

## FRENCH FORCED TO GIVE GROUND IN AISNE VALLEY AFTER TWO DAYS FIERCE FIGHTING

### ALLIES RECEIVE PARTIAL SETBACK IN THE WEST

But General Position Will Not be Affected by It — Germans Force French to Yield Ground After Two Day's Fighting Near Vregny — Destruction of Bridges by Floods Made Operations of Allies Precarious — Kaiser On The Firing Line—Russians Advance on Right Bank of Lower Vistula.

A reverse of the Allies along the River Aisne, in the neighborhood of Soissons, is admitted in the latest French official statement, although the possible effect of the German advance is officially minimized.

After continuous engagements, which lasted nearly two days, the Germans forced the French to yield in front of Vregny, to the east of Crouy. It is explained by the French war office that the flooding of the river Aisne destroyed several of the bridges and thus rendered precarious the communication of the troops operating on the right bank. These troops were withdrawn, as it was thought impossible to send reinforcements to their support.

"The success is a partial one for our adversaries," says the French statement, "but will have no influence on the operations as a whole."

Emperor William himself was present at these operations, which resulted in the capture of several thousand French prisoners, and were continued throughout January 12 and 13.

Petrograd claims that the Russian troops have progressed on the right bank of the lower Vistula, where the German cavalry was repulsed. On the other fronts the fighting is made up largely of skirmishes and artillery duels.

The general staff of the Caucasus army devotes a statement to the operations in Azerbaijan, where, it is explained, it became expedient to regroup the Russian forces, necessitating the evacuation of certain places previously occupied. No important action took place, only an engagement by the Russian advance guard.

British aviators, early in the week, dropped bombs on the German position in Antwerp, according to a Netherlands newspaper despatch. The damage done by the bombs has not been ascertained.

The American Secretary of State has acknowledged, in a friendly speech the receipt of the preliminary reply of the British government to the American note protesting against the treatment accorded neutral commerce by the British warships. No comment is made by the Secretary in view of the fact that it is Great Britain's intention to reply later in detail.

Havana, Jan. 14.—The British cruiser which has lain off the port for several days, and the name of which is still not known, was joined today by a British chartered collier, from which it coaled.

Turks Claim Progress in Persia  
Amsterdam, Jan. 14, via London.—There has been received here an official communication given out at Constantinople by the Turkish authorities as follows:

"Assisted by Persian troops, our army is steadily advancing in Azerbaijan Province, in order to deliver the country from the Russian yoke."

"We have had further notable successes, occupying advanced positions of the Russians in the vicinity of Tabriz."

"A number of tribesmen of the British army of occupation in Egypt have surrendered to our vanguard."

200 German Prisoners of War  
London, Jan. 14.—Upwards of 200 German officers and men, rescued after the naval engagement between the German and British squadrons of the Falkland Islands, in the Southern Atlantic, on December 8, arrived today in England and were taken to detention camps. As the German sailors marched through the streets they appeared to be quite contented, cheering their comrades as the squads separated.

Eighteen Russian Generals Dismissed  
Berlin, Jan. 14 (by wireless to Sayville)—A statement given out by a German news agency credits the Hamburg Fremdenblatt with the assertion that eighteen Russian generals have been dismissed from important positions.

A Partial Success Which Does Not Effect General Situation  
Paris, Jan. 14.—The following official communication was issued by the War Office tonight:

### BRITISH ARMEN RAID THE GERMAN MILITARY STATIONS AT ANTWERP

Not Learned Yet What Damage Has Been Done, Amsterdam Paper Says—Petrograd Explains How Re-arrangement of Forces in Caucasus Was Successfully Carried Out.

Petrograd, Jan. 14.—The official report from the Caucasus army, issued tonight, follows:

"To avoid any false understanding of our operations in Azerbaijan during the last few days, the general staff of the Caucasus army deems it expedient to give the following explanation:

"From the beginning of the decisive action in the principal region of this theatre of the war it appeared necessary to re-group our troops. In accordance with this we proceeded in Azerbaijan to concentrate our troops at certain places, which demanded the evacuation of several points we had occupied previously."

"This re-arrangement of our forces was not under pressure of the enemy, but in accordance with a specially devised plan. During this operation no important action took place, except an engagement which our advance guard had near Mianouk. Thus we did not evacuate Azerbaijan, but adopted changes in position answering better the new developments."

Amsterdam, Jan. 14, via London.—The Telegram, in its issue of today, says it has learned that British aviators last Monday dropped bombs on the German positions at Antwerp.

The damage inflicted has not been learned.

Genova, via Paris, Jan. 14, 6:55 p. m.—A new Zeppelin airship left Friedrichshafen yesterday on a trial flight of an hour. After skirting Lake Constance the airship disappeared over the Grand Duchy of Baden, and later returned safely to its shed. Prior to making the trip a German aeroplane made a scouting tour in order to prevent a surprise by French aircraft.

### HON. MR. HAZEN ACTING MINISTER OF MILITIA

During Absence of Gen. Hughes in West—Very Capably Arranged for Mobilization of Second Contingent and His Carrying Out of Details Elicited Great Praise.

Special to The Standard.  
Ottawa, Jan. 14.—General Sam Hughes left for the West tonight to inspect the mobilization from Port Arthur to Victoria, B. C. Hon. J. D. Hazen, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, becomes acting minister of militia and defence during the absence of Canada's war lord.

On former occasion when General Hughes was in England for several weeks Mr. Hazen had charge of the militia department. This was at a crucial time in the militia affairs of this country. The first contingent had just set sail and no decision had been reached regarding the second contingent. However, under Mr. Hazen's administration orders were sent out for the recruiting of the second contingent. Everything was done quietly but speedily and effectively. There was no blare of trumpets. Mr. Hazen was at his office from early morning until late at night and the tremendous mass of detail which was necessary was handled effectively and wisely.

A new policy had to be laid down. The first contingent had mobilized at Valcartier, but with winter coming on this was impossible for the second contingent and so it was decided while Mr. Hazen was in charge to assemble the new recruits at the headquarters of the various divisional areas throughout the Dominion. This was a convenient arrangement and has proved successful.

When General Hughes returned to Canada he expressed the utmost satisfaction with the manner in which the business of the militia department had been conducted while he was away, and so when he decided to go west upon this occasion Mr. Hazen was again asked to take charge of the militia.

The Minister of Marine is one of the busiest members of the government and the assumption of the additional duties of the militia department makes his task at Ottawa a mammoth one. Mr. Hazen is capable of the work which nobody but trappers and Indians lived. It was decided to give the G. T. P. six months longer.

Undoubtedly the government will make his task at Ottawa a mammoth one. The commission which inquired into the National Transcontinental Railway demonstrated last winter that \$40,000,000 had been wasted during the Laurier regime.

The Laurier government has cost the country untold millions, but the payments are not yet over. The G. T. P. difficulty over the N. T. R. is but one example. Responsible lawyers are quite free in their opinion that the G. T. P. can drive a coach and four through the agreement made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and if this is so, the country is going to be up against it.

### CANADIANS NOT GOING TO THE FRONT FOR ANOTHER MONTH

London, Jan. 14.—(Gazette Cable)—Although the intention of the authorities was to send the Canadian troops to the front next week, a change has been made in the plans, and a delay of at least a month is now probable.

### GETTING BACK TO NORMAL IN RUSSIA

Gradually Resuming Freight Traffic on Railways and Clearing Financial Situation Labor More Productive.

Petrograd, Jan. 14.—The following official statement was given out here tonight:

"The Minister of Finance declares that the completion of the mobilization has made possible the gradual restoration of freight traffic on the railroads of the country. The traffic in November, 1914, was only 23 per cent. lower than that of November, 1913."

"The postponement of the payment of debts which had reached maturity, and the various financial restrictions imposed, caused considerable commercial difficulties during the first weeks of the war. The situation, however, soon became better, and the unfavorable effect of the war upon commerce is becoming less and less, thanks to the measures for aiding credit and restoring merchandise traffic on the railways."

"Unemployment in the various industries is not noticeable, except in the regions where the war is in progress. Except in the small portion of Russian territory occupied by the enemy, industrial activity shows no important slackening."

"The comparatively favorable showing is due, in the first place, to the greater productivity of labor following the cessation of the sale of spirits. Productivity has increased from thirty to fifty per cent. and this, to a large extent, makes up for the shortage of labor consequent upon the calling of the workers to the colors."

### OFFICIAL WAR REPORTS RUSSIA

Petrograd, Jan. 14.—The following official statement was issued from general headquarters tonight:

"Yesterday we made progress on the right bank of the lower Vistula, our troops changing positions in a manner favorable to them."

"The cavalry of the enemy operating in this region was repulsed leaving Serpents in the possession of our vanguard."

"On our other fronts nothing has occurred other than skirmishes and artillery duels. Our reconnoitering parties have been active."

"On the left bank of the Vistula isolated German attacks were easily repelled by our fire."

"On various portions of our Austrian front the enemy tried to cannonade our position with heavy guns, but the efficient fire of our batteries soon silenced the Austrian artillery."

Battalion, with pneumonia. Next of kin, Mrs. Sarah Gardner, 15 West Street, Grove Road, Essex, Eng.  
Private William Henry Phillips, Royal Canadian Dragoons, with pneumonia. Next of kin, Miss Lillian Phillips, Seaford, Ont.  
Private Charles R. MacKenzie, Fifteenth Battalion, with pneumonia. Next of kin, John R. MacKenzie, Beaverton, Ont.

### News Filtering from Stricken Towns and Villages Show Death Toll Greater Than at First Believed—Avezzano An Immense Cemetery, With Thousands of Dead and Injured, Buried Under Ruins—Only 100 Survivors Out of Population of 12,000.

Rome, Jan. 14.—The toll of dead and injured in the great earthquake that has swept over central and southern Italy has not yet been made up, but all advices reaching Rome indicate the ever growing extent of the disaster.

Towns with thousands of inhabitants have been overthrown, and from some of these come details which show an immense loss of life. The estimates ran tonight from 25,000 to 50,000 dead and injured, and yet there are several sections, which undoubtedly felt the earthquake in full measure from which no estimates can be obtained.

In the ancient territory of Marsi, which includes Avezzano, the victims are placed at 20,000. Only a small number of the inhabitants of Avezzano, some 10,000, are left. Fifteen other towns and villages in that section have been laid waste.

King Victor Emmanuel is on the scene at Avezzano, and thirty thousand soldiers have been despatched to the various centres where the force of the disturbance was greatest.

Italy, as a nation, has arisen again to give succor, as she did at the time of the Messina earthquake, six years ago, to those who have fallen in this latest catastrophe from which the country has suffered.

While the vastly greater part of the damage was done by the first earthquake, which occurred Wednesday morning at 7:55, there has been at least one severe shock since then, which resulted in the collapse of many of the structures which escaped the first, and it is estimated that more than one hundred shocks, for the most part of a minor nature, occurred during the 24 hours after the disaster.

Rome, Jan. 14.—Demolished or partially demolished towns dot the map of Italy from Naples northward to Ferrara, and crosswise on the peninsula the Mediterranean to the Adriatic Sea, over which the earthquake of Wednesday passed. Thousands of dead lie beneath the mounds of debris which once were dwellings, churches and public institutions, which crumbled under the earth's vibrations.

Not even an estimate of the aggregate fatalities is yet obtainable, owing to the severance of telegraphic, telephonic and railroad communication. It is known, however, that Avezzano is a necropolis, and that also in Sorra, some 25 miles to the southeast a large number of lives were lost. In Avezzano and vicinity, it is estimated that 15,000 persons perished, and that the dead in Sorra will total 1,000.

So far as is known about twenty towns have been absolutely levelled, while an almost equal number suffered serious damage. In all these places persons were killed or injured. The workers throughout the day volunteered heroically, endeavoring to extricate wounded or rescue the bodies of the dead. King Victor Emmanuel himself directed the work at Avezzano caught beneath wreckage could be plainly heard.

It is estimated that in Avezzano 4,000 persons are buried alive, some of them school children in an institution which collapsed. Only four soldiers of the garrison of 400 in the town escaped when the barracks fell.

Sorra, with its population of 20,000 was almost entirely destroyed. All the municipal and government authorities perished. Four hundred and fifty bodies already have been taken from the ruins there and large numbers of injured are under treatment.

Trains arriving in Rome from the east are bringing hundreds of injured into Rome, where they are being taken to hospitals and private houses for treatment.

Heartrending Appeals from Those Buried Under Ruins.  
Avezzano, via Rome, Jan. 14.—Avezzano is filled with dead and wounded and wrecked houses. It is like the ruins of a cemetery. Those who escaped the destruction of the earthquake went heroically to work to rescue those penned under the fall of the walls. They could not seem to understand the delay in despatching aid to them from Rome and other centres, forgetting that more than 12 hours passed before knowledge of the gravity of the disaster reached the outside authorities.

Nearly all the civic officials of Avezzano, including the mayor, the under prefect, the judges, the commander of the carabinieri, and parish priests, monks and nuns perished. The college, with more than a hundred girls, collapsed. The doctors of prisons, jailers and the governor and patients in the hospitals were carried down in the wreckage.

The only notable person who survived was the head of the police, Signor Ottavi, who, though wounded, has labored since the first overthrow to give aid to the injured.

Desperate appeals are heard on all sides from under the wreckage for help, but the efforts of Signor Ottavi and the few hundred survivors have availed but little, for they lacked implements with which to effect a general rescue. But about fifty persons, all of them wounded, were taken out with great difficulty. They lay about, without shelter and without their wounds being dressed, owing to a lack of medical supplies. Later, doctors appeared on the scene and operated on some of the injured, under blazing torches. They were then removed to the station, where they were made as comfortable as possible in trucks.

Assistance came at last from Anagni and Aquila, and this morning large quantities of provisions, clothing and blankets arrived from Anagni and Pescara.

Thirty thousand soldiers have been distributed throughout the earthquake district, and already large quantities of provisions and clothing together with wood for the construction of huts have arrived.

A tour of the towns and villages around Lake Fucino disclosed vast destruction. The town of Magliano, in the territory of the Marsi, seems to have been ripped open. Its historic belfry, which rose about three hundred feet, collapsed. In the church below all the chapels were ruined, except that of the Saviour, where an immense crucifix is standing intact, while everything about is scattered and broken.

Many Buried in Ruins.  
Rome, Jan. 14.—Trains are running from Avezzano to Tivoli, without interruption, taking the injured there for treatment. Survivors arriving in Tivoli say many persons are under the ruins in Avezzano. Thousands of cubic metres of debris are piled in the town, making rescue work very difficult.

The latest information received here confirms previous reports that the greater parts of Santelimo, Paterno Pescina, Gerchio, Collarmele and San Benedetto were destroyed.

Temperature at Venice Lowest in Years.  
Reports received from Naples say that the fears that the province of Potenza, which was isolated, had been destroyed, are unfounded. Some damage was done there, mostly in the villages in the vicinity of the extinct volcano Vulturno. No fatalities have been reported from this region.

Ancona, on the Adriatic, 134 miles northeast of Rome, reports that a tempest accompanied the seismic disturbance, and there was exceptional tides coincident with the disturbances at Naples. At Venice the temperature was the lowest in years, and was accompanied by a violent snowstorm. In the Alps the thermometer went to fifteen degrees below zero.

The ministry has approved the plans undertaken by the authorities to send aid to the localities affected by the earthquake.

Many of Town Officials Killed at Avezzano  
London, Jan. 14.—A news despatch received here from Rome says that the members of the Chamber of Deputies forced liberal has telegraphed to the capital that the disaster of yesterday surpasses the Messina catastrophe. The ruin is more widespread, and the injury to life and limb will be greater.

An employee of the municipality of Avezzano, one of the few survivors of the city, says the dead include the sub-prefect and the members of his family, the whole staff of the prefecture, the staff of the law courts; the Mayor and all the members of the municipal council. Ninety-five out of the one hundred soldiers who comprised the total garrison lost their lives; four out of the seven customs officials, and eight out of the nine local policemen.

This man was on the street when the shock came. To him it seemed as if everything fell to pieces at once. An immense cloud of dust arose from the ruins and completely veiled the sky.

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