

DEFINITE CRISIS IN GREAT BATTLE

General Maurice Declares Situation to Be Decidedly Unpleasant.

FAILED UPON RIDGE

Enemy Now Threatens Important British Railway Lines in Flanders.

London, April 12.—A definite crisis has again been reached, Major-General F. B. Maurice, chief director of military operations at the war office, declared today.

"The situation is undoubtedly unpleasant," he added. "The enemy is within a short distance of Lille, which is an important railway centre for feeding our Messines-Wytschate front. He is also advancing in the direction of Hazebrouck, which is a very important railway centre on the other hand the Germans are advancing on a very flat and intricate country and have not yet gained any dominating position."

"I have little to add to the official statement from Field Marshal Haig at noon today. It gives a full account of the present situation," said General Maurice. "The enemy has attacked on a front from Hollebecke to La Bassee, and on that front has up to the present engaged at least seven divisions."

"No Success in North." "Beginning at the north his attacks on the Wytschate-Messines Ridge have not met with very appreciable success. There has been very heavy fighting there and the enemy has lost very heavily. He has failed to get on to the main crest of the ridge. He has got into the Village of Messines, but we are holding the exit from it."

"South of the main ridge there has been no material change in the situation since Wednesday beyond the evacuation of Armentieres, which I then indicated was probable. "Armentieres had been filled with gas by the Germans and we are now doing the same. Gas shells are continually falling and the place is virtually uninhabitable. The German official statement last night said that they had reached the outskirts of Armentieres, altho we already were out of it, so I take it the gas is keeping them at present."

"May Be Dangerous." "South of Armentieres the situation has developed. The enemy has forced a crossing of the Lawe and Lys Rivers, has seen an opportunity of developing an attack which may be dangerous to our position generally in a westward direction and has captured Meriville, which means an advance of about seven miles from the original starting point. "On the left flank of that advance between the River Lawe and La Bassee, he has made no progress. We still hold Ploegsteert Wood, which are the outposts of Bethune, and the enemy has made no appreciable progress in that direction. "An advance across the Lawe would mean an absolutely flat country devoid of any features of capital importance would not normally be a serious matter. In the first two days of the

Somme battle the enemy advanced some 15 miles, but there is a difference in the two battlefields. In the north we are holding a comparatively narrow strip of territory between our front and the coast and that strip contains a number of very important points to us in the shape of railway junctions and other communications. Therefore an advance of seven miles to the north is certainly much more serious than an advance of twice that distance in the south."

"Near Railways." "Therefore, summing up the situation today, I would say we again have reached a definite crisis. The situation is undoubtedly unpleasant. The enemy is within a short distance of Lille, which is an important railway centre for feeding our Messines-Wytschate front. He is also advancing in the direction of Hazebrouck, which is a very important railway centre and has got more than half way there. The enemy has formed a comparatively broad flank in the direction of Bethune and the coal area of northern France, so if he finds himself checked in his endeavor to go west, he has the opportunity of turning southwest."

"Those are the unpleasant factors in the situation. On the other side there is the fact that the enemy is advancing on very flat and intricate country and has not yet obtained a footing on any of the main ridges." "Taking the enemy's plans generally, there is quite a lot of evidence that his original intention was to advance to Bethune. Troops which took part in the first attack on the Armentieres were directed to reach the Aire Canal, which runs through Bethune and then to form a defensive flank, doubtless preparatory to another blow somewhere between the Marais and the very plain. Owing, however, to the very heavy resistance of the 5th division, that attack was checked, and the enemy, finding that he was making no progress directly westward and had to cross both the Lawe and Lys, turned his mind to exploiting his success in the direction of Bethune and Hazebrouck."

"As I conceive the enemy's plan, it was not a right one, but he kept his reserves at places where he could move them and employ them according to the development of the battle. I have said I did not think the enemy had one fixed objective, such as Amiens or Paris, and was prepared to exploit his chances as they presented themselves. I will go further, and say that the enemy, from the beginning of this battle, has never aimed at any town at all. His objective has been the destruction of the British army. Towns are mere stepping-stones on the way to that end, and having found the French coming to assist us in the south, and no progress possible except at very great cost, he has now turned his attention to developing a probably unexpected success in the north."

CANADIAN CASUALTIES

IN FANTRY. Killed in action—J. Henderson, Merrickville, Ont.; Lt. Thomas H. Reade, Revellston, B.C.; M. Barkley, Vars, Ont.; F. Loftus, 518 Queen street, Toronto; F. M. R. Jones, Lower Ontario, N.S.; J. N. Fould, 100 St. George street, Toronto; Gordon, Wallaceburg, Ont.; S. O. G. Holmes, Winnipeg; M. B. Murray, Scotland; C. P. E. Gibson, England. Died of wounds—J. John C. Sutherland, 218 St. James street, London, England; Lt. B. E. Fraser, Halifax; Stanley Hunter, Kingston, Ont.; Albert C. H. M. Smith, Ont.; Benjamin Swain, Canoe, N.S. Dined—Andrew M. Anderson, Atlantic, Iowa; Robert Whalley, New Bedford, Mass.; Co. Sgt. Major C. Walker, Scotland; Charles W. Walsh, England. Presumed to have died—Harry Daniel Barkwell, Henry Granch, England.

WAR SUMMARY THE DAY'S EVENTS REVIEWED

The Battle of Flanders has narrowed down into a contest before Belleu. This point is seven or eight miles west of Armentieres and in the Lys valley. The enemy, repulsed from a point near the Ploegsteert Wood to Zonnebeke, threw his principal forces into the open battle of Armentieres yesterday and pushed the British back to a line running roughly north and south on a front of four or five miles from Meriville to a point east of Belleu. The battle in this narrow sector has proceeded without intermission and with the weight of the German attack inclining more and more northward towards Belleu for the purpose of bursting the southern side of the Messines-Wytschate Ridge. The British seeking a good defensive position are at present making a stand behind the Belleu railway embankment. South of the line of Meriville-Belleu, the British front curves eastward to the old positions north of La Bassee. German attacks against this sector pressed the British back a trifling distance between the Lawe and Clarence rivers. The situation in this sector is at present under control. North of Armentieres and east of the Messines-Wytschate Ridge, the British lines remain pressed back a little in the region of Ploegsteert Wood and at Messines Village. The British still control virtually the whole of the high ground and the whole of the crest. So far the German advance in a narrow salient has been over that territory of little real value, but if advance may produce strategic results. Hence the order has gone forth from Field Marshal Haig that the British army has to make a stand and do no more retreating. The order is to hold out to the last man. The field marshal's message, however, carries the encouraging news that a strong French army is rapidly approaching to support them and also that the gallant resistance of the British army since the offensive began, over three weeks ago, has compelled the enemy to throw into the fighting 110 divisions, or about 1,500,000 men. At least 10 of these divisions have already been used twice and some even thrice. The British order to retreat no more puts an end to any German attempt to induce a retirement by sending men disguised as British staff officers to order them to withdraw to positions in the rear. The British army will now exactly what is expected and will fight accordingly. The Germans are striving desperately to win at all costs and are not sparing their troops nor shrinking from any slaughter. Their constant



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YORK COUNTY AND SUBURBS

FOOD BOARD WILL HAVE NO PUBLICITY. Secretary Writes Earl Court Citizens Information Given Must Be Confidential.

That the Dominion Government re-instate W. F. O'Connor in his former position as post of living commissioner, with full powers of action, was the resolution unanimously adopted at the regular meeting of the Earl Court Citizens' committee, held at headquarters, Royal George Chambers, corner of St. Clair avenue and Dufferin street, last evening.

"The letter is a most pertinent one," said the chairman, "and we will insist on copies to questions of public interest. The matter we referred to, which brought forth Mr. Todd's reply, was one relating to the working of the recent regulations regarding the closing of night inns in this city. The chairman said he would be a great hardship to the workers," said Mr. Ellis, who declared that he would be a great hardship to the workers.

JAIL FARM MOTOR SERVES GOOD PURPOSE

According to Major Morrison, superintendent at the jail farm, a motor car which the city recently purchased for the purpose of conveying prisoners to the speedy capture of Harry Barlow, who made a dash for liberty yesterday morning, carrying with him a wicked "billy" loaded with lead as a weapon.

STRIDES IN SANITATION.

Col. D. George Namath Tells of Experience at Front. In the Methodist Deacons' Home, St. Clair avenue and Avenue road, last night, Col. Dr. George Namath, director of laboratories, health department, gave an interesting and instructive address on the conditions obtaining at the front during his term of service there, and referred to the deaths from typhoid numbered 800, while the casualties were 7000.

WESTON BOWLERS WIN.

The final euchre game of a series played between the West Toronto Lawn Bowling Club and the Waverley Club, in the Waverley clubrooms last night, resulted in another win for the W.T.L.B. Club. Mr. Jackson, who was the most successful player of the evening, was awarded a fountain pen as first prize.

BEAUTIFYING GROUNDS.

The Weston Public Library Board is receiving the co-operation of the Horticultural Society in the beautifying of the library grounds. Shrubs, flowers and vines are being planted about the lawn.

YORK COUNTY FARMERS ARE BUSY AT SEEDING

Three-fourths of the farmers in York County, were yesterday busily engaged in seeding, the ground being in splendid shape and excellent progress was made. Around Agincourt, Markham Village, Stouffville, King City, Woodbridge (where seeding has been in progress for a week) and all up thru the Townships of Whitchurch, Georgina, and Gwillimbury they are busy on the land. The bulk of the acres sown this year will be to spring wheat, of the Marquis variety, and oats that last year were in barley. A lot of farmers will this spring sow peas that have not cultivated them for years on account of the pea bug, but last year's success has encouraged them to go in strongly for them.

AMERICANS REPULSE ANOTHER ENEMY RAID

With the American Army in France, April 12.—In the raid carried out by the Germans on Wednesday against the Americans northwest of Toul, the enemy intended to penetrate to the third line positions, according to information obtained from a prisoner. This is corroborated by material found on dead Germans. The enemy carried wire, dynamite, trenching tools and other implements for organizing the positions. The Americans knew in advance of the proposed attack and two prisoners captured a day or two previously from prisoners captured by the French on an adjacent sector.

THIRTY-FIVE FELL IN AERIAL COMBATS

London, April 12.—Thirty-five German airplanes, 21 of which were destroyed, were brought down by British aviators on Thursday. The official statement on aerial activities reports the dropping of bombs on military targets behind the battle front and on a railway station at Metz. The statement reads: "The mist which has prevailed the last few days continued until late Thursday afternoon, when there was great activity in the air along the whole front. Twenty-one hostile machines were destroyed and fourteen were driven down out of control. "Four of ours are missing. One of our machines reported missing yesterday have since returned. "During the night over eight tons of bombs were dropped on Bapaume, on villages south of the Somme and on military objectives at Oatend and Zebrugge. One of our machines did not return. "Today the Sablon's Railway Station at Metz was bombed successfully. Twenty-two heavy bombs were dropped, all of which burst on the railway and sidings. All of our machines returned."

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The attack was made by a special battalion of 500 shock troops, who had rehearsed the operation for two or three weeks behind the lines. As soon as the German barrage began, the American batteries, without waiting for a rocket signal, laid down a counter-barrage, with the result that less than 200 of the enemy succeeded in climbing out of their trenches and advancing toward the American line. The German officers sent the men right thru the barrage, but only two succeeded in reaching the front line. Both of these were taken prisoner, one of them dying a short time afterwards from wounds.

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