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Referendum Suggested As the Alternative for A General Election

Political Situation Now Calmer as Result of Government's Victory on Conscription Bill—London Hears of Proposal to Introduce the Referendum Should Hostility Appear to be Developing in the Country at Large—Advocates of the Measure Say the Question of Conscription Make the Present Time Suitable for the Text

LONDON, Jan. 8.—The political situation to-day was calmer after the overwhelming vote secured by the Government in the House of Commons on Thursday night on the first reading of its Compulsion Bill. The reassuring size of the Government's majority in the Lower House of Parliament helped to offset to a considerable degree the anti-conscriptionist vote of the Labor Congress which also was partly discounted by the attitude of such important Labor Leaders as Arthur Henderson, who resigned as president of Board of Education, and John Ward, George Nikoll Barnes and John Hodge, members of the House of Commons. The position of these men is that the vote of Labor Congress was too hasty and ill-considered to be regarded as reflecting the actual feeling of the Labor men of the country.

Parliament did not meet to-day and will not sit again until Monday. Indications are that the Conscription Bill will be passed through the House of Commons in order that it may reach the House of Lords in ample time for passage before the end of the month.

In some quarters, talk of a general election still persists, but it is certain that a considerable part of even the opponents of compulsion do not want a resort to the ballot. Gossip is generally agreed that Premier Asquith will have little difficulty in filling the vacancies in his Cabinet caused by the resignation of Mr. Henderson, Sir John A. Simon, the Home Secretary Herbert Samuel, at present Postmaster-General, is the man most talked of as Sir John A. Simon's successor, but there has been no general agreement in gossip as to the probable man for Mr. Henderson's place.

One of the most interesting suggestions heard in London to-day was the proposal to introduce the Referendum as the alternative for a general election, if dangerous hostility appears to be developing in the country at large, during the later stages of the Conscription Bill before Parliament.

The Referendum has been frequently suggested in Great Britain during the past few years as a desirable addition to the executive machinery of the United Kingdom and was adopted as part of the Unionist platform of constitutional reform five or six years ago. Additional prominence was given to it in Dec. 1910 when A. J. Balfour, then leader of the Opposition, gave his pledge at a monster Unionist meeting in London that no Tariff Reform Bill be enacted without its submission to the Referendum. A Bill providing for the use of the Referendum in disputes between the House of Lords and Commons was introduced in Parliament with influential backing in 1911, but was not pressed in the final stages.

Advocates of the Referendum now plead that the question of compulsion, being isolated from other questions of domestic politics, is suitable for the test. A popular vote, moreover, they say, even of the men in the trenches on a simple yes and no question, could be taken without inconvenience, whereas the ordinary Parliamentary ballot would be impossible.

FLIGHT OF SERB ARMY THROUGH MOUNTAINS ONE OF SUFFERINGS

Men Were Compelled to Destroy Guns, Autos, Waggons and all Vehicles—Soldiers Without Food For Four Days—Albanian Guerrillas Make Raids on Retreating Army Who Were Helpless to Ward off Attacks

LONDON, Jan. 6.—Hardships encountered by the Serbian army in the flight through the mountains of Albania are described in a letter to the Times sent from Scutari on Dec. 11. This is the sixth capital Serbia has had during two months, says the writer. First Nish, then Kraljevo, Theresa, Mitrovitz, Prisrend and finally Scutari. As a tourist I am acquainted with the Alps, the Carpathians and the Pyrenees, but I have never seen such goat paths for roads running along the edge of the terrible precipices and the sides of peaks in the clouds. The officials of the Serbian government use little mountain ponies, but often they had to abandon their mounts and go on foot. I have seen the horses slip and fall into abysses. Sometimes one had to go on all fours. Some, to avoid vertigo, had to be guided with closed eyes. There was snow then a yard deep. Albanian guerrillas were taking pot shots at us from behind rocks high up from the opposite sides of the canyons. The army could not bring its guns and convoys through such country. When we began to leave we had to destroy autos, waggons, vehicles and every sort of gun. Officers and soldiers wept as they demolished their guns, these huge pieces of steel which they called their French friends, the ordnance having been made at Creusot. The men had become attached to them and many artillery men served the same gun four years. Some of the officers refused to destroy their pieces for, they would use their last strength in trying to save them, and some of them have succeeded, and the actually have brought their guns across.

After all these difficulties and sufferings from cold, hunger and are kept for the women and children.

Austrians Are Up Against It

LONDON, Jan. 8.—Dealing with the situation in Russia, the Times' Petrograd correspondent says, the Russian success threatens Pink with envelopment from the South, while in Czernowitz region the Austrians' savage-counter attacks shatter themselves mainly against a stone wall on the Russian offensive.

Escaped Submarine In the Mediterranean

NEW YORK, Jan. 7.—A news agency despatch from Marseilles to-day says that the steamer Meinam raced into Marseilles to-day after eluding a submarine, which had pursued her for some distance in the Mediterranean. The submersible fired at least a hundred shells after the fleeing steamer, but none of them struck.

For Serb Orphans

BRINDISI, Jan. 6.—The French relief Mission sailed from Albania to-day taking food and clothing for the Serbian orphans.

fatigue, many soldiers being cared for, we are here altogether. There have arrived by various routes six thousand women and children. The tragedy of the situation is that the soldiers have had no bread for four days. The small quantities of flour are kept for the women and children.

OFFICIAL BRITISH

To Governor, Newfoundland:

LONDON, Jan. 7.—A British submarine was sunk off Texel yesterday. The whole crew was rescued by the Dutch cruiser Noord Brabant.

Headquarters in France report an air raid upon a German store depot. Artillery activity continues at Arras, Amiens and Ypres. In Champagne the entire enemy installation for gas attacks was destroyed by artillery. Several gas reservoirs exploded.

The Russians are established in the captured positions on the Czernowitz-Strypa front. Chartorysk cemetery has been occupied.—BONAR LAW.

LABORITES INDUCED TO REMAIN

LONDON (official), Jan. 7.—Yesterday morning a hostile bombing attack, supported by artillery, about Arras and Lille railway, was driven off. Our artillery to-day bombarded the enemy's lines, damaging their trenches considerably.

MASSACHUSETTS REPRESENTATIVE GETS "HOT SHOWER" IN CONGRESS

Hon. "Gus" Gardiner Taken to Task by Two Republican Colleagues For an Alleged Attack on German-Americans—Gardiner Backs Wilson's Policy of Refusing to Stop Shipment of Munitions—Assailed Cotton Interests

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7.—Representative Gardner was vigorously assailed to-day in the House by two Republican colleagues, Stafford and Cooper, of Wisconsin, when he made a speech, criticising German-Americans and the German nation. "The remarks we have just heard were as violent as could have been made in the British Parliament," shouted Cooper, who is ranking member on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

On Gardner's demand for the regular order of business, Cooper sat down. He had scarcely taken his seat when Stafford gained the floor, and in an impassioned address he declared Gardner to be more British than American. He criticised him for the nature of his remarks, saying that every member should weigh his words carefully. He strongly defended German-Americans. Stafford took particular exception to the declaration that German-Americans were destroying American munition factories with their gold and dynamite. "Those charges cannot be made against eight million German-Americans who are in this country," he declared. "I am not advocating the German cause, but I know that in my own districts munition factories surrounded by thousands of German-Americans are running daily, without interference. I, therefore, rise to resent the baseless charges which are unworthy of any man."

Gardner left the House just as Stafford began. Representative Gardner had made a long prepared speech in the House to-day approving of the Administration's stand that it would be unneutral to place an embargo on war munitions. He declared that peace in Europe now would be inconclusive and would mean another war. He assailed the pacifists, hyphenated Americans and cotton interests.

Died From Wounds

REMIREMENT, France, Jan. 7.—General Serret, who was in command of one of the divisions of the French army in the Vosges, died yesterday from wounds received in a recent engagement.

CARBONEAR FIRE SWEEP

Big Blaze Broke Out at 2 a.m.—Several Shops, Houses and Stores Destroyed—McCarthy's Hotel Included—Loss a Very Serious One

(Special to The Mail and Advocate) CARBONEAR, Jan. 8th.—One of the most disastrous fires that ever occurred here broke out at 2 o'clock this morning in the shop occupied by Mr. Chas. Penny and quickly spread owing to the high wind then blowing, setting on fire the dwelling and shop of Mr. Pat. Hogan, the dwelling and drug store of Mr. G. J. Brocklehurst, McCarthy's hotel, the dwelling and shop of Mrs. Margaret Brown, a dwelling belonging to Mr. Soper, also the coal-shed of John Rorke & Sons. Messrs. Hogan and Brocklehurst saved nothing, the others very little. The fire is still burning but under control.

CORRESPONDENT.

Carbonear, January 8, 1916. To Hon. Sir E. P. Morris, Prime Minister, St. John's.

Devastating fire swept part of Water Street this morning, starting in the fine house owned by Monsignor McCarthy, opposite Rorke store, then crossing street destroyed Hogan's dwelling and barn, Brocklehurst's dwelling and drug store, McCarthy's hotel and house next, also Soper's dwelling next to Penny's store. The town was saved by the splendid work of the Carbonear Volunteer Fire Brigade and citizens generally.

J. R. GOODISON.

OFFICIAL CASUALTY LIST

JANUARY 8th., 1916.

1259 Private Norley Soper, Port aux Basques. Died on board Hospital ship Aquitania; Bronchitis and Pneumonia; Dec. 29, 1915.

691 Private Walter Elliott Pippy, Torbay Road. Arrived at 3rd. London General Hospital, Wandsworth; enteric.

1337 Private James Curnew, Stephenville Crossing. Arrived at 3rd. London General Hospital, Wandsworth; frostbite.

Additional Information. Second Lieutenant Hector H. A. Ross, 14 Victoria St. Previously reported compound fracture, left Elbow, serious but satisfactory. Now reported to have arrived at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth.

J. R. BENNETT, Colonial Secretary.

CHURCHILL RECEIVES PROMOTION

LONDON, Jan. 7.—Major Winston Churchill, former First Lord of the Admiralty, who resigned the subsequent Cabinet post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and went to the front with his regiment, has been appointed to the command of a battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, at the front in France, according to a Reuter's correspondent at British Headquarters. This will prove a stepping stone to a command of a Brigade which is said to be Major Churchill's ambition.

ADVERTISE IN THE MAIL AND ADVOCATE

BREAKDOWN IN GERMAN CAMPAIGN

PARIS, by Bertille, Jan. 8.—A radical change in German strategy, which has already begun to take effect in the Balkans, and which engulves the first official admission of a breakdown in the campaign against France and Russia is foreshadowed by reports reaching Paris from Switzerland, which are credited in well-informed quarters here.

Prince Hoheneiche disguising his identity with the title of Count Kaff, is the Kaiser's Chief Commissioner, and with Prince Buelow is working in Switzerland for separate peace with France and Russia, which would leave Germany's hands free to combat Great Britain's steadily growing military strength.

Prince Hoheneiche recently told a Swiss friend that his Emperor's plans were now bent in a direction totally different from that toward which he had looked in the beginning of the war. He believed that the deadlock on the Western front is complete, and has finally acknowledged that what his army could not do in 1915 against France, it is unlikely to do in 1916.

The sporadic activity marking the return of the year was merely the result of orders he had issued to his generals to test the present strength of the Franco-British lines, nowhere could a weak spot be found, a fact which caused the Kaiser no surprise.

As regards the Eastern front his plans for a renewed offensive early in the Spring have been dropped because the dwindling effectiveness opposing Russia's swelling man-power, Germany's chances of a decisive triumph are not great enough to justify the carnage, a new onslaught against the Muscovites would entail. Such an offensive was put beyond the range of possibility when the Franco-British expeditionary forces get safely within the Salonika lines and the French Premier, M. Briand swung the British round to the policy of using that port as the starting point for an ultimate Balkan offensive.

Fighting of a Most Bitter Character Marks the Russian Progress

Will Not Repeat Similar Acts

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7.—The State Department was advised to-day by Ambassador Sharp at Paris that the French Government had ordered the captain of the cruiser Descartes to act with great care and circumspection and not to stop any more American vessels.

Serbs Defeat Bulgars in a Fierce Attack

ATHENS, Jan. 8.—Reports received from Constantinople by local newspapers declare that a British submarine has made its way by the Sea of Marmora into Golden Horn and attacked an arsenal on Pera side causing much damage and panic among the inhabitants. Patras report fierce two days engagement between the Serbs and the Bulgarians which resulted in the defeat of the latter.

Cardinal Mercier Going to Rome

ROME, Jan. 6.—The Belgian Minister to the Vatican has been informed that Cardinal Mercier, Primate of Belgium, intends to leave for Rome after presiding at the consecration, to take place in a day or two, of the new Bishop of Torino.

Japs Eager to Enlist

VANCOUVER, B.C.—Official authorization came only a few days ago that more than five hundred naturalized Japanese have already left their signatures to join the new Japanese regiment. This is almost a record in local recruiting.

Nil Desperandum

ROME, Jan. 6.—Thousands of Serbian refugees are presenting themselves at the Serbian legation, and consulates in Italy, with the request that they be incorporated in a new Serbian army to fight.

GERMANY GIVES NEW ASSURANCES REGARDING SUBMARINE WARFARE

Von Bernstorff Gives Washington Assurances That Non-Combatant Ships of Any Character Will be Attacked in Mediterranean Without Warning—Some U. S. Officials Think This Will End Controversy—Offers Indemnity in Lusitania Case

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7.—Count von Bernstorff, German Ambassador, presented to Secretary of State Lansing to-day a proposal to pay indemnity for Americans lost in the Lusitania disaster, and thereby conclude the controversy. He gave assurances that any German submarines in the Mediterranean would not attack non-combatant ships of any character, without warning, or destroy them without the opportunity for non-combatants to reach places of safety.

While offering to pay indemnity in the Lusitania case, Germany makes the reservation that it is done without admission of wrong-doing. No official indication was given as to the acceptability of the proposal, but one set of American officials took the view that it would end the controversy.

Assurances regarding submarine warfare in the Mediterranean are of a broader scope than those given after

Russians For Fifty Hours Concentrated 400 Guns on Austrian Positions at Czernowitz—Russian Activities May Herald a Big Offensive Movement of all Russian Armies From the Baltic to the Roumanian Border—British War Office to Enquire Into Whole Circumstances of the Landing of Troops at the Dardanelles

LONDON, Jan. 8.—Some idea of the determined nature of the Russian blow on the Bessarabian front is conveyed by Petrograd despatches to-day, which state that the Russians for 50 hours concentrated four hundred guns on the Austrian positions at Czernowitz as a preparation for an infantry attack. The Russians' communications do not claim that Czernowitz has fallen, but despatches from German sources admit their position critical. It is not clear whether the Russian operations in this theatre herald a big general offensive movement of all the Russian armies from the Baltic to the Roumanian border, or merely indicate a diversion of the unparalleled magnitude and fierceness designed to weaken the pressure of the Central Powers in the Balkans and incidentally on the Italian front.

The fighting has been of the most bitter character, according to both the Austrian and Russian reports. Few prisoners are being taken and the infantry engagements are largely in the nature of hand-to-hand encounters. All of the Russian operations thus far revealed are being pressed along the railway lines which simplify the problem of the Winter supply of food, ammunition and fuel. The situation along the other fronts is comparatively quiet.

The loss of a British submarine by a mischance of navigation off the Dutch coast makes a total of eleven British submarines lost since the beginning of the war. A majority of these, however, have been of the smaller types. An echo of General Sir Ian Hamilton's important review of the Dardanelles operations is found in a report published to-day that General Sir Frederick Stopford, who was recalled on account of his conduct in the Suvla Bay operations, has demanded an enquiry by the War Office into the whole circumstances of the landing of troops at the Dardanelles. In connection with the submarine activity in the Mediterranean, an Athens despatch notes that alarm is felt there owing to the fact that none of the nine ships laden with grain, purchased in America, either has arrived or, been signalled.

The assurances regarding the conduct of submarine warfare in the Mediterranean convey the first information that German submarines were operating there. As for the disavowal asked by the United States, the German Government was represented as considering that the most effective form of disavowal was the assurance that such acts should not be committed in future.

Killed in Mesopotamia

LONDON, Jan. 8.—George Gribbon, of the Allan line, has received information that his brother, Capt. Montague Gribbon of the 67th Punjab, was killed in Mesopotamia early in December. Capt. Gribbon who was previously reported wounded and missing was a grand son of the late Sir Hugh Allan of Montreal.