Week's War Summary

DURING the past seven days, the renewed offensive of the German armies on that part of the west front, between Noyon and the Marne river, a distance of some 72 miles, has been continued with unabated fierceness, but at the time of writing, it looks as if the enemy had again been checked by the reserve troops of General Foch. The Germans, under the command of the Crown Prince, successfully crossed the Aisne river over a front of thirty miles, and directed what seemed to be a blow towards Paris. They were successful in driving a wedge as far as the Marne river to a point just west of Chateau-Thierry. For a distance of about four miles on the northern bank of the Marne, the Germans are arrayed. This touches the site of the historic battle of the Marne in the fall of 1914, when the French were successful in turning back the German tide of soldiery and saving Paris.

On Saturday, however, the German army, forty-five divisions strong on this particular part of the front, appeared to have gone as far as it was possible to go. General Foch's reserves began to counter attack on Saturday, and considerable ground was regained. East of the line running from Soissons to Chateau-Thierry, where the Germans on Saturday, in continuation of their mighty strokes, gained several additional villages, and then attempted to proceed further westward, magnificent opposition was imposed by the newly strengthened lines, and with terrific smashes the French recaptured Longpont, Courcy, Faverolles and Troesnes, vantage points in the centre of the line, leading to the forest of Villers-Cotterets, which seems to be the present objective of the enemy.

The Germans, however, still have in their possession the village of Vaureis, lying to the west of Soissons, and further south Soconin-et-Breuil, Chaudun, Licy and Boureches, the last-named directly west of Chateau-Thierry.

Have Not Crossed River

Nowhere has there been any attempt by the invaders to cross the river, and at all points east of Chateau-Thierry they are hugging the northern bank of the stream. It is not improbable, however, that the tactics of the Germans have in view the fortifying of the river when the time is more propitious, for in the centre of the line between Chateau-Thierry and Reims they have pushed back the allied front across the Reims-Dormans road between Clizy-Violaine and Ville-en-Tardenois, and are pressing onward toward the Marne. This is the only point on their left wing, however, where the enemy has been able to make fresh gains, notwithstanding the fact that he has thrown new divisions into the battle, some of them the best trained troops in the German army.

Attempt to Outflank Reims.

Having failed in all their efforts to conquer Reims by direct assault, it now seems to be the intention of the Germans further to widen their occupation of the territory lying south of the Reims-Dormans road, and thereby outflank the cathedral city and bring about its capitulation. In the fight in the vicinity of Reims, the enemy won Fort de la Pompelle, but his tenure of the position was shortlived, for the French troops in a counter-attack recaptured it.

Taken all in all, the seventh day of the new battle found the allied line from Soissons to Reims, although it had been bent back at various points, not so hard pressed as on previous days and seemingly more capable of resisting the enemy's onslaughts. Just how many men the allies are opposing against the 45 German divisions that are now actively engaged on the Soissons-Reims front has not become apparent, but the fact that on the west the enemy is being not only held, but driven back at points, and on the southern end of the salient he has been unable to make but slight new progress, is apparent evidence that a turn in the battle is not far distant.

The British in the regions of Arras, Lens and Bethune are keeping up their trench raiding operation against the Germans. Saturday night, contingents from the London forces invaded a German trench southeast of Arras and took 27 prisoners and a machine gun, while east of Lens and north of Bethune, similar manoeuvres were carried out and other Germans made prisoners. There is considerable artillery by both sides on the northern sectors of the western front.

Why Allies Were Outnumbered

In a remarkably clear and true statement of the military situation on the west front, the leading editorial in The Globe, of Toronto, on Thursday last, explains as follows why the Allies were seemingly outnumbered when the Germans launched their last offensive on Monday, May 27:—

To those who have had no occasion to make a special study of military affairs, the statement that the British and French troops holding that part of the Aisne front on which the German attack was made were greatly outnumbered doubtless carries the suggestion that the Allied leaders must have been to blame for leaving their men exposed to attack by overwhelming enemy forces. Why? it may be asked, did not the aerial supremacy of the Allied armies enable the Intelligence Department to learn that the Crown Prince was preparing to strike along the Ailette? If information of an impending attack did reach General Foch, why were not the Allied reserves moved up to the Heights of the Aisne from the Somme front so that they would be immediately available to check the enemy's rush?

There are a number of reasons why the Allies were outnumbered on the Ailette as they had been on the Cambrai-St. Quentin front in March. The first and probably the most important, is that the Commander-in-chief of the Allied armies believes that it is sound strategy to hold the line lightly. The war will be won in his opinion, by the side which most shrewdly husbands its resources of man-power. Foch is prepared to give up territory at any time to the enemy if the enemy will pay for it in lists of killed and wounded heavier far than the corresponding lists of the defence. To carry out his views he has gathered together a large reserve army, and has necessarily drawn upon the trenches for his men. Colonel F. N. Maude, writing in the May Contemporary Review of the St. Quentin operations, states the attitude of General Foch in these words:—

"Against this tremendous concentration of German effort we have employed only a part of our available numbers; not because we are short of men or means of moving them, but because it is a fixed principle of the strategy enunciated by the French General Staff, and accepted now by our own, to economize our reserves to the utmost, in order to strike with the greatest possible intensity when we have not only definitely located the enemy's masses but can hold them firmly so that they can no longer manoeuvre to evade our blow. This was Field Marshall Joffre's plan on the Marne, which he carried out to a successful issue under infinitely greater difficulties than those which now confront us; and General Foch, the principal exponent of this school of thought, may be trusted to put it into execution when in his opinion the right psychological moment has again arrived."

The retirement from the Ailette to the Marne will be a victory, not a defeat, in the estimation of General Foch, if the comparatively small Allied army engaged in it is able to inflict upon the Germans much greater losses than it suffers from them. The risk taken in such a retirement is that the enemy, because of his superior strength, may break through the retiring line and envelop a portion of it. That would mean the destruction of the part of the Allied army so enveloped. But this risk is not so great in modern war as in the campaigns of the past, when the opposing armies were necessarily within what would now be regarded as point-blank range before the battle was joined. In none of the important battles on the Western front has any large body of troops been surrounded and forced to lay down its arms as Napoleon was at Sedan. The present battle is no exception to this general experience. The line bends, but it does not break.

A front held lightly as a matter of policy accounts for the outnumbering of the Allies in the opening phase of the battle. The reason why the Germans still retain numerical superiority after three days of fighting is that they hold the advantage of interior lines. Roughly, the front from Rheims by Soissons and Montdidier to Amiens is an arc of a circle. The interior of this arc is held by the Germans, the exterior by the Allies. To reach Amiens or Soissons the German reserves concentrated near the centre of the circle have to travel less than half the distance the Allied reserves concentrated west of Amiens have to travel to reach the new front.

It may be asked why the Allied reserves are assumed to be west of Amiens instead of at some point midway between Amiens and Soissons. It must not be forgotten that General Foch had to post the bulk of his reserves where they would be within reach of the Lys battlefield, on the north, as well as the Somme battle field. The probability is that the bulk of the Allied reserves when the Germans struck at the Ailette were north of Amiens rather than south of that city.

The forces at General Foch's command will enable him before the end of the week to concentrate between Paris and Soissons an army as great as that with which the Crown Prince is attacking. That concentration will probably be on the line of the Marne, for it is evident that the lines along the Vesle in which the French so gallantly resisted the advance on Tuesday and Wednesday were only held until positions farther south could be prepared for occupation and equipped with stores of war material. Paris, in any event, is safe. The rush is not swift enough to enable the Germans to reach the city before Foch throws an impenetrable wall of France's best fighting men between the Capital and the advancing enemy.

The Mail Bag

Woollen Goods

The manufacture of woollens has advanced in great strides of late years. The writer can remember as a boy in Ontario "minding" a custom carder, which machine was used to make rolls for home spinning to be afterwards home knit and even in some cases woven. Since then we have seen the great mills of Yorkshire with their thousands of spindles and hundreds of looms turning out their products—tons daily.

From the simple all-wool home-spun thread we have come to the thread made of wool and cotton, or wool and wool shoddy. Sometimes it contains wool only in name. The old "full-cloth" and all-wool blankets which would last for years is superseded by the beautiful woolly-creations that would last a long time if they were not used and should be wrapped in tissue paper and put away in lavender.

From an economic standpoint it is absolutely impossible in these days (or in pre-war days either) to make all fabrics from new wool. There is not enough grown to supply the demand. What we contend is that the price should be according to quality and all goods plainly marked and subject to government inspection, similar to pure-food regulations. There is no product that admits of more adulteration than woollen goods, nor is harder for an ordinary eye to detect.

The Textile Industry of Canada has enjoyed the fruits of protection for a great number of years, it is long out of its 'teens and should surely be now strong enough to stand alone. If not there is something radically wrong either with the industry or with the tariff system. How about the British manufacture of woollens. He has no protection, he stands or falls on his own merits. He does not expect to become a millionaire in a year or two just because he gives a number of employees a job. He has, however, certain advantages of his own.

The climate of the British Isles is ideal for wool or cotton spinning as it is very moist and there are no great extremes of heat and cold. He has abundance of cheap coal for power and heat. Lots of cheap efficient labor, unlimited market in which to buy raw material no matter what his line, cheap railway rates, little advertising, and last but not least no campaign funds to subscribe to.

Our Canadian manufacturer has to contend with a too dry climate, subject to extremes of heat and cold, all detrimental to good work. Dear fuel, expensive labor, much costly advertising and also the inevitable campaign funds to subscribe to. Consequently he needs protection. His product cannot hold its own without it. That protection has grown to be prohibitive. So also has the price of good woollen articles.

In comparing prices between goods bought across the sea and those bought here we find, quality considered, that our "made in Canada" goods are sold for nearly double the British price. One hates to suggest that our flag waving manufacturer—safely hiding behind the tariff wall is actually robbing the Canadian public. But it looks very like it.

What does it cost an average farmer family, of man, wife and say three growing children for "protected" clothing, boots, shoes, blankets, overcoats, etc., for one year? How long would $200 last if one could afford it? Out of this amount how much is chargable to "tariff" account? Not less than $75 you may be sure.

The Guide enters 35,000 homes weekly in Western Canada, what do The Guide readers lose annually by protection. Figure it up dear reader for yourself, its worth the time. Meanwhile does our manufacturer pay duty on his machinery? Not very much! He induces cheap labor over from Britain. He doesn't pay any more for labor than he has to.

Does any of our protected industries pay duty on raw material or machinery for their own mills? Very little. That is not the game. The idea is this—heads I win, tails you lose. How else can millionaires be made? And now they go whining to the government for an embargo on wool.

Several years ago I was visiting a great industrial city in South Ontario. I thought it would be fine to hear the rattle and roar of the weaving shed and the whirr of spindles, it would remind me of old times over the water. So a friend and I paid a visit to the big woollen mills, my friend was slightly acquainted, so as I was from the northern wilds "and would like to see how wool was worked," etc., we were allowed to go through the mill. Unfortunately the river was blocked with ice so work was suspended but we went on our tour of inspection just the same. I was somewhat surprised to see British machinery and methods faithfully copied even as I had seen them on the continent. I found even a plant for the manufacturer of rags into shoddy, commonly called "wool." I saw all kinds and conditions of low grade blankets, etc., "im Ban," but I saw no new wool, not an ounce. So I say that some of the mills use precious little wool, they make it "while you wait."

I am not a wool grower—I grow wheat. I hold no brief for the British manufacturer. But being British born I like a square deal.

Having had nearly 15 years experience in Canada, England and on the "continong" in the woollen industry, I can see wherein the people of this country are being "fleeced," or shall we put it more plainly? "robbed." This is a subject which sould be of especial interest to our women voters especially our W.G.G.A's. They are the ones who know how hard it is to keep the little toes and knees from protruding these cold days and how flimsy these so-called woollen garments are. Yours, B.B.