

The Semi-Weekly

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ST. JOHN, N. B., S.

BLOODIEST SINCE ALBUERA

Forty Per cent. Casualties at Spion Kop.

Buller's Operations Since Crossing the Tugela Have Cost Two Thousand Men—Canadians are Looking After Traitors—Laurentian Has Been Reported.

LONDON NEWS AND VIEWS.

London, Feb. 1, 4 a. m.—The supplemental list of casualties fill two columns in nonpareil type in the morning paper, making 1,300 reported thus far for General Buller's operations north of the Tugela. The Daily Chronicle estimates that the total exceeds 2,000.

The forty per cent. loss at Spion Kop is greater than any British force suffered, except possibly at Albuera.

The admiralty has warned all half pay naval officers to hold themselves in readiness for service. This, with the fact that able seamen not thoroughly experienced have been withdrawn from the Channel squadron, is taken to indicate the early mobilization of the reserve fleet.

At a meeting of the army and navy members of the house of commons yesterday a resolution expressing absolute confidence in whatever the government thought necessary commanded only two votes. Instead of this a resolution was adopted calling for the immediate formation of a house defense force.

Lord Salisbury has called another cabinet council, which will meet Friday or Saturday, to consider the situation.

Public spirits are at a very low ebb.

Natal Wasted Soldiers.

A blue book has been published containing a quantity of correspondence relating to the defence of Natal. It contains urgent letters and telegrams from the Natal government from dates as early as May last up to the outbreak of hostilities, asking reinforcements. On August 3rd, Mr. Chamberlain wired: "Arrangements to send 2,000 troops are in progress."

The Natal ministry grew more alarmed and on Sept. 19th implored the imperial government to avoid a rupture until further reinforcements had arrived. The correspondence shows that Sir Wm. Parns thought that 4,000 men would be enough to secure the integrity of Natal; and this view was apparently concurred in by the Cape authorities.

SPION KOP ECHOES.

London, Feb. 1.—Accounts of the battle of Spion Kop continue to filter in. All testify to the terrific Boer fire. Estimates are that the total losses of General Buller's turning movement will amount approximately to 1,500.

When the reinforcements arrived the troops were much cramped on the top of Spion Kop. Preparations were made below to secure the position, guns were on the way and engineers had been ordered up to strengthen the entrenchments.

Col. Thorneycroft was not aware of this when he ordered the retirement; and he actually met the artillery coming up.

General Woodgate was wounded about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Even then he protested that he was all right and had to be held down on the stretcher.

It is reported that the Boer commander at first insisted on the release of some Boer prisoners before he would permit the English to collect their wounded.

A Ghastly Incident.

A curious incident is related of the fighting on Jan. 24. One of the Lancasters, while firing from the prone position had his head taken clean off by a shell. To the amazement of his comrades the headless trunk rose, stood upright a few seconds and then fell.

Army Only Escaped.

Mr. Winston Churchill, in a further dispatch to the Morning Post, which describes the re-entrance of the Tugela, says:— "The army is encamped, not defeated. General Buller will persevere and all will come right in the end."

Disregard Cape Dutch.

The Cape Town correspondent of the Daily Mail says:— "Evidence is accumulating that something beyond a tacit understanding existed between the Boer executive and the inner circles of the Afrikaner Bond concerning what should follow the ripening rebellion at the outbreak of war. Fully 5,000 Colonial Dutchmen have joined the enemy.

"The Boers, however, believed that this number would be multiplied tenfold. Consequently the Afrikaner bond is now executed at Pretoria and Bloemfontein."

AN ATTACK BY BLOOD.

London, Feb. 1.—The correspondent of the Times at Lourenso Marques, telegraphing yesterday, says:— "Information has been received here from the Transvaal that the war department convinced that it would be useless to storm Ladysmith and that the bombardment will continue ineffective, has decided upon a change of tactics. Huge quantities

of timber and sand bags and hundreds of Kaffirs have been sent from Johannesburg and Pretoria for the purpose of damming the Tugela river some miles below Ladysmith, the idea being to flood the town and to drive the soldiers and inhabitants out of the bomb proof caves so as to expose them to shell fire.

Portuguese Waking Up.

The Portuguese authorities are at last exercising stricter surveillance. The governor has notified the consuls that they must personally guarantee that applicants for passports are not going to assist the Boer army before passports will be granted. It is rumored that he has also conveyed a hint to Herr Pett, the Transvaal consul, of serious consequences if he continues to infringe the neutrality of the port."

ROBERTS SATISFIED WITH THE HOSPITAL SERVICE.

Cape Town, Jan. 31.—Field Marshal Lord Roberts authorizes the representative of the Associated Press to say that, as a result of his inspection of the hospital service here, he is perfectly satisfied that everything medical skill suggests for the benefit and comfort of the sick and wounded has been done. He is satisfied the home authorities are sending out all the nurses who will possibly be required.

DORCHESTER LADIES RED CROSS.

Dorchester, N. B., Jan. 31.—A largely attended meeting of the ladies of Dorchester, for the purpose of forming a local branch of the New Brunswick Auxiliary of the Red Cross Society, was held in the parlor of the Windsor hotel this afternoon. A communication from Lady Tilley, president of the New Brunswick branch of that society, urging such a course, was read. The branch was organized, Mrs. D. L. Hamilton being elected president, and Mrs. J. A. McQueen secretary-treasurer. A large committee, composed of ladies from various sections of the parish, was appointed. This afternoon about 800 was subscribed toward the aim of the society. It is the intention of this branch to manufacture underwear, etc., for the troops soon to depart for South Africa.

MORE CASUALTIES.

London, Jan. 31.—The war office has issued an additional casualty list of the battle of Spion Kop, Jan. 24 and of the engagements at Ventors Spruit Jan. 27 and Jan. 29. The additional list numbers 139 men killed, 391 wounded and 63 missing, a total of 633. With the additional casualties given for the fighting at Ventors Spruit, the total loss since the beginning of the war is placed at 9,553 men.

CANADIANS ARE HUNTING REBELS.

Montreal, Jan. 31.—The Star publishes the following cable from its special correspondent with the first contingent:— "Belmont, Cape Colony, Jan. 31.—The colonial troops are now being given an important share in the operation which Lord Roberts is inaugurating for the invasion of the Orange Free State. Both the Canadian and Australian are being used to aid the imperial authorities in clearing the northern part of Cape Colony of rebels who are so impeding the progress of the British troops. A strong party of Australians and Canadians left Belmont a week ago, five hundred strong, for a reconnaissance in the Tredder district. The enemy were found in force at Belmont on the Riet River. After a smart fight, in which some of our men were injured, the rebels were cleared out and Colonel Boyd, commandant at Belmont, ordered the establishment of a permanent force at Richmond, twelve miles west of Belmont. A company of Canadians with a mounted force will be left to garrison the post, from which an advance will be made to clear out the rebels of the district. It may be seen in for some smart work. All are well."

THE LAURENTIAN HEARD FROM.

St. Vincent, Cape Verde Islands, Jan. 31.—The Allan line steamer Laurentian, from Halifax Jan. 21 for Cape Town, arrived here this afternoon. She carries the first artillery section of the second Canadian contingent of volunteers for service in South Africa.

WAR NEWS FROM LONDON.

London, Feb. 2, 4.30 a. m.—Mr. Wynnham's remarkable declaration in the house of commons that Great Britain will have in a fortnight 100,000 regulars in South Africa, 7,000 Canadians and Australians, and 20,000 South African volunteers, is received with wonder. This total of 213,000 troops with all are now there with the exception of about 18,000 that are afloat. Beyond parison this is the largest force Britain has ever put into the field. The end of the Crimean war she scraped together 80,000 men. Wellington had at Waterloo 25,000.

Mr. Wynnham's speech was the best defence the government has yet forward as to what has been done a being done.

The general tone of the morning paper is that his figures will astonish the country. Roughly speaking only 80,000 men at the front. Ten thousand others have been lost and 10,000 are shut up at Ladysmith.

Including those there are 70,000 troops who have not yet been in action in a fight so those at sea. Why so many factories have not yet been engaged explained by the lack of land transportation and the organization of supplies, which Lord Roberts is devoting his experience and Lord Kitchener his genius for details.

It seems as though the weight of these masses must destroy the equilibrium which now holds the British forces stationary wherever they are in contact with the Boer army.

Lack of transport and organization will not explain adequately why, when general at the front request reinforcements, they get them in rather small numbers. Knowledge is slowly penetrating to London that large garrisons must be kept in Cape Colony to hold down the Cape Dutch who, as everyone knows, outnumber the British residents three to two.

Cable scraps received during the last 12 hours do not further illumine the military operations. Various independent correspondents confirm the report. Gen. Buller told his troops of that he hoped to relieve Ladysmith a week. It is believed in some quarters that he is again in Boer lines.

A further list of casualties in the war office brings the total of crossing of the Tugela to 1,300 men. Exceptional activity at Ladysmith continues, but a correspondent of the Press learns that new construction and three ships will be sent to the port this month.

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