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GERMANS FALL BACK NEARLY THREE MILES BEFORE BRITISH

Give Up Several Villages Where Fighting Has Been Fiercest

Khaki Patrols Are Out in All Directions Harrassing The Enemy

Belief That Evacuation of Bapaume Can Now or Soon Be Forced — It Was One of the Chief Objectives of the Somme Drive

(From a staff correspondent of the Associated Press, British headquarters in France, Feb. 25, via London Feb. 26.)—On one portion of the British front at least the war today became a war of movement. Under cover of fog and mist, which have been particularly heavy in the last forty-eight hours, the Germans carried out the greatest retirement they have made on the western front in the last two years, and the British have swept into possession of Pys, Serre, Miramont and Petit Miramont, including the famous Butte de Warlencourt, which has been the scene of the fiercest fighting of the war and in places is deep with the bones of dead men.

The exact extent of the German retirement is not known to night, but it is estimated that it approaches a depth of three miles at some points.

British patrols are out in all directions harrassing the Germans and keeping in touch with their movements. Until they report, it will not be possible to say just where the German have determined to fix their next line of resistance.

Nevertheless, it can be said that the British now are, or soon will be, in a position possibly to force the evacuation of Bapaume, which has been the key to the German position since the beginning of the battle of the Somme.

The points which already have fallen into the British hands have stood out in the history of the fighting on this front and had been most stubbornly defended.

French Break in Trenches.—Late yesterday French detachments broke into the German lines near Ville-sur-Tourbe, twenty-five miles west of Verdun, destroyed some shelters and brought back prisoners and material.

Two surprise attacks by the enemy, says the announcement, "one on one of our trenches north of Beaulieu, northeast of Soissons, the other on one of our posts northwest of Avocourt were broken up. We took prisoners, including one officer."

There was intermittent cannonading at some points on the front.

Yesterday our pilots brought down three German airplanes. One of these machines fell in our lines near Mersy, in the vicinity of Rheims, the second south of Fion, in the Aisne, the third southeast of Ailette. Our squadrons threw numerous projectiles on the enemy and munition depots near Spincourt, where explosions were heard on the aviation grounds and hangars at Buzancy, the railways at Ars-sur-Moselle and on railway stations at Bouzeville and Woeling in the region of Wissembourg.

French Airship Destroyed.—Berlin, Feb. 26.—Fourteen men were killed by the destruction of a French airship reported in yesterday's official communication to have been brought down by the German defensive fire.

Additional details regarding this incident were given out here officially yesterday as follows: "The French airship brought down on Friday night was set ablaze by our anti-aircraft fire. It fell in flames near Wefferdingen, west of Sarregrand (in Lorraine). When it landed the ammunition which it carried exploded, the crew, consisting of fourteen men, were killed. The damage to the airship does not prevent ascertaining the details of its construction."

Enemy Report.—Berlin, Feb. 26.—(Via Sabille).—The following is the German official statement issued today: "Western front:—In several sectors between Arrantieres and the Aves British reconnoitering advances were undertaken without success. In some instances these advances were attempted after artillery preparation; in others, surprise attacks were made.

South of Cernay, in the Champagne, the French made an attack without success. Between the Meuse and the Moselle German reconnoitering detachments carried out successful enterprises.

"In numerous aerial engagements yesterday our adversaries lost eight airplanes, two of them from the midst of an aerial squadron, which dropped bombs without success in the Saar district.

Western Front—Prince Leopold's front—West of the Aa, Russian raiding de-

DUTCH VEXED OVER SINKING OF THEIR SHIPS

Some Talk of Sealing Frontier but People Long Suffering Where Germany Concerned

London, Feb. 26.—News despatches from Holland to the London newspapers emphasize the continued indignation aroused among the Dutch by the recent destruction of Dutch ships by German submarines. The despatches say that there is a complete absence of noisy protest, the gravity of the situation having produced a sense of solemnity.

All reports agree that nothing which has happened hitherto in the war has provoked such an intense feeling. An Amsterdam despatch to the Times says: "Everybody is asking what the government will do. The position is one of extreme difficulty and is engaging the most anxious attention of the government. It is generally accepted that a few days will elapse before the administration's course of action is made public. It is not thought however, that this new invasion of Dutch rights will lead, as the Dutch people themselves being anxious to avoid it while the rapidity of German efforts to modify the outraged sensibilities of Holland indicates that Germany is also anxious to avoid further complications."

"Shipping interests are extremely concerned, and talk of the stoppage of all Dutch shipping to the Dutch coast is suggested here that one way of bringing Germany to a sense of her misdeeds would be to seal the Dutch frontier so that Holland could be utilized no longer as a purveyor of food stuffs for Germany."

The expulsion of thousands of German spies and an embargo on the Dutch coast would be a long suffering people who are concerned and extremely cautious."

WELCOME HERE FOR MEN OF THE 198TH, TORONTO

Canadian Buys 450 Strong Reached St. John This Morning—Address by Mayor—Luncheon Served

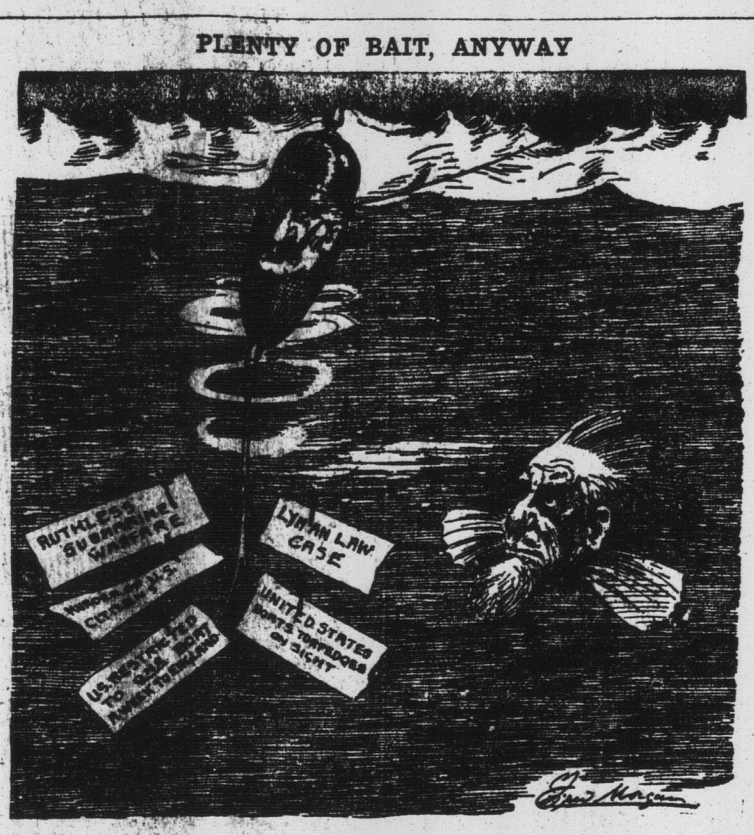
About 400 men of the 198th battalion, Toronto, "Canadian Buys," arrived in the city this morning about 8:30 o'clock, but did not detract, until about 10 o'clock. They were then paraded in front of the Imperial Theatre, where Mayor Hayes extended to the colonel, officers and men on behalf of the citizens of St. John his hearty welcome and trust that they will stay in the city the citizens would do all in their power to give both the officers and men the best of everything possible. His Worship felt that everything possible would be done to add to the comfort of the men while quartered here.

The men were then paraded to their quarters in the exhibition building, the old quarters of the 118th battalion, where the ladies of the patriotic societies served to the officers and men hot coffee and cake. This was enjoyed by them and the adjutant on behalf of the battalion heartily thanked the ladies for their thoughtfulness.

The total strength of the unit is about 800 men, including thirty-one officers. The adjutant of the Canadian Couriers, is a man of wide militia experience, having been connected with the militia of Canada for more than twenty-one years. The battalion has two bands, a brass band and a bugle, both of which are said to be of the very best, especially the brass band, which has won several prizes in competition with other battalion bands and which hold a silver cup which they won while encamped in the exhibition camp at Toronto during last summer.

The unit was authorized about one year ago the city of Toronto and there was recruited. All the officers of the unit are qualified for a rank higher than they hold. The adjutant of the battalion said this morning that his men are all very efficient in their drill and no branch of their work had been neglected.

The officers of the unit follow: Lieut.-Colonel John A. Cooper, Major J. F. Henderson, Captain Craig, Adjutant Major W. M. Walwyn, Major E. H. A. Pike, B. Gray, F. Hoeks, N. Smith, C. A. Scott, J. E. Webber, J. J. Dolan, B. N. Palmer, E. H. Cooper, C. U. Hayward, H. Boothe, R. Hoeken and G. Campbell.



Stormy In Gloucester; Returns Likely Late

Opposition Offer 2 to 1 That They'll Win All Four Seats—Money and Liquor For Government Use Arrive

(Special to The Times).—Bathurst, N. B., Feb. 26.—The eyes of the province are turned today towards Gloucester county, where the decision for or against the cause of good government is to be given finally today. On today's election of four members depends the fate of a single ballot by government workers in Bathurst and this is an indication of the efforts made and methods used to ensure the defeat of a man whom the government feared to be elected.

The weather is far from favorable; it is very cold and the county is wrapped in a heavy snow storm. These conditions make it more difficult to get out the vote, especially in the thinly settled districts, where the electors have to travel long distances to the polling places.

The government forces are making a desperate stand in an effort to win the county. A party, headed by Dr. O. B. Poir, defeated government candidate in Moncton city, arrived in Bathurst last night and are busily engaged today aiding the local workers. There is money and liquor in abundance for the use of the government workers and both are being used openly and brazenly. As in other parts of the province the opposition is running a clean election.

Owing to the way in which the polling places are scattered the complete result may be late, and the weather conditions may cause further delay in the announcement of the results.

The opposition is confident of success and is offering in support of this view offers of two to one that the opposition will take all four seats have found no takers.

In the Twenty-three to twenty-one, with Gloucester to hear from was quite enough to produce a happy smile on the faces of the opposition supporters around the city today. It was taken for granted that the government was defeated.

There is a general feeling that W. E. Foster should be given the opportunity to continue in the legislature the leadership which has been his in such a splendid victory at the polls and that a seat should be found for him.

E. S. Carter's work is also regarded as deserving of special consideration. In view of the fact that he faced the premier in his own constituency and that stronger efforts were put forth to defeat him than were used against any other opposition candidate, his showing is regarded as remarkable under the circumstances.

The fact that he led the polls in his own parish is an unanswerable argument to the petty personal canvasser which have been directed against him. It is said that as high as \$50 was offered for a single ballot by government workers in Bathurst and this is an indication of the efforts made and methods used to ensure the defeat of a man whom the government feared to be elected.

In one place the opposition workers ran an absolutely clean election, the government used every corrupt method known. Money and liquor were used with scarcely any effort at concealment. Impersonation was tried in many cases.

A scheme which was used in some polling places to aid the government was the removal of the opposition ballots. In one place the opposition workers said that the ballots disappeared as fast as they could be placed in the booth.

The opposition candidates who were defeated in the city lost in Sydney and Guys wards, and it is said that the methods used by the government forces in these wards were particularly notorious.

Among the amusing stories told of election day is one of a man who evidently must be a strong partisan of Hon. J. D. Hazen, in a ballot box was found an opposition ballot, on which the name of Mr. Barnby, the first and last name were deleted leaving only his middle name. The ballot therefore was cast for "Hazen."

The Standard says E. S. Carter did not carry his own parish. Let us see. In the last election the government carried the parish by eighty-one majority. On Saturday Mr. Carter had 140 votes and Premier Murray 118. Evidently the people were not so much in the mood for a good deal more of him than they do of the Hon. James A. Murray.

Declaration Day.—The official announcement of the results of the voting will be made by Sheriff Wilson, returning officer for the city, on Monday at 10 o'clock.

Red ink has run short in Prince William street. Suddies.

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WILSON ASKS AUTHORITY TO PROTECT AMERICAN RIGHTS

President Goes Before Congress This Afternoon—Wants Sanction to Use Forces of the Nation

New York, Feb. 26.—President Wilson will address a joint session of congress this afternoon and ask for authority to establish a state of "armed neutrality." He has made detailed plans to protect American ships desiring to enter the German war zone.

The president will point out that while he desires peace there is something greater than peace—the protection of the sovereign rights of America, and that the untrammelled right of American ships to sail the seas unmolested by any foreign nation must be upheld.

Mr. Wilson's decision to go before congress was partly caused by the fact that Germany's campaign is herding American ships tied up in American ports. Such a condition, the president will say, is unbearable.

Arming American merchantmen or conveying them through the war zone are two methods of protecting American commerce that are being considered. Exactly what steps will be taken has not been revealed.

The president will ask congress to empower him to use the forces of the United States to protect American rights on the high seas. The president's address was sent to the public printer at 9:30 o'clock today. At the same time the president discussed his speech with the members of the Senate foreign relations committee. No announcement was made, but it was learned that the president was going to do just what he outlined in his address announcing the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Germany.

To ask for authority to use the forces of the United States to protect American rights is not in any sense to ask for a declaration of war, nor is it an act of war, but it is to take the step regardless of what may be warlike acts by any other nation.

The president decided that before congress adjourned for the session it was necessary that he be given additional authority to protect American rights. There have been reports that such a move would be opposed in congress, but the president decided to take the step regardless of what may be warlike acts by any other nation.

His address the president will point out in diplomatic relations indicate her determination to take the step regardless of what may be warlike acts by any other nation.

"I do not wish to see Germany crushed, but I do wish that over this ambition of a world empire, which Germany has had for the last forty years, there should be written one word, and that word is failure."

EX-PREMIER CLARKE DIED THIS AFTERNOON

Hon. G. J. Clarke, until recently premier of the province, died at his home in St. Stephen at three o'clock this afternoon. The interment will be made in his family lot in St. Andrews, but the funeral arrangements have not yet been made.

Hon. George Johnson Clarke was born in St. Andrews (N. B.) on Oct. 10, 1847. His parents were Nelson and Mary Clarke. He received his education at St. Andrews and in Fredericton. He was admitted to the bar in 1868, became a barrister in 1871, and in 1873 was appointed king's counsel. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the house of commons in 1891 and for the legislature in 1899. He has served as mayor of the town of St. Stephen and warden of the municipality of Charlotte. He was first elected to the legislature in 1908 and was returned in 1908. He was elected Speaker of the legislature in 1909 and was re-elected at the opening of the present session in 1913. In 1914 he accepted the office of attorney-general and was returned by his constituency by acclamation. After the resignation of Premier Flemming in December, 1914, he was entrusted with the formation of a cabinet and assumed office as premier, taking the portfolio of lands and mines. In religion he was a Methodist.

Amsterdam, Feb. 26.—(Via London).—A telegram from Berlin says that it is officially announced that the Bundesrath has authorized Chancellor Von Bethmann-Hollweg to claim, and wherever necessary, seize the whole production of coal, lignite, briquettes and coke in Germany.

RUSHING MILL STREET WORK.—The water and sewerage department had a gang of men at work from Saturday night to Sunday morning and again last night in Mill street where connection is being made from the water main to the sprinkler system in the National Drug & Chemical Company's building. Owing to the heavy traffic and the large number of street cars passing, an effort is being made to accomplish as much as possible at night.

J. G. CHEESMAN DEAD.—C. P. R. Engineer J. G. Cheesman, who was scalded on Wednesday last when some freight cars run off the siding at Fairville, running into his engine, died in the General Public Hospital this morning. He leaves his wife, who resides in Dunn avenue, Lancaster Heights, four small children, mother and five brothers.

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BOY LEAVES WILL AND SHOOTS HIMSELF.—Calgary, Feb. 26.—Donald, ten-year-old son of J. W. Chittick, shot himself through the heart last night with his father's revolver. The boy is in the neighborhood had been playing soldier and a brother had enlisted in the navy. The boy left a will reading as follows: "I leave my sword to Harvey (a brother), and my money to my mother, which she saved. Goodbye."

LOST WITH ALL ON BOARD.—San Diego, Cal., Feb. 26.—The British Columbia Salvage Company's tug Pilot, of Vancouver, which sailed from here in last July for Ocos Guatemalan, to salvage the former German freighter Sacoite, founded off the Guatemalan coast, with the loss of all on board, according to advices received today from Salina Cruz, Mexico. So far as known the men were on the Pilot when she left Salina Cruz.

Weather Report.—A moderate disturbance is moving eastward across the Great Lakes, causing unsettled weather with rain and snow from Ontario to the maritime provinces. It continues only in the western provinces.

Ottawa Valley.—Occasional snow and rain today, turning colder tonight. Tuesday, strong winds or gales from westward, clearing and turning colder.

New England.—Probably rain tonight and Tuesday, colder Tuesday, south-west shifting to northwest gales.

Clearing and Colder.—Maritime.—Strong winds and gales from southwest, snow turning to rain. Tuesday, strong winds or gales from westward, clearing and turning colder.

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The Laconia Sunk; Americans Aboard

Queenstown, Feb. 26.—The Cunard Line steamship Laconia, of 18,099 tons gross, which sailed from New York on February 18 for Liverpool, has been sunk. The survivors are said to number 170. They will be landed today.

New York, Feb. 26.—The Cunard liner Laconia, which sailed from New York on February 18, had 100 passengers on board, among whom were ten or more Americans.

Weather Report

Issued by Authority of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, R. F. Stupart, Director of Meteorological Service

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