

The Herald What "National Service" Means

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Parliament Meets Jan. 18

An extra of the Ottawa Gazette summoning parliament to assemble on Jan. 18th, was issued on Thursday last Dec. 28th. The date is two weeks in advance of that first intended, the reason for the change being the invitation from the British government to Sir Robert Borden to attend a series of special meetings of the war cabinet. The prosecution of the war, the conditions upon which peace may be made, and the problems to arise after the war, all will be considered at these meetings, and the prime minister feels himself bound to attend a conference which will deal with questions so vital to the interests of Canada as well as that of the whole Empire. To enable Sir Robert to sail for England in time for the opening of the conference in Feb. the business of parliament is to be taken in hand at once.

Effort to Trap The Entente

The London papers generally regard Germany's reply to President Wilson's note no reply at all, but a renewed effort to trap the entente into a conference at an inopportune moment for the latter, with a view to averting what is consistently maintained here as inevitable—the defeat of the Central Powers.

The Post, asserting that Germany regards Wilson's note as an instrument fashioned to serve her interests, says that Germany has seized the occasion with the desperate eagerness of a drowning man catching a straw. Rejecting all idea of a conference, the Post says: "It is perfectly evident that if a discussion were once begun, the war could not possibly be resumed. The long gathering momentum of the Allies, once checked, could not be recovered."

The Post calls the German proposal for a conference "an impudent affront," and adds: "that the absence of occasion for this affront should help President Wilson to understand why in all the allied capitals his action is regarded as a German answer may well refer to the friendly spirit of the American note, for its effect, however under signed, is to snore Germany and embarrass the Allies."

The Daily Telegraph thinks the reply marks a new and significant step in the game of desperation forced upon the Central Powers by their well justified dread of what the immediate future holds for them.

The Daily News says: "The failure to meet President Wilson on a common ground cannot be ascribed to obtuseness. Germany's affectation of misunderstanding will mislead nobody. The original German note and the present reply to President Wilson have the common object of throwing upon the entente the onus of rejecting ostensibly genuine advances. The Allies must see that they do not promote the success of that transparent manoeuvre by the adoption of a purely negative or intransigent attitude. Our right course is not to reply advances but to state our terms when the challenger to the negotiations has stated her's."

New Years Day was fine and everything in connection with its observance passed off quietly. The usual horse-speeding took place on Great George Street, but this year wagons were used instead of sleighs, for the most part, as snow was rather scarce. There was sailing to an extent, and plenty skating at the rink and elsewhere.

Progress of the War

With the British Armies in France, Dec. 24, via London, Dec. 25—(From a staff correspondent of the Association Press)—North of Arras certain Canadian troops have just accomplished what the British officers declare marks a new phase in modern trench warfare. In a raid which, however, was much more than a raid, they succeeded in putting out of action, temporarily at least, an entire battalion of German infantry. They took 59 prisoners, including one commissioned officer, and estimated they killed 150 Germans in dugouts which were blown to atoms after their occupants refused to surrender. The Canadian losses were extremely light.

The "raid" took place at three o'clock in the afternoon on a front of 400 yards. The German prisoners admit that they were taken completely by surprise. The officer captured said he was convinced that something was about to happen, but believed that the attack was coming on Christmas eve. He reported to the higher command, but received no support. The Canadians, mostly stalwart men from the plains of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, had skillfully established themselves well forward, so that when the artillery had ceased the preparatory fire they were in the German front line trenches in less than two minutes. The officer in command, who was reporting the raid to brigade headquarters by telephone, said that he had hardly uttered the word, "they're off" before he had to say "they're in."

Consternation reigned among the Germans, who scrambled for the saps and dugouts leading to the rear trenches, while the Canadians pelted them with hand grenades. Caught absolutely unprepared many Germans in the front line offered no resistance, but threw up their hands with cries of "Kamrad." Others were taken as they fled for the second and third lines, for the Canadians pushed on quickly to the second trenches. About twenty dugouts were destroyed by the Canadians, several with bombs captured from the Germans. One of the officers engaged said: "As we entered the trenches many Germans broke for the dugouts. All who did were subsequently well cared for. Each of our men was given definite instructions for his precise task, and a map of the enemy's trenches which proved absolutely correct. Each man knew every detail of the proposed operation. They were delighted at this and entered the fight with great cheer."

"When they came out two hours later, they were singing and as happy as school boys on a holiday. The neatness and despatch with which the raid was carried out were unique. The artillery's co-operation of the British guns was perfection. Beautifully placed curtains of fire prepared our advance, and, creeping forward, protected us as they proceeded to absolutely demolish the enemy trenches and dugouts. The programme had given the men an hour and a half for their work, but the clean-up was accomplished in an hour and ten minutes, and the raiders signalled they were ready to return to their own trenches." No attempt was made at a counter-attack until the following night, when the Germans bombarded and raided their own first line, or what was left of it, thinking that the raiders were still there. As a matter of fact the Canadians who carried out the operations were miles away. They were not part of the fighting line, but on rest, and went forward for this particular piece of work, which was planned weeks ago.

Paris, Dec. 26—The war office bulletin issued tonight reads: "There was great activity by both armies in the sectors of Belloy-En-Santerre and Fouquet-court. Everywhere else the cannonade was intermittent." The Belgian communication: "The usual artillery activity prevailed."

Berlin, Dec. 26, via Sayville—The Russians have been driven from several positions in north eastern Wallachia, says tonight's army headquarters statement on operations, which reads: "On the north bank of the Somme there was temporarily strong artillery fire. Elsewhere on the western and eastern fronts nothing important occurred. In Great Wallachia the Russians were ejected from several positions. Conditions in Macedonia were calm."

Rome, Dec. 26, via London.—"There have been desultory actions along the whole front, interfered with by bad weather," says today's war office statement. "On the Carso, south of Montefait, we straightened our lines by a surprise advance to a depth of 300 metres. In one of the crater-like holes in the area occupied by us we found 150 cases of artillery ammunition which had been abandoned by the enemy."

London, Dec. 26—An official statement on the Mesopotamia situation issued tonight reads: "On the 22nd British detachments advanced to the right bank of the Tigris. Their position subsequently had been consolidated and extended south and east of Kut-El-Amara. The enemy's on the right bank of the Tigris, southwest of Kut-El-Amara have been systematically bombarded. Our cavalry by a night march reached and destroyed Gassab's Fort, twenty miles southeast of Kut, which had long been a base of operations of the hostile Arabs. Sixty tons of grain were destroyed, cattle were captured and a number of hostile Arab encampments were burned."

Petrograd, Dec. 27, via London—(British admiralty per Wireless Press)—The following statement on military operations was issued today by the war office: "Roumanian front: Throughout the day the enemy made a number of fierce attacks along almost the whole of our front. In the region of the upper stream of the River Rimnik, north of Megura, he succeeded in pressing back slightly our cavalry detachments and infantry detachments of the Roumanians. On the Rimnik high road our detachments, after having repulsed a series of attacks, were obliged to abandon first line trenches, which were demolished by artillery fire. Enemy attacks in the remaining sectors were beaten back with great losses to him, and in the village of Valea Seltzei, by our counter-attack, were captured several machine guns."

The battle along the front continues. In Dobrudja there were operations by small detachments. In the vicinity of Lake Van our detachments, after having dislodged a Turkish patrol guard, developed an attack and occupied the village of Ataman. Under our pressure, the Turks, about a battalion strong, retired eastward."

Paris, Dec. 27—The official statement on the campaign issued by the war office tonight reads: "Marked artillery activity was displayed in several sectors south of the Somme. One of our bombardments caused two fires and an explosion in an enemy battery. In the region of Beauvaines, south of the Ancre, we exploded successfully several mines. At the conclusion of this operation our men raided the trenches bringing back prisoners. The day was calm on the rest of the front."

London, December 28—The following communication is issued from the Canadian war records office: "One of the most successful raids ever carried out on the western front was executed this week by the Canadians. The raid was made in the early afternoon, while the low winter sun was still shining. From several points of observation it was possible to witness the whole progress of the operation, and successful cinematograph films, for historical purposes, were obtained within a short distance of the attack. Preliminary bombardments had successfully destroyed the heavy enemy entanglements and generally weakened the German defences."

of picked men, carefully trained for this special occasion, filed in to the trenches and took up a position along the tip of an advanced crater. The enemy remarked the unusual movement, because a few hours before advanced an active rifle fire broke out and several colored rockets were fired from the German trenches. "Nevertheless, at the appointed moment our artillery barrage opened with a sudden crash of dense sound. Clouds of smoke were also liberated, isolating the area to be attacked. A covering fire from our machine guns added a deafening medley of noise. At the given signal the lines of our men advanced slowly and deliberately and in perfect order. Little resistance was met while crossing 'No Man's Land.' The German garrison were seeking safety from our avalanche of shells in their deep dugouts. A number of bombers at one point, however, attempted a resistance. These were quickly disposed of, and the survivors sent back as prisoners. "Swiftly our men then went about their allotted tasks, following the communication trenches back to the German supports, establishing protective blocks, attacking and overcoming the guards and sentries. Special attention was paid to the dugouts, from which many Germans came out to surrender. Bombs and igniting explosives were then thrown inside, destroying and setting on fire the wooden supports."

"This was done so thoroughly and methodically that the progress of the attack could be followed by the fires as they broke out, one after the other. Machine gun emplacements were also destroyed, and the total damage done to the German trenches was very considerable. Many of the enemy were killed, and 58 prisoners including two officers, were captured and taken back to our lines. Our own casualties were remarkably light, and all were promptly evacuated. "Considering the number of men employed in the attack, the extent of the frontage captured, the depth to which the parties penetrated, and the fact that we remained in possession of the German trenches for over two hours before withdrawing, this so-called raid really assumed the character of a very successful local offensive. Some time after all our men had returned, under cover of darkness, to their own lines the enemy could be heard energetically his own deserted and badly damaged trenches."

London, Dec. 29—The battle of the Somme is pictured as a sweeping triumph for allied arms in a detailed report by General Haig, which was issued tonight, and which covers operations from July 10 to November 18. General Haig terms the battle a triumph in which the German western armies were only saved from complete collapse and a decisive defeat by a protracted period of unfavorable weather, which prevented the Anglo-French forces from taking full advantage of their successful advances. He declares that nevertheless it was a triumph which proved beyond doubt the ability of the Allies to overthrow Germany "when the sun comes."

The British commander shows himself a firm believer in the doctrine that the Allies can win the war on the western front.

Dominions Called to War Conference

London, Dec. 26—The secretary of state for the colonies has sent a telegram to the dominions explaining the purposes of the forthcoming imperial conference, announced by Premier Lloyd George. The telegram explains that what the government contemplates is not an ordinary imperial conference, but a special war conference of the Empire. The prime minister of each of the dominions is invited to attend a series of special meetings of the War Cabinet, in order to consider urgent questions affecting the prosecution of the war, possible conditions on which, in agreement with our Allies, we could consent to its termination, and problems which would then immediately arise. The premiers are urged to attend at an early date—not later than the end of February.

Ottawa, Dec. 27—In a cable to

than the end of February. While the presence of your prime minister himself is earnestly desired by His Majesty's government, they hope that if he sees insuperable difficulties he will carefully consider the question of nominating a substitute, as they would regard it a serious misfortune if any dominion were left unrepresented. With the session of parliament coming on pretty soon the attendance of Sir Robert Borden will not be without difficulty, but the importance of the war conference is so great as to suggest the certainty of the premier going across.



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