

The St. John Standard

VOL. IX, NO. 269.

TEN PAGES

TUESDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 5, 1918.

FAIR AND COLD.

PRICE: TWO CENTS.

Factories and Business Houses In Ont. and Que. to Close Three Days

The General Strike In German Empire Virtually Over

IRON MERGER NEGOTIATIONS IN PROGRESS

Scotia Interests Anxious for Merger with Dominion Steel Corp.

WORKMAN DECLINES TO MAKE DENIAL

Dominion Steel Interests in Position of Wanting to Be Shown.

DIRECT APPROACH BY SCOTIA CO.

Should Merger Occur British Interests Must Have Control.

Special to The Standard. Montreal, Feb. 4.—Reports that negotiations for a Dominion Steel Corporation-Nova Scotia Steel merger were again in progress were drawn to the attention of Mr. Mark Workman, president of the first named company, this afternoon and drew out an enigmatical answer. Mr. Workman while declining to admit to The Standard that negotiations were in progress, also declined to deny it.

The Standard's understanding of the situation is that there is a number of false starts, the interests in control of Scotia are again actively to the front with plans in furtherance of the merger idea, and that a definite proposal will be forthcoming from that direction in the course of the next two or three months, possibly earlier.

Long Had Ambitions. The American interests now dominant in Scotia's affairs have been credited for some two years with ambitions to bring the two properties together. Well substantiated reports that they had acquired a large amount of stock indicated the possibility that they hoped to swing a merger through the ownership of a substantial block of stock, plus the voting power that they might be able to enlist through friendly sources. Moves along those lines have been reported from time to time, but their possibility of success was doubted.

Two of the largest shareholders, Mr. Mark Workman and Mr. Jack Ross, were considered out of the sphere of the negotiations that went on. Their stock ownership added to the influence of the president with other large interests in Dominion Steel Corporation's affairs made it more than doubtful whether any round about plan towards a merger could succeed.

A Direct Approach. The latest phase of the merger plan, a phase that is said to have been developing quietly for three months, seems to be that a direct approach to Dominion Steel is now being made by the dominant interest in Scotia. Negotiations have not reached the stage of submitting a definite proposal, but such a proposal will be forthcoming before long and the question will then reach an official status. Dominion Steel is in the position of wanting "to be shown" if the Scotia interests can submit a proposal which Dominion directors would consider favorable, the merger could be brought about very quickly. It is more probable that there will be a series of offers and refusals before a definite basis of agreement can be reached.

Two Principles. Dominion Steel interests will hold out firmly for two principles, one that the control of the properties must be kept in British hands, and the other that a merger must be on terms of equality for all Dominion shareholders, eliminating all special terms and conditions that might be advantageous to a

Drastic Military Action Apparently Breaks Up the Movement.

ENFORCE MARTIAL LAW IN BERLIN

Important Austro-German Conference on Serious Situation.

TO SUPPRESS THE PEACE SENTIMENT

Still No Indication That Germans Will Make Big Drive Soon.

From the meagre accounts of the economic situation in Germany reaching neutral countries—and they are meagre to a degree, the general strike that prevailed throughout the empire last week has virtually ended. Apparently the hard hand of the military authorities had much to do with the breaking up of the movement on the part of the workers, whose full energies are required by the government at the present moment to add in the prosecution of the war, for even their leaders are reported to have advised the men to return to their jobs.

The proclamation of martial law in Berlin and throughout Brandenburg by the military commander, evidently had its full effect for, with the threat of summary court martial and execution staring them in the face, the strikers carried out no disorders in Berlin Saturday, like those earlier in the week. Industrial quietude seems to pervade the whole country now, except at Jena, capital of the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar, where new trouble has arisen. It is not improbable that the strike here has been engendered by sympathetic feeling on the part of the numerous students in this educational centre.

Conference Called. That under the surface the political waters in Germany and Austria-Hungary still are seething is indicated by the announcement that the German and Austro-Hungarian foreign ministers and General Von Ludendorff, chief of the German war lords, next to Von Hindenburg, are to gather together in a conference in an endeavor to bring about an amelioration of the tense economic and political questions affecting Germany and the Dual Monarchy and doubtless lay plans to combat the peace voices and desires of large parts of the populations in the two countries.

After weeks of watching and waiting there still is no indication that the Germans contemplate an early date for their big offensive against the Entente Allies which it was asserted would be delivered by the old armies reinforced by troops brought from the Russian fronts.

PRICE OF BUTTER ON THE INCREASE

Ottawa, Feb. 4.—The scarcity of oleomargarine in the city, due to the embargo placed on this commodity by the United States government has caused an acute situation with regard to butter, according to retail grocers. The price of creamery butter has advanced two cents per pound during the past week, directly due to the shortage of margarine. It is now selling at 56 cents per pound. There is also said to be very little dairy butter coming in from the farming districts.

As to the principle of British control The Standard understands that the American interests in Scotia are prepared to concede it from the outset. There has been talk of a voting trust being formed with the power in the hands of British or Canadian interests as an impossible safeguard in that respect. But the plan that might be followed is immaterial in view of the willingness of the American group to concede the principle.

CANADIAN CONTROLLER OF FUEL TO ENFORCE HEATLESS MONDAYS

Many Industries, Including Munition Plants, Will Be Shut Down Three Days by Order in Council Adopted Last Night—Maritime Province Factories Escape for the Present—Canadian Order Goes Further Than the American in That During February and March Sportsmen's Clubs Must Do Their Bit—Heatless Mondays for Theatres, Movies, Pool Rooms, etc.

Ottawa, Feb. 4.—On the recommendation of C. A. McGrath, Canadian fuel controller, the cabinet tonight passed an order-in-council suspending the operation of manufacturing plants for three days, February 9, 10 and 11. The only exceptions are plants which must be continuously operated seven days of the week to avoid serious injury to the manufactured products; plants manufacturing perishable foods or food necessary for immediate consumption, and plants devoted to the publication of daily newspapers. The order applies to all business and professional offices, warehouses, wholesale and retail stores. For the purpose of selling food only, stores may retain necessary heat until 12 o'clock (noon) February 9 and 11.

The regulations do not apply to Western Canada nor to the Maritime Provinces. The order, as passed, will apply to all of Ontario and Quebec, from Fort William on the west, to Riviere Du Loup on the east.

McGrath in the U. S. It is understood that it was the intention to pass this order last week, but it was held up owing to doubt as to further action in the United States and the possibility of the discontinuance of their order. Mr. McGrath, who is in Washington, is in close consultation with the American authorities and is co-operating with them in every possible manner to meet the present situation. This recommendation was decided upon by him as best for the present, although further orders along the same lines may be issued later if necessary.

Clubs Must Close. The Canadian order will go further than the American in that all munition plants must close down for three days. The Canadian order also goes further than the American in that during the month of February and March, all golf, country, yacht, canoe or hunt clubs must be closed except on Wednesdays and Saturdays. On other days of the week the coal consumption is to be restricted to the quantity to prevent damage through freezing.

For the present heatless Mondays are ordered only for theatres, moving pictures, bowling alleys, billiard rooms, private and public dance halls and other places of amusement. They must remain closed every Monday beginning February 18 and extending to March 25. Exception is made where entertainments or special functions had been advertised before Feb. 4th.

French Statement. Paris, Feb. 4.—The war office announcement tonight says: "During the day the artillery action became quite intense on the front north of the Aisne, in the region of Carnillet, in the Argonne and in Upper Alsace.

Eastern theatre, Feb. 3.—Near Sugovo, on the slopes south of Belas, the British troops carried out a successful raid on the Bulgarian trenches West of Lake Ochrida an enemy detachment, which attempted to capture one of our posts, was repulsed. Greek aviators bombed the Miletovo station in the Vardar Valley."

Whale Meat for Food, Advocated by Museum Head. Is Not Fish and is Equal in Food Value to Beef—Could Be Marketed for 12 1/2 Cents per Pound.

New York, Feb. 4.—Whale will be the principal article of food at a luncheon to be tendered Thursday members of the American Museum of Natural History here Friday, planned as a demonstration of the possibilities of whale meat consumption, as an offset for scarcity of other meats that might be caused by the war. Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the museum, who has arranged the demonstration, today declared that 15,000,000 pounds of meat from more than 1,000 whales captured annually on the Pacific coast, now is used only as fertilizer. This meat, he declared, is equal in food value to beef and could be marketed in New York city for 1 1/2 cents a pound.

500,000 U.S. TROOPS FOR OVERSEAS

Secretary Daniels Says Navy Assured of Sufficient Transport Facilities.

MEN TO GO OVER EARLY THIS YEAR

Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska Gets Excited in the Senate.

CRITICIZES THE WAR SECRETARY

German Game Now is Muckraking the Administration, Says Williams.

Washington, Feb. 4.—Secretary Daniels today authorized the statement that the navy is assured of enough transport facilities to make sure that there will be 500,000 American troops in France early this year as was stated by Secretary Baker recently before the Senate military committee.

Secretary of War Baker's recent statement to the senate military committee that the United States would have half a million soldiers in France early this year and that prospects were not unpromising for ships to carry a million more who would be ready during the year, were characterized by Senator Hitchcock, Democrat of Nebraska, in an address today as "absolutely preposterous and so exaggerated as to convey an entirely false impression as to what we can do and what we are doing."

Says Baker Misd. Supporting the committee's bill for a war cabinet and munitions director, Senator Hitchcock declared that Secretary Baker was no doubt sincere, but was misled by lack of information regarding the scarcity of ships into making sanguine predictions. He said President Wilson, himself, "does not know the real situation," and cited this situation as an illustration of the absence of government co-ordination.

BOLO PASHA SAYS HE ISN'T TRAITOR

Famous Frenchman Brought to Trial on Charge of Treason.

Paris, Feb. 4.—"I am no traitor. I have asked to be judged and I am willing to die; but not as a traitor." Thus spoke Bolo Pasha, who was brought to trial by court martial today on a charge of treason in having been a chief factor in German propaganda in France. Bolo Pasha's quick wit and repartee were features of the sitting as he tried to extricate himself from the conclusions of the report of Captain Bouchardon of the Paris military court, who took the parliamentary testimony.

Otherwise than for the fumbling of his monocle nervously, Bolo was impassive during the reading of Captain Bouchardon's report of the investigation dealing with Bolo's activities in Switzerland and deals alleged to have been carried out in the United States. The defence outlined by Bolo's counsel was that Bolo's activities had been wholly in the interest of the Entente Powers.

The Teutonic Airmen Bomb Venice, Padua, Treviso and Mestre

Number of Civilians Outside of City of Venice Killed and Wounded.

CIVIL HOSPITAL AT TREVISO HIT

American Airmen on French Front Bring Down Machines.

THE BRITISH DROP NUMEROUS BOMBS

Zeebrugge Violently Bombarded and Bombs Fall at Bruges.

Rome, Feb. 4.—Venice and a number of towns on the Venetian Plain have been bombed by enemy airmen, according to the Italian official communication, issued today. While no damage, and no casualties resulted from the attack on Venice, considerable destruction was wrought in the towns of Padua, Treviso and Mestre, where also a number of civilians were killed or wounded.

The text of the communication follows: "There has been increased artillery and trench mortar activity in the Lagarina Valley and toward the coast. Reconnaissance and surprise attacks, carried out by us at Castione and Capo Sile, resulted in our taking prisoners. "Our aircraft have vigorously bombed the enemy's rear lines. Traffic on the railway lines east of the Piave was effectively disturbed last night by our aircraft. All of them returned safely.

Venice Bombarded. "Enemy aviators again gave vent to their mischievous impulses by bombarding Venice and other towns on the Venetian Plain, where the peaceful population is densest and the military objective of the least importance.

"Padua, Treviso and Mestre were repeatedly attacked. As usual the greatest damage was done to private property and the largest number of casualties was among the civilians. The civil hospital at Treviso was hit, and altogether eight persons were killed and ten wounded, among the population. There were neither casualties nor damage at Venice.

Huns Lose Machines. London, Feb. 4.—Nearly four and a half ton of bombs were dropped Sunday on various targets, according to an official statement tonight on the British aerial operations.

"Five hostile machines were brought down in air fighting," the statement adds, "and five were driven down out of control. One of our machines is missing."

Paris, Feb. 4.—Taking advantage of the fine weather, members of the Lafayette Escadrille continued their brilliant exploit over the French front during past few days, bringing down three German machines and losing none themselves. Thomas Hitchcock Jr., the well-known American turfman, whose home is in Long Island, downed two enemy airmen within a short time of each other—his first victories in the air. David E. Putman of Brookline, Mass., brought down his third machine.

Details of these combats in the air have not yet been received in Paris. Both Hitchcock and Putman have been on the battlefield for less than three months and have not yet been transferred to the American army.

Zeebrugge Bombarded. Amsterdam, Feb. 4.—Zeebrugge was violently bombarded yesterday afternoon by a number of aeroplanes which hovered over the coast, according to a despatch from the frontier. Bombs also fell in Bruges harbor.

BENSON TO LEAVE

Halifax, Feb. 4.—It is understood that General Thomas A. Benson, O.C., Military District No. 6, is soon to leave Halifax. He has made a most important position to fill in such a military city as Halifax during the present war.

RATIONING BY CARD SYSTEM IF NECESSARY

New Food Controller Says It Would Be Hard to Do It.

THE PRICE FIXING PANACEA FAILS

Some 22,000 Groceries in Canada Going Under License.

SHOPPING EXPENSE ADD TO THE COST

Extravagant Shopping Habits and Multiplicity of Delivery Systems.

Ottawa, Feb. 4.—A declaration by Mr. H. B. Thomson, Canada's new food controller, that it would be an exceedingly difficult matter to introduce a card rationing system in a country like Canada, was the feature of an address made by the food controller at an informal gathering of the University Club today.

"We have had many letters from people," said Mr. Thomson, "advocating that Canada be put upon rations, and that food be distributed in some equitable way. Now, while card rationing systems may be workable in congested countries where you have full control of supplies, such as would be the case in Montreal and Toronto, or other large centres, they would have to be operated upon a Dominion wide basis, and not merely in one or two districts. It would be very difficult to operate such a system the Dominion over. How about Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba? How would you enforce the rationing system among the farming population?"

Might Come to It. "Nevertheless, if conditions got worse, it might come to food rationing. But," said Mr. Thomson, "if Canada produces to the limit, I trust it won't be necessary. The people are getting conversant with the situation." Statements from Baron Rhonda, the British food controller, are growing more emphatic every day. Spring is approaching. The greater production campaign has been launched. Soon we can get at it.

The panacea of fixing prices had failed, the controller said. Fixing profits was another matter. "Public clamor is directed against food dealers," said Mr. Thomson. "It is a natural tendency for the consumer to think the trouble revolves around his or her own corner-grocery, but much of the cost that they complain about had been added by the efforts of retailers in competition with each other to grant the public's unreasonably insistent demands for what is called 'service.' The consequence is the expense of doing business keeps increasing and the public is paying for it."

Mr. Thomson after referring to the multiplicity of delivery systems and extravagant shopping habits, said: "In a few days we expect to have regulations in force controlling the situation. There are 22,000 retail grocers operating in Canada, and we are placing them under license."

BORN IN SACKVILLE

The death is announced in Arlington, Mass., of Captain John E. Ross. Capt. Ross was born in Sackville sixty years ago and went to sea when a boy. He leaves a wife and daughter.