, it is said, there will be absolutely no addition to the police force, no increase in the fire department, no repairs or improvements to the ferry and there will be a very marked curtailment in the public works department. The water surplus will be called upon to meet \$5,000 of the water sewerage maintenance and other adjustments were made in smaller items.

Commissioner McEllin, it is believed, will depend upon the appointment of the new chief and the introduction of the patrol system to effect some improvement in police protection but will place the responsibility for any material weakness in the force on the citizens who demanded the reduction. The fire department estimates were allowed to remain the same as last year.

Commissioner Wigmore, it is understood, demurred at any cut in his appropriation but finally yielded to the pressure exerted by Commissioner McEllin who, it was said, pointed out that the public could not complain of weak pressure at hydrants or delay in sewerage extension if the water reserve was taken up to keep down the taxes.

Com. Russell, it was said, consented willingly to a reduction of \$5,000 in the ferry estimates with the understanding there would be no repairs or improvements on the floats this year.

Much of the time was spent on the board of works estimates, the items being taken up in detail and reductions made wherever possible.

The chamberlain was advised with the commissioners and on each cut was made the amount was jotted down with the object of reaching a total which would wipe out the increase of \$7,000 decided upon at Friday's meeting. It appeared certain at three o'clock that there would be no increase outside the interest increase of \$44,000 and every effort, it was said, was being made to whittle this away. Legislation will be secured to make the amended assessment after January 1st.

About three o'clock the commissioners adjourned for half an hour. It was said then that there were only about \$15,000 still remaining on the increased estimates to be accounted for. Further consideration of the public works estimates will be taken up at the meeting this afternoon, and the hope was expressed that the whole increase might be wiped off then. It was the intention of the commissioners to insist in council to sanction the reduction in the estimates this afternoon.

If the commissioners allow any increase it will be in addition to the increase of \$100,000.

The commissioners today decided to ask the school board to reconsider their estimate, and make a reduction in the total, which is practically the safe last year.

More Apply For Places In The Mounted Rifles

Major Colin Mackintosh to be Paymaster—The Matter of Equipment—More Presentations to Soldiers

The recruiting for the 8th Mounted Rifles, "B" Squadron, Major C. H. McLean, O.C., was continued today, and several additional applications were received. As it is believed that there will be little difficulty in securing men for this branch of the militia, more than 100 having offered to serve yesterday. Although not quite 150 are required for the squadron here, a careful selection is being made, and only the most desirable are being taken, consideration being given efficiency in mounted detail, physical condition, and moral and other factors.

An instance of this is shown in the fact that out of ten men who applied this morning to Major McLean, only three were accepted. There is no dearth of volunteers either from the city or the country.

Another Appointment

Friends of Major Colin Mackintosh well known in St. John where he was in business for a time, will be interested to know that he has been appointed paymaster in the mounted unit. He has been a member of the 8th Dragoons since its organization. His appointment will be popularly received.

New Equipment

The matter of equipment is proving of interest to the members of the militia going on foreign service, in that recent intimations in despatches have been that the Oliver, which is in general use in Canada, was giving way to the Webb which has been the equipment in the English service. There has always been an open controversy among soldiers as to the superiority of the equipments. No matter what decision is arrived at it is the belief of competent military authorities that no change will be made in what has been issued to the second contingent mobilized here, the 26th having

been equipped with the Oliver but that if a change is made it will take place upon their going to the other side.

Routine Drill

So far as the Army Service Corps are concerned, being a mounted unit, they are not concerned in this question of equipment. Regarding their other equipment, as to horses, lorries, etc., no further word has been received, and they have been occupying their time with routine drill in the absence of the equipment for carrying out their complete curriculum. Physical training has formed a large share of their programme thus far and the men are showing the results in a hardening of form and an improvement in physical condition. Sports of various kinds are being encouraged.

Friendly Rivalry

The same is true with regard to the 26th Battalion between whom and the No. 8 Co. C. A. S. C., a friendly rivalry has sprung up as to supremacy with the puck and stick, and this may possibly be developed still further in tug-of-war matches.

Presentations

Friends of Charles Richardson gave him a pleasant surprise last night at his home in Union street when they assembled in his honor and during the evening presented to him a valuable wrist watch. Included in those present were fellow members of the 26th. All present enjoyed themselves in games and music.

Bellevue Avenue, last night friends of Private E. M. Morrell, of the 20th presented to him a wrist watch. Best wishes were bestowed upon him in behalf of those present by Chas. Gallop, who made the presentation, following which a jolly time was had.

CARLETON CASE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT

The case of the King vs. Judson Dryden came up for trial in the circuit court this morning before Mr. Justice Barry and jury. The defendant was charged with assaulting Dennis Keleher on November 25 on the west side of the harbor.

The complainant, Commissioner Wigmore, and a man named Duddy gave evidence for the crown and Dryden testified in his own behalf. F. R. Taylor, K. C., addressed the jury for the defendant, and Attorney-General Baxter later for the crown. Following the judge's charge this afternoon the case will go to the jury.

THE FUNDS

Mayor Frink this morning acknowledged the following contributions to the Belgian relief funds: The Moncton Division, A. O. H., per Hugh F. Hamilton, \$37.50; Soldiers' Aid Society, River Valley, per W. B. Evans, \$10; Union S. S., \$5 and Rev. H. Markham, \$1, per Hon. A. R. McClellan; Upper Maugeville Baptist church, per J. Ainsworth, \$10; Belvidere, V. C. S. S., per F. A. Baird, \$5; Mrs. Nichols, Westfield, \$2; Mrs. John Weston, Jarmville, per Mary Cameron, \$5; Centre Napan Women's Institute, per Mrs. Lena Mackinnon, \$44.25; Men's Bible Class, Newcastle Ridge, per W. B. Evans, \$10; High School Alumnae, per Jessie F. Lawson, pres., \$100.

"MASSACRE OF INNOCENTS," AMERICAN DESCRIPTION OF THE ENEMY'S AIR RAID

New York Herald Editorial Scores Germans For Attack on undefended Places -- Four Deaths Known to Have Been Caused by Bombs

New York, Jan. 20—Under the caption of "More slaughter of innocents," the Herald comments editorially on the German aerial raid of last night on the east coast of England, as follows: "Is it the madness of despair, or just plain every-day madness that has prompted the Germans to select for attack the peaceful and undefended resorts of England's east coast? First a squadron of German cruisers swooped down upon Harlow, Whitby and Scarborough to take their toll of death of non-combatants, women and children, and now it is an aerial attack upon Yarmouth, Sandringham, Kings Lynn and Cromer.

"What can Germany hope to gain by these wanton attacks upon undefended places and this slaughter of innocents? Certainly not the good opinion of the peoples of neutral nations, for these know that the rules of civilized warfare call for notice of bombardment, even of places fortified and defended."

THE STORY OF THE RAID

London, Jan. 20—German aircraft yesterday made the long threatened raid on England, and considerable damage besides some casualties in the towns resulted. One effort was directed against the king's residence at Sandringham, in Norfolk, but no damage was done and the royal family were not there at the time.

Peopls were killed in Yarmouth and King's Lynn, while Cromer, Sberingham and Becton were also visited. It is supposed the Germans flew across the North Sea from Cuxhaven.

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