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The Question of Tonnage Now Greatest Economic Problem of the Day

The Government Again Put on the Defensive in Commons—Score of Members Attack Policy of Ministry—Britain Has Difficult Task in Getting Sufficient Bottoms to Meet her Demands—Must Depend to Large Extent on Neutral Shipping—To Deal Unharshly With Them Would Be Folly as They Would Seek Other Ports Where Better Conditions Exist—Government Doing its Best in Interests of the Country

LONDON, Feb. 18.—The Government again found itself on the defensive in the House of Commons to-day. Yesterday the subject was air raids. Today it was the control of merchant shipping. A score of members attacked the Government's method of dealing with the mercantile marine. Balfour, First Lord of the Admiralty and Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Trade, replied to attacks explaining in much the same manner as was used yesterday in connection with the air defence criticisms. While the situation was admitted to be far from satisfactory, the Government was doing its utmost to make things better. Complaints by Members of Parliament were mainly in effect to the high freight rates, which were largely due to waste of tonnage caused by Government mismanagement. Runciman, in reply, said: "Shipping difficulties at the present time are due, not to mismanagement, but to our trying to pour a quart into a pint pot. This, and nothing else in

the general upward tendency in ocean freights is caused by the fact that the mercantile marine, which is limited in size, and has to carry out a task far greater than in times of peace. The shipping problem has become the greatest economic problem of the day. Where we had hundreds of ships before the war we must now do with 67 of which 24 are under neutral flags. You see we are dependent to an enormous extent on the services of neutral shipping. If we drive it away by any system of low maximum rates or similar device we shall starve. If we fix the maximum rates below the working level we shall drive neutral shipping to ports where higher rates are obtainable. There has been no laxity in the management or control on the part of the Government and the Board of Trade has made the largest possible use of expert advice. Lord Curzon's Committee has control of shipping to the fullest extent. In fact the control is now so wide and adequate that no British vessel can go anywhere or trade anywhere without permission of one kind or another. Certain steps are being taken to alleviate the difficulties of the shipping problem. The first necessity is to get rid of the congestion at our ports and measures are now under way to achieve this. Then there is the shipbuilding, in which respect the navy has been the greatest competitor to the mercantile marine. But the Admiralty has already permitted us to build 45 merchant ships, while the number of others which are under construction have now been classified as war ships. We also have done a little to make ends meet by restricting imports.

Balfour Answers Government Critics Regarding Question of Gov't Handling of Shipping

LONDON, Feb. 17.—Britain has not refused to allow food to reach Poland, according to a statement made by Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, in reply to a question in the Commons to-day. The Foreign Secretary added that the Entente Allied Government had been approached with a request to permit food to be sent to Poland under neutral control, but that the Allies had replied they could not consider the question until various methods of speculation employed by the Central Powers expired; otherwise, he said, it would be merely to supply food to the Germans. Laurence Ginnel, Nationalist member of Parliament for the North Division of West Meath, made the allegation that pressure had been used by the Entente Allies to dissuade the Belgian Government from accepting from Germany an offer to re-establish the integrity of Belgium, restore her independence and fully compensate her for damages sustained. This brought a blunt answer from the Foreign Secretary, who said the statement made is entirely untrue. Sir Edward added he believed the statement of an offer being made to Belgium was also untrue.

ers could not complain of hardships, as rates were not only high, but preposterously, dangerously high. He denied that Britain was acting selfishly regarding tonnage, or making money out of her Allies, arguing that the country which was prepared to deprive its people of certain imported goods in the interests of an efficient working merchant service could not be accused of acting selfishly. Referring to waste, Balfour thought matters might be improved by giving a commercial training to admirals and generals, but that was a matter of a life time. It was not through any action of the transport department that there was a shortage in tonnage, he declared, and whatever might be said about the policy of a temporary governmental appropriation of the whole shipping strength of the country's mercantile marine, he hoped nothing would be said in criticism of the Navy in this connection.

ECONOMY ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS

LONDON, Feb. 18.—The Government's Was Savings Committee issued the first of a series of appeals which will point out to the people of the country facts regarding the various forms of expenditure which would be checked as wasteful and absorbing labor that could be put to better use. The first appeal deals with the use of automobiles and motor-cycles for pleasure. If this form of selfish and thoughtless extravagance is stopped says the appeal, millions of pounds can be saved any many workers transferred to more useful channels. We appeal to all owners to consider earnestly whether the use of their cars can be justified by the question of public utility or real necessity. We cannot ask poorer classes to save as long as they see the well-to-do enjoying an expensive luxury.

Arthur St. Benn, member for Plymouth, seconded the amendment. Balfour, First Lord of the Admiralty, replying, thought that ship-own-

Times Says It Was Inconceivable that America Could Stand For It

LONDON, Feb. 18.—The Times to-day, says, concerning Germany's recent memorandum as to status of armed merchantmen after Feb. 29, England learns with gratification, but with no surprise, that America declines to recognize Germany's monstrous pretension to the right to sink armed merchantmen at sight, it was inconceivable that under any President America should acquiesce in such a policy. The article then proceeds to a general defence of President Wilson and declares that the British people fully understand and make allowance for grave difficulties besetting him and his administration.

Floods Still Cause Anxiety In Holland

Amsterdam, Feb. 18.—The flood situation continues to cause the gravest anxiety although dykes at critical points have all held thus far. During the past 24 hours the water in several places has reached the highest stage the present winter. Inhabitants in districts around Amsterdam show signs of leaving, many who during the previous flood remained in their houses are now coming into Amsterdam. Farmers, laborers and soldiers are busy strengthening the weak spots. Queen Wilhelmina to-day travelled from Amsterdam to Alkmaar on an inspection trip.

RUSSIANS REACH BAIBURT

LONDON, Feb. 18.—The Russian forces have reached Baiburt, according to an Athens despatch to The Daily News. Baiburt is 75 miles northwest of Erzerum on the road to Trelizond.

Buenos Aires, Feb. 18.—The Government has decided to prohibit the exportation of sugar.

KAMERUN CONQUEST COMPLETE

LONDON, Feb. 18.—An official communication referring to operations in the Kamerun region in Africa was issued to-night. A telegram dated Feb. 16 from General Dobbell, French commander in the Kamerun, states he had received information from General Aylmerich that the French have closed the frontier up to Ngoa and all east thereof. Camp region column has a few miles to traverse close to a line from the sea. Active operations are now practically ended. The conquest of Kamerun is complete with the exception of an isolated position on Mora Hill. The German commander, Zimmerman, succeeded in making his escape into Spanish territory.

Germany Expresses Regret for Sinking of Dutch Ship

The Hague, Feb. 18.—Germany has notified the Government that an investigation of the Artemis incident has established the fact that the Artemis was blameless, that the torpedoing of this vessel was a blunder on the part of the commander of the German torpedo boat. The German Government has disapproved of his action and taken the necessary measures. Germany expresses regret for the incident and tenders an apology and offers to pay an indemnity.

FOUGHT TO A DRAW

New York, Feb. 18.—Sam Langford of Boston and Sam McVey of California fought ten rounds to a draw at Madison Square Garden here to-night.

FALL OF ERZERUM EFFECTS GERMAN MARKET

NEW YORK, Feb. 17.—A despatch from London says that the capture of Erzerum by the Russians has caused a record-breaking slump in prices on the German market, according to despatches from Amsterdam to-day.

Germany Anxious Hold Good Will of United States

Director of Hamburg-American Steamship Co. Says a Breach of Relations Between the Two Countries Would Have Serious Results

LONDON, Feb. 17.—An Amsterdam despatch says that the manager of one of the greatest German shipping companies, in an interview in the Bremen "Tagblatt," expresses the most pessimistic opinion concerning the effects of a possible breach in relations between Germany and the United States. This shipper, who, the despatch says, is believed to be Albert Allin, Director General of the Hamburg-American Steamship Company is quoted as follows:

A breach of Germany's relations with America would have a serious effect. All America's money and munitions would be at the disposal of the Entente Allies. We should have to take over the feeding of the Belgians, and America's attitude probably would induce other neutrals to attack us. All our ships would finally be interned in American ports. This would represent the taking away of enormous wealth from us. Our plight would be most difficult. When the war is over Germany will have to replenish her stocks of raw materials. Do not let us entertain any illusions with regard to Great Britain. She will continue commercial war for long after military operations are over. She will take away all our trade with South Africa and Australia, and it will take years for our passenger service to reach a condition anything like that which existed before the war."

Sweden Asks States For Co-operation in Seeking Redress

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18.—Another Note from Sweden has been addressed to the State Department through its Minister, E. Kengen, appealing to the United States for co-operation with the Swedish Government and other neutral nations to maintain the preservation of rules of International Law concerning the protection of neutral commerce and navigation. Action is proposed particularly against Great Britain because of the detention of mail by that country and other aggressions against neutral trade which is regarded by Sweden as unwarranted. Secretary of State Lansing has informed the Minister, it is learned to-day, that he could not answer the Note until the controversy with Germany over the Lusitania case is settled.

Russians Take 100,000 Men and 1,000 Guns in The Capture of Erzerum

Fighting Was Terrific and Turks Claim the Russians Lost 5000 Men—Italians Still Shelling Positions in Rombon Sector—Hitch in Negotiations Between Germany and Serbia—King Peter of Serbia is an Exile on Island in Aglian Sea—No Important Developments on Battle Line in France and Belgium—In East Galicia Hostilities Have Almost Ceased

LONDON, Feb. 18.—Estimates from Petrograd place the number of troops in the Turkish garrison at Erzerum, the capture of which has been announced, at 100,000 men. The guns numbered more than one thousand. But it has not yet been officially stated if all these troops and guns were taken by the Russians. That the fighting before the fortress fell was terrific is indicated by a Constantinople report, which although not announcing the capture of Erzerum, says the last two days before the communication was issued the Russians had lost five thousand men killed. Both Berlin and Paris report there have been no important developments on the battle line in France and Belgium.

On the Russian front there have been artillery engagements and isolated infantry actions at various points. In East Galicia the hostilities have almost ceased for the present. The Italians are still engaged in

shelling the positions taken from their recently by the Austrians on the Rombon sector. They also are keeping up their artillery actions against the bridgeheads at Tolmino and Gorizia. An infantry attack against Monte San Michele is reported by Vienna to have been repulsed.

There still remains a hitch in the negotiations between the United States and Germany over the sinking of the Lusitania. The State Department has announced the controversy is not susceptible to a settlement while Germany's memorandum regarding armed merchantmen remains inconsistent with the assurance previously given the American Government by Germany with regard to the sinking of vessels by submarines.

King Peter of Serbia is at present a virtual exile on the Island of Euboea in the Aegean Sea. In a statement to an Associated Press correspondent he expresses great gratitude to the people of the United States for the relief work done by Americans among the sick, wounded and starving Serbian people. King Peter also took occasion to say that for those of the Serbian Allies who had remained faithful he had no reproach. "They came to our aid too late to save us," he said, "but they came."

That besides the one Zeppelin which took part in the recent raid on England, which was damaged by British gunfire and later lost at sea, there is good reason to believe another had been damaged and put out of action was the statement made in the Lords by Earl Kitchener, the British War Secretary.

OFFICIAL

BRITISH LONDON, Feb. 18.—A British official statement issued to-night on the African campaign says: "The General officer commanding the British forces in East Africa states that on the 12th inst. a reconnaissance force was carried out against Salaita Hill to locate the enemy's position and ascertain his strength. The hill was found to be strongly held, the main German reserves were ascertained to be in the neighborhood. Our casualties amounted to 172 of whom 138 were from the Second South African Brigade, which had their first experience in bush fighting."

Good Work of the Canadian Troops

OTTAWA, Feb. 18.—"Not a solitary foot of our trenches is in the possession of the enemy. The Germans got into them at many points and are still there, but they are dead. This was the terse way in which Major-General Sir Sam Hughes described in the Commons this afternoon the result of the German offensive the past few days on the British-Canadian front. General Hughes said that while he had as yet received no official report, his information was that the Germans had attacked the British-Canadian lines east and south-east of Ypres, following a very heavy bombardment of two or three days. The Canadian troops, he said, did not seem to have suffered nearly as much as might have been expected from the severity of the bombardment. The casualty reports for the last three days showed less than ten killed and only about 30 or 40 wounded. The normal number of daily casualties which have been coming in recently were under normal conditions."

LONDON, Feb. 18.—A British official statement on campaign on western zone issued to-night says: "Early this morning the enemy sprung two mines, one near Fosse and the other south of Loos. After the explosion of the latter the enemy attempted to occupy the crater but was driven back by our fire. We hold him near the rim of the crater. To-day our artillery bombarded the enemy trenches near Hohenzollern redoubt east of Armentieres. Between Ypres and Comines Canal and Ypres and Comines railway the situation is unchanged."

REVOLT WAS FINANCED BY GERMAN AGENTS

Paris, Feb. 18.—The Paris Journal's correspondent at Tanarivo says that German agents financed and otherwise encouraged the native plot to overthrow the Government of Madagascar on December 31 last. The seat of the conspiracy was at Fianarantsoa and it was planned to poison the French officers and soldiers on New Year's Eve and either gain the native troops to the cause of the conspirators or obtain from them their military weapons.

RUSSIAN.

Petrograd, Feb. 18.—(Official.)—On the Caucasian front it has been learned further that 25 more guns have been seized at Erzerum first line forts and that 39 officers and 1,413 Arab irregulars were made prisoners in the region of the fort taft 20 versts from Erzerum. Our troops occupy Erzerum fortress. Registration of prisoners and taking stock of booty is proceeding. Erzerum is on fire in many places.

PLEADED NOT GUILTY

Yesterday in the Supreme Court in the matter of the King vs. Piercey for Arson the accused pleaded not guilty. Monday next, the 21st inst., was fixed for the hearing of the case, which will be tried before a special jury.

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