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FRIDAY MORNING APRIL 20 1917—FOURTEEN PAGES

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VOL. XXXVII.—No. 13,309

STEADY GAINS BY FRENCH

Villages of Aisy, Jouy, Laffaux and Fort de Conde Taken With 500 Prisoners; Important Advance Near Bermericourt; Strong System of Enemy Trenches Northwest of Auberive Carried for a Mile and a Quarter.

GERMANS ARE FIGHTING ON REDUCED RATIONS

HEAVY GERMAN FORCES POCKETED BY FRENCH

On Five-Mile Tongue of Land Hindenburg's Men Are Faced With Alternatives of Precipitate Flight or Certain Surrender, and French Are Dangerously Near Craonne.

BY ARTHUR S. DRAPER.

Special Cable to The Toronto World. LONDON, April 19.—The valiant armies of General Nivelle continued to lean heavily against the hard-pressed German forces today the commander-in-chief desisted from the smashing blows he has delivered since the French offensive opened on Monday and successfully applied the well-known "pinch" tactic to the German salient which projects into trench lines northeast of Soissons.

Swift French advances drove the Germans back against the Chemin des Dames, the famous road which runs right across the Craonne Plateau, established the soldiers of the first army of the republic well upon the summit of the plateau itself and pocketed the heavy German forces between Laffaux and Jouy in a perilous angle of less than twenty-three degrees. On this five-mile tongue of land extending southwestward from the plateau Hindenburg's men are faced with the alternatives of precipitate flight or certain surrender. They cannot remain where they are.

Beginning at the point of this salient and operating from the bridgehead on the Aisne, which they seized yesterday, the French drove ahead today, capturing Fort-de-Conde and swinging their line northeastward well past Yully, thru the villages of Aisy and Jouy. From this point to Courvoisier, where the French established themselves yesterday, the ground is all high, in fact only a few yards lower than the most commanding positions the Germans still occupy on the Craonne Plateau. The penetration here is on an average of somewhat more than three miles and well beyond the most difficult of Hindenburg's trench systems.

Near the Hurbise farm there was a sharp engagement, following which the French were able to occupy a strong point of support and send five hundred prisoners and two 105-millimetre cannon to the rear. This success brings the Poilus dangerously near Craonne.

West of Bermericourt also Nivelle's detachments made an important advance and captured another 50 prisoners.

Can't Stop the French. Nowhere has Hindenburg been able to stem the French progress or regain a foot of the lost territory, though yesterday he threw in twelve new German divisions, or approximately 224,000 men over the front from Soissons to Auberive. Counter-attacks organized on the largest scale and in the favorite German mass formation have withered under the smashing French fire without even reaching the lines at which they were aimed. The slaughter following these fruitless charges has had its effect on the German morale, as the official reports from Paris indicate, and the stormy weather which has alternated between rain, hail and snow has been even more of a burden on the Germans, depressed by failure, than on the French, elated by their unchecked succession of victories.

The strip of territory before Moronvillers in the Champagne continues to be the scene of the heaviest fighting, with results that are highly satisfactory to the French. Hill 27, the highest in the region, was stormed by the French today and the artillery fire became even more furious against the

bulk of the other hills. The French positions north of Mont Haut were enlarged and a German counter-attack here as well as against Mont Carnillet, was promptly shattered. Northwest of Auberive, which thus far marks the eastern limit of Nivelle's offensive, a brilliant French action over a mile and a half front drove the enemy out of his strongly organized trench system, linked Auberive up with the Moronvillers wood, and carried the French line to the outskirts of Vaudeincourt on the Sulpice River. This may indicate a gigantic French plan to drive the Germans out of the great strip of territory bounded on the northward by the Sulpice, clear to its junction with the Aisne, northwest of Berry-au-Bac.

French Not Depressed. Berlin insists that captured French orders prove that "French troops have only approximately attained their tactical aims, to say nothing of their strategic objects." But whether this is true or not, more than 17,000 prisoners and nearly a hundred guns, not to mention the territory acquisitions, are not calculated to depress the French.

Two more batteries were captured by the French today and it is said that the German guns have been buried in the mud and churned under by the hurricane of French fire. Altogether in the grand offensive, the allies have taken more than 31,000 dead and the British alone, as the night official report testifies, have accounted for 22 guns, field pieces and cannon. Machine guns have been seized at the rate of about one to every fifty German prisoners.

Highly important as have been the results of the last fortnight's fighting, it is believed to be merely the prelude to a greater struggle and that events are rapidly leading

up to a decisive conflict into which the allies and Germany will hurl all their strength. Such a titanic struggle must result as decisively as is physically possible, as practically the entire nation will be engaged.

The time has come for Hindenburg to put his cards on the table and prove whether or not he is merely bluffing, as observers here. His mouthpiece, Major Morait and Count von Reventlow, show by their frantic appeals to the people to support him that there is something like unrest and fear in Germany over the military situation. The publication of the daily list of submarine sinkings is no longer counterbalancing the defeat German news sufficient to prevent Hindenburg from denouncing the trenches of reinforcements for the French front. More progress was made in the effort to trenches south of the German front, eastward of both Fampoux and Monchy. Berlin speaks of increased artillery fire in this section and it looks as the Field Marshal Haig was about to renew the drive on Douai.

Two Months Retreating. Moreover it is fundamental German strategy to use the attack as the best means of defence. With a few exceptions Hindenburg has been continually retreating for nearly two months. The weather heretofore has been his defence, but with the advent of a late spring a change of conditions is now likely.

In the north the British are evidently in process of enlisting a new blow. Meanwhile they keep up a pressure sufficient to prevent Hindenburg from denouncing the trenches of reinforcements for the French front. More progress was made in the effort to trenches south of the German front, eastward of both Fampoux and Monchy. Berlin speaks of increased artillery fire in this section and it looks as the Field Marshal Haig was about to renew the drive on Douai.

GERMANS NOW FIGHTING ON SHORT BREAD RATION

Each Man Now Receives Only One-third of a Loaf Instead of a Half Loaf Daily.

By R. T. Small, Staff Correspondent of The Associated Press.

BRITISH HEADQUARTERS IN FRANCE, April 19.—Via London.—A German officer, captured Tuesday, frankly stated that the Germans regard the loss of Vimy Ridge as the biggest defeat they have suffered since the war began. This officer knows the ridge thoroughly, having been stationed on it all last summer, and said he could not understand how any troops could fall to hold it. In his opinion the garrison must have been demoralized before the British attack began.

The latter statement is thought to be true, for other captured Germans have testified to demoralization in their ranks after several days of the British intensive artillery fire. The Germans continue highly nervous all along the front, the slightest increase in the British fire calling up distress signals.

The German infantry are getting better artillery support since the battle of Arras, as a result of the bitterly worded reports made regarding the lack of this support previously. The feeling is so intense between the German infantrymen and artillerymen that the British have found it necessary to separate the prisoners belonging to the two services, to prevent fighting within the cages.

Rations Are Reduced. The newly called up troops thrown into the western line, admit that the artillery fire bewildered them. This is also true of the German troops recently transferred from the eastern to the western fronts. Prisoners from the latter forces say that they had no idea what war was actually like until recently, and all became much depressed when they saw the trenches they were supposed to occupy all smashed and torn by the British shillies.

Prisoners taken in the past three days tell of the spread of discontent in the German army because of reduced rations since April 15. Each man formerly received half a loaf of bread daily. Now he has only one-third of a loaf. This reduction coming after the Somme retreat, the defeat at Arras and the beginning of the great French offensive, has caused much grumbling among the troops.

CANADA GLADLY WELCOMES AID PLEDGED BY U.S.

Foster and Laurier Pay Eloquent Tributes to New Ally.

LIBERALS TRUCULENT

W. F. Maclean Points Out Serious Menace to Mining Industry

By a Staff Reporter.

Ottawa, April 19.—The house of commons reassembled today, after ten weeks' adjournment, with a large proportion of members in attendance. The Liberals seemed to be in a truculent mood, while the government, under the leadership of Sir George Foster, was disposed to be conciliatory. Several motions which ordinarily would go thru by unanimous consent were held over upon objection from Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and by raising points of order he also prevented the house going automatically into supply. Even in the course of his speech upon the entrance of the United States into war, the leader of the opposition referred to the closer relations growing up between Canada and the United States, and made a sarcastic reference to the free wheat concession which highly delighted his followers.

Menace of Strikes. Before the orders of the day were reached there was some discussion on the subject of strikes in the far west, and W. F. Maclean (South York), warned the government that strikes were likely to occur in the Porcupine and Cobalt districts. He thought the government should address itself to preventing strikes rather than trying to stop them after they got under way. He thought the War Measures Act should be invoked to prevent coal famine either thru unnecessary strikes or thru railway tie-ups and transportation break-downs as had occurred during the past winter in the Province of Ontario.

Following the British precedent, the party leaders welcomed the advent of the United States into the war. Both Sir Geo. Foster and Sir Wilfrid Laurier agreed that the aid to be extended by the United States was most likely to be of a moral and financial character. At the same time they thought it quite possible that the conflict might so long continue as to make the advent of an American army in France the turning point of the war.

Significant tributes were also paid by Sir George and Sir Wilfrid to the late Duchess of Connaught, whose death had occurred during the parliamentary recess.

The greater part of the day was devoted to discussing capital punishment. Mr. Bickard's bill to abolish the death penalty was discussed at considerable length, but the sentiment of the house was overwhelmingly against

(Concluded on Page 11, Column 1).

CANADIAN CASUALTIES LIST STEADILY GROWS

Nearly Twenty-Six Hundred Are Reported Since Easter Monday.

Ottawa, Ont., April 19.—Lists reported a total of 224 casualties among members of the Canadian expeditionary forces were issued today from the records office of the militia department. The morning list had 222 names and the night 101. There were 16 reported killed in the day list and one in the night, 308 wounded in the day list and 73 in the night (most of them only slightly). The day list reported four missing. The night list reported five dead or wounded, eleven wounded, four presumed to have died, and five who have died of illness. This brings the total number of casualties (issued since Easter Monday) up to 286 officers and 2,197 men, a total of 2,483.

GALLANT DEEDS PERFORMED BY THE CANADIANS AT VIMY

OFFICIAL WAR REPORTS

PARIS, April 19.—The text of today's official communication reads:

"Between the Somme and the Oise quite violent artillery actions were in progress.

"North of the Aisne the enemy, under our energetic pressure, continued to withdraw in the direction of the Chemin des Dames. Our troops in the course of the day occupied the Villages of Aisy, Jouy and Laffaux, and kept in close contact with the enemy. Fort de Conde (northwest of Conde-sur-Aisne) also fell into our power.

"In the region of Hurbise after a spirited engagement we occupied a point of support north of that farm, taking five hundred prisoners and two cannon of 105 millimetres.

"West of Bermericourt we made an important advance and captured about 60 prisoners.

"In Champagne the artillery action was continued furiously against the Massif of Moronvillers. We changed our positions north of Mont Haut, and repulsed two German counter-attacks in that region and on Mont Carnillet.

"Northwest of Auberive, our troops brilliantly carried on a front of two kilometers a system of trenches strongly organized, joining this village with the Moronvillers wood, drove back the enemy to the southern outskirts of Vaudeincourt. One hundred and fifty prisoners were captured in the course of the action.

"In the region of St. Mihiel a German attack on Romainville farm was broken up by our fire. The enemy left prisoners in our hands."

"Artillery fighting, at times quite spirited, took place in the region of Vauquois, and on the left bank of the Meuse in the direction of Le Mort Homme.

"Belgian communication: 'There was a violent artillery duel before Dixmude today. Further to the south in the direction of Steenstraete lively bomb fighting occurred.'

The text of this afternoon's statement follows: "South and southwest of St. Quentin there was very active artillery fighting. Patrol encounters occurred on the outskirts of the upper Forest of Coucy. We took prisoners.

Between the Aisne and the Chem-

in-des-Dames we continued to make progress north of Vally and Ostel. An enemy attack in the region of Courtois was checked by our machine guns. Further east the Germans at 6 o'clock last night made a very violent attack on our positions on the Vaulere Plateau. They were moved down by our fire. This futile attack was beaten back with very heavy losses and the Germans were not able to reach our lines. During the night there was heavy artillery fighting in the sectors of Saignesuil, Le Godet and La Pouspelle.

"In the Champagne our successes on a great scale were continued. At Moronvillers we attacked, achieving success everywhere. We carried Le Mont Haut and several heights to the east of that point, including Hill 27. In the region south of Moronvillers in the course of an engagement last night we captured two more German batteries. On the front between Soissons and Auberive we have identified twelve new German divisions.

"In the region of St. Mihiel a German attack on Romainville farm was broken up by our fire. The enemy left prisoners in our hands."

LONDON, April 19.—We improved our position slightly south of Monchy-le-Preux," says the official report from British headquarters in France tonight. "Today we further progressed east of Fampoux, and in the enemy's trenches southeast of Loos, where we again captured prisoners.

"South of Lens an enemy bombing attack upon one of our advanced positions was successfully beaten off. "The total number of guns captured to date is two hundred and twenty-eight."

PARIS, April 19.—The following official communication was issued tonight: "Eastern theatre, April 17: Attacks or reconnaissances, supported by strong artillery preparation, were carried out by the enemy in the direction of the Centre, in the region of St. Quentin. All of them were repulsed abruptly.

"Before the Italian front, preparation for an enemy attack was at 11 by artillery fire. Towards Monastir and Terzana Stena the enemy carried out a violent cannonade. We energetically counter-shelled batteries in actions near Koriza. We drove the enemy beyond Moskopolie and made Austrian prisoners.

GERMANS MASS FLEET FOR ATTACK ON RUSSIA

Kaiser's Warships at Libau May Attempt Landing on Baltic Coast Near Petrograd--Von Hindenburg Collects Army.

PETROGRAD, April 19, via London.—German preparations to attack the northern front, supported by a German fleet, reports of which appear to be well founded, heard on the war office warning recently issued, that the enemy means to march on Petrograd. The preparations consist of the massing of troops on the Dvinsk-Riga front and the concentration of transports, warships and shallow draft ships in Baltic seaports. A portion of the German fleet is reported to have moved from Kiel to Libau.

It is regarded here as extremely probable that the plan is to cut off Petrograd from the active army. The German efforts to spread discontent in the Russian army have developed an ingenious device of loading shells with copies of Chancellor Von Bethmann-Hollweg's reichstag speech of March 29, and firing them into the Russian lines.

Reuter's Petrograd correspondent says the information concerning the preparations being made by the Germans for an attack on the Russian northern front was made public by the Russian general staff.

"The opinion is," says the correspondent, "that the Germans contemplate a descent in the rear of the Russian right flank, either at Penau or Reval, or elsewhere on the Gulf of Finland. In connection with these preparations the military authorities note the recent withdrawal of German troops from some of the southern fronts, notably the line in Rumania."

Examples of Conspicuous Valor Will Result in Many Decorations When Honor List is Announced.

BY STEWART LYON.

CANADIAN Headquarters in France, via London, April 19.—

Where all the soldiers have been heroic it is difficult to single out actions which stamp the men who perform them as the bravest of the brave, but from the records which may result in the decoration of some of the heroes of the battle of Vimy Ridge I am now permitted to make mention of examples of conspicuous valor and places where it belongs. A private during the fierce struggle for the hill the second day of the battle earned a decoration, if ever a man did. The advance was made in a blinding snowstorm, which fortunately carried the wind into the faces of the enemy in their carefully guarded position on the hill slope. As our men advanced they were met by a murderous fire from a machine gun operated and guarded by a group of a dozen of the enemy. Our men were falling fast as the hail of lead from the machine gun swept the hillside. Then with utter disregard of his own safety this private rushed forward, tackling alone the barrier to our victory. Making progress from shell hole to shell hole, he reached a point within thirty yards of the enemy gun. He threw a bomb that distance which killed or wounded part of the machine gun crew; then, with a final rush, he reached the position and bayoneted the five men remaining with the gun. This splendid deed of gallantry saved the situation and the lives of many men.

Another episode was that wherein the captain of a battalion engaged in the assault on the hill went forward with a trap, to secure Germans who were captured in dugouts before they could make their escape. He left the scout stationed near the entrance of the large dugout with instructions to shoot at anyone emerging if he did not himself return. When the officer reached the bottom of the dugout he found seventy Germans in it, who surrendered at his demand. In the face of so many prisoners it was impossible that their captor should turn his back on them and ascend the dugout stair as doubtless he would have been promptly shot in the back. With his revolver in hand he stationed himself at the foot of the stairs and ordered the prisoners up.

Several of them, on reaching the top, were shot by the scout, who had no evidence that the enemy had surrendered. The ascending Germans blocked the stairs and shouted for the officer to whom they had surrendered to come up and stop the shooting. This he did at the imminent risk of his life from the enemy behind him and his own scout in front. He enjoyed the triumph of taking almost 70 men

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(Concluded on Page 7, Column 1).

ALTERATIONS AT DINEEN'S.

Repairs and alterations are still in progress on the Dineen Building and the sale prices are accordingly an outstanding attraction. The bargains in furs, millinery and men's hats, for Friday and Saturday sellings, are detailed on page two of this morning's World. Visit the Dineen store early, 140 Yonge street.