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War News.

Messages Received Previous to 9 A. M.

ITALIAN VICTORY.

Italian Headquarters in Northern Italy, Sunday, Nov. 18.—The Austrians who forced their way across the Piave River above Zenson have been thrown into the river, drowned, bayonetted, killed or captured until now not an enemy remains on the west bank at that most threatened point. The fight was one of the most fearful chapters of the war and one of the most glorious. Details of the fight have been gathered from eye-witnesses who saw the fearful carnage thro' Friday night and yesterday and who stayed until the whole west bank was cleared except for the corpses on the shore, and in the foreground the wounded were so numerous that many have not yet received succour. The enemy had staked everything on getting to the west bank of the river and the Italians staked everything on keeping him on the eastern bank. This nerved both to desperation. The Austrians made their first move on Friday in two separate crossings a short distance above Zenson, the first at the village of Fagare, and then at an old mill called Sega Mill, near Follana. Several circumstances enabled them to pass. They chose a place where a sand bar ran in mid-stream, giving them a landing and guiding the main streams into two small shallow currents; also there was a heavy mist screening their movements. They carried material for an improvised bridge, with uprights and iron plates for floorings. This was about five o'clock in the morning and in the mist at that early hour they got across the second narrow channel to the west bank. The last ten feet the men waded across in water above their waists. In their first surprise rush they swept past Italian machine gun batteries capturing their guns and driving the Italians back into the village of Fagare. Here the real fight began as the Italians had now recovered from the surprise and they fought like demons. It was a hand-to-hand fight through the streets of the town with no place for artillery or machine guns and the Italians using bayonets, hand grenades, knives and gelatine torpedoes. The Austrians held part of the town near the bank with the Italians on the land side. The Austrians tried to throw a line around the town and succeeded in part on one side until the Italian batteries to the north got range of the line outside the shelter of the streets. This line was the first to be demolished and then the Italians on this side of the town advanced cheering and hewing their way. The enemy held at first, then began to seek cover, and finally broke as the Italians pushed them into the town and back to the river. Some plunged into the water and sought to get to the sand bar. All the machine guns were abandoned. Most of the enemy fell along the water's edge, and an observer who saw the gruesome sight says that the bodies on the river bank and in the water reminded him of heaps of seaweed after the tide had gone out. Further up the river at the Sega Mill the other crossings had brought on another bloody fight which lasted until late yesterday when the whole shore was cleared of living Austrians, but it was lined with dead. The movement here began late on Friday night and reached its culmination about eleven o'clock Saturday morning. Friday night several Austrian battalions got across under cover of darkness. They chose narrow channels and some of the Austrian officers rode across on horseback. They took a position near the town cemetery and opened on the Italians during the night with machine guns. At daylight yesterday the enemy still held his position at the cemetery. The situation began to look serious and for a time it appeared as though the Italians would have to fall back. But now the famous Bersagliari brigade was brought up fresh from its heroic rearguard defence of the main army as it retired on the field. The Italians charged shortly after dawn, moving straight up the hill to the cemetery against machine gun fire and guns on the bank. The Italians moved with bayonets, grenades and torpedoes. It was one of these charges inspired by love of home and country which will live always, and it was irresistable. The enemy wavered and broke just as the Italian artillery on a nearby height had got the range of the cemetery. But the main fighting was hand-to-hand, with the enemy being pressed back steadily to the river where they were cut down, drowned, bayonetted or captured. By ten o'clock yesterday all had been swept away except a few straggling groups, but by noon not one of the enemy's force was left on the western bank. In addition to some 1,500 killed, the enemy lost 1,500 prisoners, including two colonels and some thirty other officers. All the Austrian machine guns were captured and are now being used by the Italians.

ENEMY MASSING ON THE NORTH.

Headquarters of the Italian Army in Northern Italy, Sunday. (By the Associated Press.)—Having felt the Italian steel along the Piave, the enemy is again massing his forces on the north. Austrian prisoners taken at Follina and Fagare say Von Buelow's forces, who were present four days ago at Vidor on the Piave River, have now been swung northward, probably back of Asiago on the front between the Piave and Brenta Rivers. Some of the heaviest blows are now being struck there, and although the enemy forces in that territory have exceeded the Italians, heavy reserves are being added to them and the pressure has been steadily increased since Friday. It is not possible to state where the Alfied reinforcements are, but it can be stated they are not on the Piave, nor in the fighting zone at the north, which now appears to be one of the enemy's chief lines of approach. It is felt that the Allied reinforcements could render incalculable service at this juncture in furnishing reserves to meet this concentration on the north, and the correspondent is authorized that this would be considered most timely now. Austrian prisoners also say that fresh enemy divisions have recently been brought from the Russian front, and the prisoners include a large number of the Poles thus far used on the Russian front. They give strange accounts of what is happening along the Russian front and assert that Russian resistance is giving place to easy living and feasting.

BRITISH OFFICIAL.

LONDON, Nov. 19.

Official.—On the Ypres battlefront we improved our position slightly during the night northwest of Passchendaele. A hostile attack on certain parts of advanced posts north of Polygno Wood was successfululy repulsed. This morning other hostile parties who attempted to approach our lines southeast of Poelcapelle were caught under our machine gun fire, and the greater part of them were killed or made prisoners.

FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO CROSS THE PIAVE STOPPED.

ROME, Nov. 19.

Further attempts of the Austro-German troops to cross the Piave have been stopped. On the front west of the Piave, south of Quero, great numbers of Austro-German troops are attacking the Monte Montfencra and Monte Tomba lines.

LLOYD GEORGE'S SPEECH DEBATED IN THE HOUSE.

LONDON, Nov. 19.

Intense interest in the debate on the creation of an inter-allied War Council and Premier Lloyd George's Paris speech on this subject, was shown when the House met this afternoon. The public, peers and distinguished strangers' galleries were crowded, while every member who could be accommodated had either a seat or standing space on the floor of the Chamber. The usual hour devoted to questions having passed, the chief whip, Lord Edmund Talbot, moved the adjournment, this giving an opportunity for debate, and former Premier Asquith immediately arose. Asquith said that in war the responsibility for what was done and what was left undone rested on the shoulders of the Government of the day. It was the business of the advisors of the Government to inform the Council as to the best means whereby the policy of the Government could be brought to a successful issue. It was of vital importance in war that there should be frequent and intimate conconsultations among the statesmen of the Allies and as complete co-ordination as circumstances permitted. Germany had the advantage that the policy of all Governments of that alliance was decided by a central authority. Austria and Turkey had no voice in either policy or strategy. It is urgent, continued Asquith, if the Allies are to develop by all the means possible the machinery for concrete consultation, communication and co-ordination, they should welcome any scheme or arrangement which would provide for more frequent communication between the general staffs, supplemented by an appointed mission of officers of high rank. He would deprecate the setting up of any organization which would interfere with the responsibility of general staffs to their Governments or deviate in any way from the legitimate responsibility of each of the Allied staffs to its own people. Dealing with the Premier's speech, Asquith strongly emphasized that there was no mention of the navy, while in many aspects of the war the navy dominated strategical considerations. It suggested unity of control and meant unity of command, but he didn't desire to read any such purpose into the Premier's statement. He asked whether the advisory staff officers would have a separate staff, and what would happen if this staff and the general staff were not in agreement, which would give way or decide the question? Sir Edward Carson, interrupting, "the War Cabinet." Asquith continued: The object of the debate was to dispel certain misapprehensions which had been excited, not so much by the scheme as by the Paris speech. Referring to that speech he went on to say that while he would continue to eschew all unnecessary controversy, he would be failing in his duty if he were to pass it by. The Premier had selected four cases in criticism of Allied strategy: two, Serbia and Roumania, in which he himself and Lloyd George had in their respective capacities equal responsibility, and two, Russia and Italy, which belonged to this year. Lloyd George's views regarding Serbia was not the view taken by any military authority of weight in this country, he said. The prosposition that there was only one front was perfectly sound and one of the corrollaries was that you might render the best service to any ally at one end of the line by exerting the maximum effort at the other end. It was a sacred trust of the Allies to see that the future freedom and security of Serbia and Roumania were adequately assured. Asquith went thro' the Premier's reference in his Paris speech to Russia and Italy, and asked what the Premier meant by "we?" He suggested a doubt whether a council at Versailles last March would have affected the Russian situation. He also asked if it was not a fact that up to the eve of the German attack General Cadorna was full of confidence and serenity and assured he would triumph over it. Lloyd George regaled the good people of Paris, he said, with irrelevant rhetoric. Asquith doubted whether any allied council would have interfered with successful offensives in the west in favor of more attractive adventures elsewhere, and concluded, we have no reason to be ashamed of our contribution to the war. We have kept the seas free, we have expanded our army into seventy divisions and we have placed our arsenals and credit at the disposal of our Allies, and so we will go on to the end.

Premier Lloyd George, in reply, said that more important than anything he had said in Paris was to decide whether greater unity of control was needed and whether they were taking the right course to secure it. He re-affirmed that the Allies had suffered by lack of co-ordination and that any criticism he had directed against the past was not directed against any staff or any commander in this or any other country. He merely had used certain illustrations where the lack of co-ordination among the Allies had brought disaster without any blame being attached to any commander or staff. It had been said that this was an attempt on the part of civilians to interfere with the soldiers, but an inter-allied council had been suggested by Field Marshal Lord Kitchener and in June, 1917, a scheme for a Central authority was brought forward at the sitting of chiefs of staff at which Britain, France and Italy were represented. He was utterly opposed to the appointment of a generalissimo, it wouldn't work and would produce friction. So far as he could gauge American public opinion, America would have preferred a Council with Executive authority, but there were reasons why he thought it undesirable to set up a Council with full executive authority unless the allies were absolutely driven to it by failure of the present scheme. The first advantage of the present scheme was that the information at the disposal of one of the Allied staffs would be at the disposal of this Central Council. Nominally that was so at present, but only practically. It was therefore an essential part of this scheme that it should be permanent and that the council should sit day by day co-ordinating plans of the general staffs for all fronts. Asquith had asked him about the Italian front and what Cadorna had said. He replied, It is very difficult to give answers to these questions. I am not sure that I can answer the question as to what Cadorna said. There is a good deal to be said about what Cadorna said and what he thought. We are not responsible for the Italian front. We know or believed or suspected a good deal. The Italian Government knew something about it. But General Sir William Robertson (Chief of the Imperial Staff at army headquarters) couldn't go on pressing things in respect to another nation's conduct or operation. If there had been a central council at Versailles General Robertson could have pressed his considerations through the representatives of the Government and forced consideration for them. Showing that the Italian front was important to the French front he pointed out that the British and French when disaster came had to rush troops, and doesn't that affect our front? Of course it does, he declared, and will. We have come to the conclusion that the mere machinery of an occasional meeting of chiefs is utterly inadequate for the purpose of securing real co-ordination. You must have a permanent body constantly watching these things, advising you on them and reporting upon them to the Government, whether our front, the French front or the Russian front is most concerned. The Premier then turned to Mr. Asquith's criticisms of his Paris speech and, denying that Winston Spencer Churchill had anything to do with its composition, said: Let me say at once I considered the speech carefully. If the speech was wrong I can't plead any impulse or that it was said in the heat of the moment. I considered and delivered it for a deliberate purpose, I have some resolutions for unity and co-ordination; where are they? You might as well throw them straightway into the waste paper basket. I may know nothing of military strategy, but I do know something of political stategy, and to arouse public opinion in such a matter and convince public opinion of its desirability is strategy not of an easy kind. That is why I did it and it has succeeded. (Lour cheers.) I was determined to deliver a disagreeable speech that would force everybody to talk about the scheme and it has been talked about on two or three continents, with the result that America is in, Italy is in, France is in, Great Britain is in, public opinion is in, and that is vital. (Loud and continuous cheers.) The Premier said he could assure Asquith that representation of the navy was no afterthought. It was essential that all information regarding naval operations should not be known to these military advisers. That was a different thing to the establishment of a naval council, and to co-ordinating naval strategy. A good deal could be said for that. We are suffering from lack of it now, declared the Premier. Anybody who knows what is happening in the Mediterranean could tell there is a great deal to be said for a similar council dealing with naval strategy to that which is set up for military considerations, but that is a very different thing. Mr. Asquith has challenged my history. That will be decided one day and I am not afraid of it. There has not been a single battalion or gun moved this year except on the advice of the general staff. There has not been a single attack ordered on any part of the battlefront except upon the advice of the general staff. I have only twice this year acted against the advice of the soldiers. The first time was with regard to the big gun programme. They thought I was manufacturing too much and they would be unable to man them. Is there a soldier to-day who would not say I was right? The second case was when I pressed upon the soldiers the appointment of a civilian to reorganize the railways behind the lines. There is not a soldier to-day who would not say that he was grateful to me for pressing my advice. If we act together I have no fear of what will happen. I see anxieties on the horizon and I never concealed them. It is better to tell the people what is going on, but I see no anxieties that modify my conviction that there are only two things that could defeat us. There was the submarine menace. If that had wrenched from us the freedom of the seas then indeed our hopes would be shattered. But now of the submarine I have no fear. We are on its track, and I am glad to tell the House that on Saturday we destroyed five of these, five of these pests of the seas. What is the other? Lack of unity is the only thing. I support every scheme that will help on the road to victory and that will bring peace and healing to a world that is bleeding. The debate closed with the withdrawal of the motion for adjournment.

DIED IN MESOPOTAMIA.

LONDON, Nov. 19.

An official announcement issued today says:—General Maude died in Mesopotamia yesterday evening after a brief illness.

A BIG CATCH.—The schr. Jubilee has just arrived to Hr. Grace with 1,700 quintals of codfish, 14,00 of which was secured at the Labrador and 300 on the French Shore.

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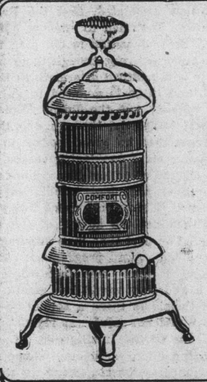

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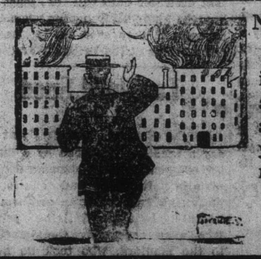

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