

HALIFAX WRECKED BY EXPLOSION

The Disaster is the Most Awful Catastrophe Which Has Befallen Any City in the World.

Harrowing Details of the Explosion Which Wrecked the Northern Section of the City and Caused Death and Injury of Thousands—Collision in the Harbor Between French Munitions Ship Mont Blanc and Belgian Relief Steamer, The Imo.

Many hundreds of people are dead and thousands are injured and homeless because of a frightful explosion and the fire which followed it on Thursday last week. All the extreme north end of the city is devastated. The city is cut off from telegraphic communication with the world.

The disaster was caused primarily by the Belgian relief steamer, the Imo, going out and a French munitions steamer, the Mont Blanc, entering the harbor coming into collision. Then the munition ship took fire and the crew left her. They landed on the Dartmouth shore, and soon after the ship blew up, with 5,000 tons of high explosives. The Belgian ship was beached on the shore of the harbor opposite Halifax. Fragments of the ship and her ammunition were scattered all over the northern part of the city, and the violence of the explosion wrecked all the buildings in that part of the city.

"The most awful catastrophe which has befallen any city in the world." Such is the opinion of all officers and men who have returned from the front who have been in the thick of the fighting since Canadians went into action. And they are right. The men from the trenches, the men behind the trenches or in the rear, and the man who has been through the times of distress in London and the southeast coast when Zeppelins and enemy airplanes bombed the Capital of the Empire and the coastal towns, they all know that they never met with such dire casualties as befell the city of Halifax on Thursday last week. At nine o'clock on Thursday of last week the city was enjoying its usual period of calm and the streets were crowded with people wending their way to work, little thinking of that which in a few minutes was to befall them.

Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, there came an explosion. From one end of the city to the other glass fell, and people were lifted from the sidewalks and thrown flat into the streets. In the downtown offices, just beginning to hum with the usual day's activities, clerks and heads alike covered under the shower of falling glass and plaster which fell about them.

The collision was a terrific one, the munition boat being pierced on the port side almost to the engine room. The relief vessel, which was practically unharmed, kept going ahead with the wounded craft, and when the fire was seen to break aboard her, backed away, and the crew started to abandon her.

The Mont Blanc drifted away, a burning wreck, while the relief boat beached near Tux's Cove on the Dartmouth side of the harbor. Seventeen minutes after the collision the explosion occurred. Under the force of the explosion houses crumpled like decks of cards, while the unfortunate residents were swept to death in the debris.

The main damage was done in the north end of the city, known as Richmond, which was opposite the point of the vessels' collision. Here the damage was so extensive as to be totally beyond the field of description. Street after street is in ruins and flames swept over the district.

Five minutes after the explosion occurred the streets were filled with a terror-stricken mob of people, all trying to make their way as best they might to the outskirts in order to get out of the range of what they thought to be a German raid.

Women rushed in terror-stricken mobs through the streets, many of them with children clasped to their breasts. In their eyes was a look of terror as they struggled in mobs through the streets with blood-stained faces and endeavored to get anywhere from the falling masonry and crumbling walls.

Among the hundreds who were killed by the explosion was one particularly sad case of a Canadian Government employee named MacDonald, who, on rushing to his home after the explosion, found that all his family consisting of his wife and four children, had perished. Before him on the roadway were the mangled remains of his little two-year-old child, who had met death while playing on the roadside.

Many of those composing the crews of ships in the harbor were killed and injured. The damage along the waterfront is very serious.

The munition ship, after the crew left her, veered in towards the Halifax side of the harbor, and the city received the full force of the explosion.

A part of the town of Dartmouth is also in ruins.

Nearly all the buildings in the dockyard are in ruins.

Practically all the north end of the city has been laid waste.

The destruction extends from North street railway station, as far north as Africville, to Bedford Basin, and covers about two square miles.

The buildings which were not destroyed by the explosion were laid waste by the fire that followed.

Thousands Homeless.

Thousands of persons are rendered homeless. The Academy of Music and many other public buildings have been thrown open to house the homeless.

Five hundred tents have been erected on the Common, and these will be occupied by the troops, who have given up their barracks to house the homeless women and children.

Temporary hospitals and morgues have been opened in the school houses in the western section of the city. The doctors and nurses worked heroically in rendering aid to the injured.

Later Details.

Order is beginning to be restored. The fire department reports all fires under control, and the emergency committee has matters well in hand.

A howling blizzard set in Friday afternoon and impeded the rescue work, but the homeless are being temporarily sheltered and made as comfortable as possible pending the arrival of supplies, doctors and nurses, which are already pouring in on special trains from other cities of the province and New Brunswick, and will be largely supplemented from Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Quebec and Ontario on Saturday.

Temporary hospitals have been secured in sheds and stores where inmates of charitable institutions whose buildings are in danger of collapse will be removed. The Bank of Nova Scotia will furnish all necessary funds to the various committees now organized.

It is estimated that as much as a year will be required to furnish enough glass to provide for the city's needs. Omitting altogether the wrecked district, which eventually will be rebuilt, in that portion of the city still standing, there is scarcely a house in which the glass is intact. It is as if the whole city had been built, and all the glassing left for one job.

Stores are doing business without daylight, as all windows are now boarded up, and artificial light is used by day and night.

Among the citizens still able to attend to business, b.ndaged heads and hands are common sights, and for the most part, they think themselves fortunate to have escaped that well.

The battlefields of Europe do not furnish a parallel to the scenes witnessed at Halifax, says Duncan Grey, who arrived in St. John on Friday. He was engaged in inspecting shells in a shed on the waterfront when the devastation began, and barely escaped before the building collapsed. This is his story:

"A few seconds after the roar of the explosion a gust of wind swept through the shed and then down came pillars, boards and beams. I rushed to the open and the sight that met my gaze was the worst that I hope ever to see in this world."

"I have been in the trenches in France. I have gone 'over the top.' Friends and comrades have been shot in my presence. I have seen scores of dead men lying upon the battlefield, but the sight that greeted me yesterday was a thousand times worse, and far more pathetic."

"I saw people lying around under timbers, stones and other debris; some battered beyond recognition, and others groaning in their last agonies."

Halifax, Dec. 9.—To-day, after another terrible night, when the wind blew a hurricane and the rain fell in torrents, upon conditions becoming normal again, the relief work and the search for the dead was continued. Many more bodies have been found and the number at the various morgues is 1,050.

As yet no definite statement can be made about the total number of dead, though four thousand is given as the figure that may ultimately be reached.

Acting on orders the police began the arrest of day of all German citizens of Halifax, whether men or women. At six o'clock seven men and one woman had been locked up, and the police are after the others, who

CONFUSION OVER WHISTLES BLAMED

Pilot Frank Mackie, who was on the munition ship, declares that the accident was due to a confusion of whistles, sounded by the Belgian Relief steamer.

In addition to her cargo of munitions, the Mont Blanc carried a deckload of benzins, and this caught fire, following the explosion.

The Captain of the Mont Blanc ordered his crew to take to the boats. The men hastily left the ship in two boats and rowed for the Halifax side of the harbor, which they reached in safety.

The men ran for refuge, as they felt that an explosion was inevitable. Twenty minutes later the explosion occurred, and the men were hurled flat on the ground.

Wholesalers are selling to the retail trade at the following prices:

Butter—New York, 25 to 27c; choice, 28 to 30c; creamery prints, 45 to 46c; solids, 44 to 45c.

Eggs—New York, 25 to 27c; choice, 28 to 30c; creamery prints, 45 to 46c; solids, 44 to 45c.

Flour—Manitoba, 25 to 27c; choice, 28 to 30c; creamery prints, 45 to 46c; solids, 44 to 45c.

Wheat—Manitoba, 25 to 27c; choice, 28 to 30c; creamery prints, 45 to 46c; solids, 44 to 45c.

Barley—Manitoba, 25 to 27c; choice, 28 to 30c; creamery prints, 45 to 46c; solids, 44 to 45c.

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Speltz—Manitoba, 25 to 27c; choice, 28 to 30c; creamery prints, 45 to 46c; solids, 44 to 45c.

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Markets of the World

Broadstuffs

Toronto, Dec. 11.—Manitoba wheat—

No. 1 Northern, \$2.24; No. 2 do, \$2.20;

No. 3 do, \$2.17; No. 4 do, \$2.14; in

store Port William, including 2 1/2% tax,

Manitoba oats—No. 2 C.W., \$1.84; No.

3 C.W., \$1.81; No. 1 extra feed, \$1.84; No.

1 feed, 76c; in store Port William.

American corn—No. 2 yellow, nominal;

Ontario oats—No. 2 white, 75 to 76c;

nominal; No. 2, 74 to 75c; nominal,

according to freight outside.

Ontario wheat—New, No. 2, 75c; Winter,

\$2.22; hard, in store Montreal.

Peas—No. 2, \$3.70 to \$3.80, according

to freight outside.

Barley—Malting, \$1.23 to \$1.24, ac-

cording to freight outside.

Rye—No. 2, \$1.75, according to

freight outside.

Manitoba flour—First patents, in Jute

bags, \$11.50; 2nd do, \$11.50; strong bak-

ers' do, \$10.60; Toronto.

Ontario flour—Winter, according to

sample, \$9.55; in bags, Montreal, \$9.75;

Toronto, \$9.70 bulk, seaboard, prompt

shipment.

Millfeed—Car lots, delivered Montreal

freights, bags included—Bran, per ton,

\$37; shorts, do, \$42; middlings, do,

\$47 to \$48; good feed flour, per bag,

large twin 25, \$2.40; small, \$2.30.

Hay—No. 1, new, per ton, \$16 to \$17;

mixed, do, \$13 to \$15; track Toronto.

Straw—Car lots, per ton, \$9 to \$9.50,

track Toronto.

Country Produce—Wholesale

Butter—Creamery, solids, per lb, 42 1/2

to 43c; prints, per lb, 43 to 43 1/2c; dairy,

per lb, 38 to 38 1/2c.

Eggs—Fresh gathered eggs, 47 to 48c.

Potatoes—Wholesale, according to

growers and country shippers, \$1.35 to

\$1.95 for first-class stock, f.o.b. outside