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The Toronto World

TUESDAY MORNING FEBRUARY 29 1916

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VOL. XXXVI.-No. 12,893

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Special Cable to The Toronto World. LONDON, Feb. 28.—With the formidable German advance on Verdun still checked, it is believed for good, the fury of the onslaughts of the Kaiser's soldiery abated considerably today and the French still continued to hold the same lines which they fell back on four days ago and the new lines which they established in their counter-attacks from the heights of Douaumont along the ridge which runs from there to north of the Village of Vaux, beating back the less buoyant waves of Germans which were hurled against them at less frequent intervals. The German and French artillery still keeps up spirited bombardments, signs are developing that the German gun fire has begun to abate, especially on the western side of the Meuse, where it died down considerably today. The rushes of the Germans against the French positions were today toned down into several partial attacks, which, the French say, were driven back by fire and counter-attacks. The struggle on the lines drawn to the west of Verdun, which has been marked by hand-to-hand fighting, in which the French say they won a local success by electing their foes from a small range in which these foes had succeeded in effecting lodgment. No Attacks on Pepper Hill. The Germans twice made an attempt to take Pepper Hill today, but the French still remain in possession of it. On Sunday night and Monday morning, the furious struggle raged around Douaumont Village, which was ended by the breaking of the furious assaults of the Germans. The battle which raged Sunday on the plateau north of the Village of Vaux, which the Germans had been attacking today with the Germans making a headway. Fort Douaumont, which remains encircled by the French lines, is still occupied by the French, and have been cut off from the rest of their forces by the French since Saturday. The Germans do not claim much in their official report from Berlin today in regard to the fighting north of Verdun, beyond the capturing of the masses of French troops which were thrown into the combat and near the fortresses of Douaumont and Houdoumont were exhausted in unsuccessful attacks against the German positions, and that the Germans had cleared the Meuse peninsula, but the French had reported on Friday that the German positions, which were being attacked by the French, had been captured. The reason given for the withdrawal from the Meuse peninsula by the French was that the French forces in the peninsula would run grave danger of being cut off in case of accident. Frightful Massacre. A Paris dispatch dated Sunday, but delayed by the censor till today, says: "A frightful massacre" is how German soldiers taken prisoner in the battle of Verdun describe the effect of the French artillery, machine gun and rifle fire. But the impetus of the assaulting forces was not diminished thereby during the first four days because fresh troops were thrown into the battle unceasingly. "Advance, no matter what the losses may be," was the order given to the German troops before the attack. This is verified by documents found on one of the captured officers. The most critical moment in the six days' actions was when the Germans gained a footing in the entrenched camp by the capture of Fort Douaumont. The least hesitation on the part of the defenders would have been disastrous. The Germans redoubled their efforts to take advantage of any confusion, but the French immediately began a counter-offensive. French infantry advanced at double quick to the trumpet charge and leaped at the first ranks of the Germans with irresistible fury. The clash was murderous to both sides. The French ranks were not to be denied, but went on to the second German wing, while reinforcements were hurried to their support. The German lines swayed first west of Douaumont; then were driven out of the ruins of the fort. A cry of triumph went up all along the French line, and the ardor of the counter-attack was redoubled. In the meantime an artillery duel, surpassing in intensity any previous action of the war, added to the carnage. Germans Cut Off. The battle seems now (Saturday and Sunday morning) to have reached a critical point. The assaulting forces have recoiled slightly in the region of Douaumont, leaving the heights and surrounding French troops. The attacks upon the French left at 1 p.m.

(Continued on Page 4, Column 5)