

[c. 1915-3]

# The Hell Hole YPRES

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## CANADIANS GALLANT VICTORY

# The Hell Hole *of* Ypres

BY AN EYE WITNESS

**I**N years to come when truth has a hearing, when the Historians will have written time and again the events of "the War of the Allies and Germans," when our great grandchildren and their children will have learned by heart the valiant deeds of their ancestors, there will be written in clear blue above them all, the names of the soldiers, the heroes, the gallant men who fought and died at Ypres.

**C**The boys from the Land of the Maple, most of them only amateur soldiers, consisting of lawyers, college professors and business men, who before the War, were untrained, showed many striking deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice. They made their brilliant charge with dogged persistence in the face of overwhelming odds, game to the core, never faltering, and when it was over, there remained only 92 men of the Company of the 14th, to tell the story of the battle at the cross-road at Kersselaere. Words fail, and pen pictures are impossible to describe the horrors on that afternoon of April 22nd, when our boys not fighting against men alone, but against an inhuman and heretofore unknown method in civilized warfare—poisonous gases—carried the Flag to Glory and Victory.

# The Canadians at Ypres

(From the Canadian Record Officer)

ON April 22 the Canadian Division held a line of, roughly, 5,000 yards, extending in a north-westerly direction from the Ypres-Roulers Railway to the Ypres-Poelcapelle road, and connecting at its terminus with the French troops. The division consisted of three infantry brigades, in addition to the artillery brigades. Of the infantry brigades the First was in reserve, the Second was on the right, and the Third established contact with the Allies at the point indicated above.

The day was a peaceful one, warm and sunny, and except that the previous day had witnessed a further bombardment of the stricken town of Ypres, everything seemed quiet in front of the Canadian line. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon a plan, carefully prepared, was put into execution against our French allies on the left. Asphyxiating gas of great intensity was projected into their trenches, probably by means of force pumps and pipes laid out under the parapets. The fumes, aided by a favorable wind, floated backward, poisoning and disabling over an extended area those who fell under their effect.

The result was that the French were compelled to give ground for a considerable distance. The glory which the French Army has won in this war would make it impertinent to labor the compelling nature of the poisonous discharges under which the trenches were lost. The French did, as every one knew they would do, all that stout soldiers could do, and the Canadian Division, officers and men, look forward to many occasions in the future in which they will stand side by side with the brave armies of France.

The immediate consequences of this enforced withdrawal were, of course, extremely grave. The Third Brigade of the Canadian Division was without any left, or, in other words, its left was in the air. Rough diagrams may make the position clear.

It became imperatively necessary greatly to extend the Canadian lines to the left rear. It was not, of course, practicable to move the First Brigade from reserve at a moment's notice, and the line, extending from 5,000 to 9,000 yards, was naturally not the line that had been held by the Allies at 5 o'clock, and a gap still existed on its left.

It became necessary for Brig. Gen. Turner, commanding the Third Brigade, to throw back his left flank southward to protect his rear. In the course of the confusion which followed upon the readjustments of position, the enemy, who had advanced rapidly after his initial successes, took four British 4.7 guns in a small wood to the west of the village of St. Julien, two miles in the rear of the original French trenches.

The story of the second battle of Ypres is the story of how the Canadian Division, enormously outnumbered—for they had in front of them at least four divisions, supported by immensely heavy artillery—with a gap still existing though reduced, in their lines, and with dispositions made hurriedly under the stimulus of critical danger, fought through the day and through the night, and then through another day and night; fought under their officers until as happened to so many, those perished gloriously, and then fought from the impulsion of sheer valor because they came from fighting stock.

The enemy, of course, was aware—whether fully or not may perhaps be doubted—of the advantage his breach in the line had given him, and immediately began to push a formidable series of attacks upon the whole of the newly-formed Canadian salient. If it is possible to distinguish when the attack was everywhere so fierce, it developed with particular intensity at this moment upon the apex of the newly formed line, running in the direction of St. Julien.

It has already been stated that four British guns were taken in a wood comparatively early in the evening of the 22nd. In the course of that night, and under the heaviest machine-gun fire, this wood was assaulted by the Canadian Scottish, Sixteenth Battalion of the Third Brigade, and the Tenth Battalion of the Second Brigade, which was intercepted for this purpose on its way to a reserve trench. The battalions were respectively commanded by Lieut.-Col. Leckie and Lieut.-Col. Boyle, and after a most fierce struggle in the light of a misty moon they took the position at the point of the bayonet. At midnight the Second Battalion, under Colonel Watson, and the Toronto Regiment, Queen's Own, Third Battalion, under Lieut.-Col. Rennie, both of the First Brigade, brought up much-needed reinforcement, and though not actually engaged in the assault were in reserve.

All through the following days and nights these battalions shared the fortunes and misfortunes of the Third Brigade. An officer who took part in the attack describes how the men about him fell under the fire of the machine guns, which, in his phrase, played upon them "like a watering pot." He added quite simply, "I wrote my own life off." But the line never wavered. When one man fell another took his place, and with a final shout the survivors of the two battalions flung themselves into the wood. The German garrison was completely demoralized, and the impetuous advance of the Canadians did not cease until they reached the far side of the wood and intrenched themselves there in the position so dearly gained. They had, however, the disappointment of finding that the guns had been blown up by the enemy, and later on in the same night a most formidable concentration of artillery fire, sweeping the wood as a tropical storm sweeps the leaves from a forest, made it impossible for them to hold the position for which they had sacrificed so much.

The fighting continued without intermission all through the night, and, to those who observed the indications that the attack was being pushed with ever-growing strength, it hardly seemed possible that the Canadians, fighting in positions so difficult to defend and so little the subject of deliberate choice, could maintain their resistance for any long period. At 6 A. M. on Friday it became apparent that the left was becoming more and more involved, and a powerful German attempt to outflank it developed rapidly. The consequences, if it had been broken or outflanked, need not be insisted upon. They were not merely local.

It was therefore decided, formidable as the attempt undoubtedly was, to try and give relief by a counter-attack upon the first line of German trenches, now far, far advanced from those originally occupied by the French. This was carried out by the Ontario First and Fourth Battalions of the First Brigade, under Brig.-Gen. Mercer, acting in combination with a British brigade.

It is safe to say that the youngest private in the rank, as he set his teeth for the advance, knew the task in front of him, and the youngest subaltern knew all that rested upon its success. It did not seem that any human being could live in the shower of shot and shell which began to play upon the advancing troops. They suffered terrible casualties. For a short time every other man seemed to fall, but the attack was pressed ever closer and closer.

The Fourth Canadian Battalion at one moment came under a particularly withering fire. For a moment—not more—it wavered. Its most gallant commanding officer, Lieut.-Col. Burchill, carrying, after an old fashion, a light cane, coolly and cheerfully rallied his men and, at the very moment when his example had infected them, fell dead at the head of his battalion. With a hoarse cry of anger they sprang forward (for, indeed, they loved him), as if to avenge his death. The astonishing attack which followed—pushed home in the face of direct frontal fire made in broad daylight by battalions whose names should live for ever in the memories of soldiers—was carried to the first



line of German trenches. After a hand-to-hand struggle the last German who resisted was bayoneted, and the trench was won.

The measure of this success may be taken when it is pointed out that this trench represented in the German advance the apex in the breach which the enemy had made in the original line of the Allies, and that it was two and a half miles south of that line. This charge, made by men who looked death indifferently in the face (for no man who took part in it could think that he was likely to live), saved, and that was much, the Canadian left. But it did more. Up to the point where the assailants conquered, or died, it secured and maintained during the most critical moment of all the integrity of the allied line. For the trench was not only taken, it was held thereafter against all comers, and in the teeth of every conceivable projectile, until the night of Sunday, the 25th, when all that remained of the war-broken but victorious battalions was relieved by fresh troops.

It is necessary now to return to the fortunes of the Third Brigade, commanded by Brig.-Gen. Turner, which, as we have seen, at 5 o'clock on Thursday was holding the Canadian left, and after the first attack assumed the defense of the new Canadian salient, at the same time sparing all the men it could to form an extemporized line between the wood and St. Julien. This brigade also was at the first moment of the German offensive, made the object of an attack by the discharge of poisonous gas. The discharge was followed by two enemy assaults. Although the fumes were extremely poisonous, they were not, perhaps having regard to the wind, so disabling as on the French lines (which ran almost east and west), and the brigade, though affected by the fumes, stoutly beat back the two German assaults.

Encouraged by this success, it rose to the supreme effort required by the assault on the wood, which has already been described. At 4 o'clock on the morning of Friday, the 23rd, a fresh emission of gas was made both upon the Second Brigade, which held the line running northeast, and upon the Third Brigade, which, as has been fully explained, had continued the line up to the pivotal point, as defined above, and had then spread down in a southeasterly direction. It is, perhaps worth mentioning that two privates of the Forty-eighth Highlanders who found their way into the trenches commanded by Colonel Lipsett, Ninetieth Winnipeg Rifles, Eighth Battalion, perished in the fumes, and it was noticed that their faces became blue immediately after dissolution.

The Royal Highlanders of Montreal, Thirteenth Battalion, and the Forty-eighth Highlanders, Fifteenth Battalion, were more especially affected by the discharge. The Royal Highlanders, though considerably shaken, remained immovable upon their ground. The Forty-eighth Highlanders, which, no doubt, received a more poisonous discharge, was for the moment dismayed, and, indeed, their trench, according to the testimony of very hardened soldiers, became intolerable. The battalion retired from the trench, but for a very short distance, and for an equally short time. In a few moments they were again their own men. They advanced upon and occupied the trenches which they had momentarily abandoned.

In the course of the same night the Third Brigade, which had already displayed a resource, a gallantry, and a tenacity for which no eulogy could be excessive, was exposed (and with it the whole allied case) to a peril still more formidable.

It has been explained, and, indeed, the fundamental situation made the peril clear, that several German divisions were attempting to crush or drive back this devoted brigade, and in any event to use their enormous numerical superiority to sweep around and overwhelm its left wing. At some point in the line which cannot be precisely determined the last attempt partially

succeeded, and in the course of this critical struggle German troops in considerable though not in overwhelming numbers swung past the unsupported left of the brigade, and, slipping in between the wood and St. Julien, added to the torturing anxieties of the long-drawn struggle by the appearance, and indeed for the moment the reality, of isolation from the brigade base.

In the exertions made by the Third Brigade during this supreme crisis it is almost impossible to single out one battalion without injustice to others, but though the efforts of the Royal Highlanders of Montreal, Thirteenth Battalion, were only equal to those of the other battalions who did such heroic service, it so happened by chance that the fate of some of its officers attracted special attention.

Major Norsworth, already almost disabled by a bullet wound, was bayoneted and killed while he was rallying his men with easy cheerfulness. The case of Captain McCuaig, of the same battalion, was not less glorious, although his death can claim no witness. This most gallant officer was seriously wounded, in a hurriedly constructed trench, at a moment when it would have been possible to remove him to safety. He absolutely refused to move and continued in the discharge of his duty.

But the situation grew constantly worse, and peremptory orders were received for an immediate withdrawal. Those who were compelled to obey them were most insistent to carry with them, at whatever risk to their own mobility and safety, an officer to whom they were devotedly attached. But he, knowing, it may be, better than they, the exertions which still lay in front of them, and unwilling to inflict upon them the disabilities of a maimed man, very resolutely refused, and asked of them one thing only, that there should be given to him, as he lay alone in the trench, two loaded Colt revolvers to add to his own, which lay in his right hand as he made his last request. And so, with three revolvers ready to his hand for use, a very brave officer waited to sell his life, wounded and racked with pain, in an abandoned trench.

On Friday afternoon the left of the Canadian line was strengthened by important reinforcements of British troops amounting to seven battalions. From this time forward the Canadians also continued to receive further assistance on the left from a series of French counter-attacks pushed in a north-easterly direction from the canal bank.

But the artillery fire of the enemy continually grew in intensity, and it became more and more evident that the Canadian salient could no longer be maintained against the overwhelming superiority of numbers by which it was assailed. Slowly, stubbornly, and contesting every yard, the defenders gave ground until the salient gradually receded from the apex, near the point where it had originally aligned with the French, and fell back upon St. Julien.

Soon it became evident that even St. Julien, exposed to fire from right and left, was no longer tenable in the face of overwhelming numerical superiority. The Third Brigade was therefore ordered to retreat further south, selling every yard of ground as dearly as it had done since 5 o'clock on Thursday. But it was found impossible, without hazarding far larger forces, to disentangle the detachment of the Royal Highlanders of Montreal, Thirteenth Battalion, and of the Royal Montreal Regiment, Fourteenth Battalion. The brigade was ordered, and not a moment too soon, to move back. It left these units with hearts as heavy as those with which his comrades had said farewell to Captain McCuaig. The German tide rolled, indeed, over the deserted village, but for several hours after the enemy had become master of the village the sullen and persistent rifle fire which survived showed that they were not yet master of the Canadian rearguard. If they died, they died worthily of Canada.

The enforced retirement of the Third Brigade (and to have stayed longer would have been madness) reproduced for the Second Brigade, commanded

by Brig.-Gen. Curry, in a singularly exact fashion, the position of the Third Brigade itself at the moment of the withdrawal of the French. The Second Brigade, it must be remembered, had retained the whole line of trenches, roughly 2,500 yards, which it was holding at 5 o'clock on Thursday afternoon, supported by the incomparable exertions of the Third Brigade, and by the highly hazardous deployment in which necessity had involved that brigade. The Second Brigade had maintained its lines.

It now devolved upon General Curry, commanding this brigade, to reproduce the tactical manoeuvres with which, earlier in the fight, the Third Brigade had adapted itself to the flank movement of overwhelming numerical superiority. He flung his left flank around south, and his record is, that in the very crisis of this immense struggle he held his line of trenches from Thursday at 5 o'clock till Sunday afternoon. And on Sunday afternoon he had not abandoned his trenches. There were none left. They had been obliterated by artillery. He withdrew his undefeated troops from the fragments of his field fortifications, and the hearts of his men were as completely unbroken as the parapets of his trenches were completely broken. In such a brigade it is invidious to single out any battalion for special praise, but it is, perhaps, necessary to the story to point out that Lieut.-Col. Lipsett, commanding the Ninetieth Winnipeg Rifles, Eighth Battalion of the Second Brigade, held the extreme left of the brigade position at the most critical moment.

The battalion was expelled from the trenches early on Friday morning by an emission of poisonous gas, but, recovering in three-quarters of an hour, it counter-attacked, retook the trenches it had abandoned, and bayoneted the enemy. And after the Third Brigade had been forced to retire Lieut.-Col. Lipsett held his position, though his left was in the air, until two British regiments filled up the gap on Saturday night.

The individual fortunes of these two brigades have brought us to the events of Sunday afternoon, but it is necessary, to make the story complete, to recur for a moment to the events of the morning. After a very formidable attack the enemy succeeded in capturing the village of St. Julien, which has so often been referred to in describing the fortunes of the Canadian left. This success opened up a new and formidable line of advance, but by this time further reinforcements had arrived. Here, again, it became evident that the tactical necessities of the situation dictated an offensive movement as the surest method of arresting further progress.

General Alderson, who was in command of the reinforcements, accordingly directed that an advance should be made by a British brigade which had been brought up in support. The attack was thrust through the Canadian left and centre, and as the troops making it swept on, many of them going to certain death, they paused an instant, and, with deep-throated cheers for Canada, gave the first indication to the division of the warm admiration which their exertions had excited in the British Army.

The advance was indeed costly, but it could not be gainsaid. The story is one of which the brigade may be proud, but it does not belong to the special account of the fortunes of the Canadian contingent. It is sufficient for our purpose to notice that the attack succeeded in its object, and the German advance along the line, momentarily threatened, was arrested.

We had reached, in describing the events of the afternoon, the points at which the trenches of the Second Brigade had been completely destroyed. This brigade, the Third Brigade, and the considerable reinforcements which this time filled the gap between the two brigades were gradually driven fighting every yard upon a line running, roughly, from Fortuin, south of St. Julien, in a northeasterly direction toward Passchendaele. Here the two brigades were

relieved by two British brigades, after exertions as glorious, as fruitful, and, alas! as costly as soldiers have ever been called upon to make.

Monday morning broke bright and clear and found the Canadians behind the firing line. This day, too, was to bring its anxieties. The attack was still pressed, and it became necessary to ask Brig. Gen. Curry whether he could once more call upon his shrunken brigade. "The men are tired," this indomitable soldier replied, "but they are ready and glad to go again to the trenches." And so once more, a hero leading heroes, the General marched back the men of the Second Brigade, reduced to a quarter of its original strength, to the very apex of the line as it existed at that moment.

This position he held all day Monday; on Tuesday he was still occupying the reserve trenches, and on Wednesday was relieved and retired to billets in the rear.

Such, in the most general outline, is the story of a great and glorious feat of arms. A story told so soon after the event, while rendering bare justice to units whose doings fell under the eyes of particular observers, must do less than justice to others who played their part—and all did—as gloriously as those whose special activities it is possible, even at this stage, to describe. But the friends of men who fought in other battalions may be content in the knowledge that they, too, shall learn, when time allows the complete correlation of diaries, the exact part which each unit played in these unforgettable days. It is rather accident than special distinction which had made it possible to select individual battalions for mention.

It would not be right to close even this account without a word of tribute to the auxiliary services. The signalers were always cool and resourceful. The telegraph and telephone wires being constantly cut, many belonging to this service rendered up their lives in the discharge of their duty, carrying out repairs with the most complete calmness in exposed positions. The dispatch carriers, as usual, behaved with greatest bravery. Theirs is a lonely life, and very often a lonely death. One cycle messenger lay upon the ground, badly wounded. He stopped a passing officer and delivered his message, together with some verbal instructions. These were coherently given, but he swooned almost before the words were out of his mouth.

The artillery never flagged in the sleepless struggle in which so much depended upon its exertions. Not a Canadian gun was lost in the long battle of retreat. And the nature of the position renders such a record very remarkable. One battery of four guns found itself in such a situation that it was compelled to turn two of its guns directly about and fire upon the enemy in positions almost diametrically opposite.

It is not possible in this account to attempt a description of the services rendered by the Canadian Engineers or the Medical Corps. Their members rivaled in coolness, endurance, and valor the Canadian infantry, whose comrades they were, and it is hoped in separate communications to do justice to both these brilliant services.

No attempt has been made in this description to explain the recent operations except in so far as they spring from, or are connected with, the fortunes of the Canadian Division. It is certain that the exertions of the troops who reinforced and later relieved the Canadians were not less glorious, but the long, drawn-out struggle is a lesson to the whole empire. "Arise, O Israel!" The empire is engaged in a struggle, without quarter and without compromise, against an enemy still superbly organized, still immensely powerful, still confident that its strength is the mate of its necessities. To arms, then, and still to arms! In Great Britain, in Canada, in Australia there is need, and there is need now, of a community organized alike in military and industrial cooperation.

That our countrymen in Canada, even while their hearts are still bleeding, will answer every call which is made upon them, we well know.

The graveyard of Canada in Flanders is large; it is very large. Those who lie there have left their mortal remains on alien soil. To Canada they have bequeathed their memories and their glory.

## Vapor Warfare Resumed

SIR JOHN FRENCH'S REPORT

*The British Press Bureau authorized the publication of the following report, dated May 3rd, by Field Marshal Sir John French on the employment by the Germans of poisonous gases as weapons of warfare.*

**T**HE gases employed have been ejected from pipes laid into the trenches, and also produced by the explosion of shells specially manufactured for the purpose. The German troops who attacked under cover of these gases were provided with specially designed respirators which were issued in sealed patent covers.

This all points to long and methodical preparation on a large scale. A week before the Germans first used this method they announced in their official communiqué that we were making use of asphyxiating gases. At the time there appeared to be no reason for this astounding falsehood, but now, of course, it is obvious that it was part of the scheme. It is a further proof of the deliberate nature of the introduction by the Germans of a new and illegal weapon, and shows that they recognized its illegality, and were anxious to forestall neutral and possibly domestic criticism.

Since the enemy has made use of this method of covering his advance with a cloud of poisoned air, he has repeated it both in offense and defense whenever the wind has been favorable. The effect of this poison is not merely disabling or even painlessly fatal as suggested in the German press. Those of its victims who do not succumb on the field and who can be brought into hospital suffer acutely, and in a large proportion of cases die a painful and lingering death. Those who survive are in little better case, as the injury to their lungs appears to be of a permanent character, and reduces them to a condition which points to their being invalids for life.

These facts must be well known to the German scientists who devised this new weapon and to the military authorities who have sanctioned its use. I am of opinion that the enemy has definitely decided to use these gases as a normal procedure, and that protests will be useless.

### THE "EYEWITNESS" STORY

The following descriptive account, communicated by the British Eyewitness present with General Headquarters, continues and supplements the narrative published on April 29th of the movements of the British force and the French armies in immediate touch with it:

April 30th, 1915.

As will have been gathered from the last summary, assaults accompanied with gas were not made on every position of the front held by the British to the north of Ypres at the same time. At one point it was not until the early morning of Saturday, April 24th, that the Germans brought this method into operation against a section of our line not far from our left flank.

Late on Thursday afternoon the men here saw portions of the French retiring some distance to the west, and observed the cloud of vapor rolling

along the ground southward behind them. Our position was then shelled with high explosives until 8 P.M. On Friday also it was bombarded for some hours, the Germans firing poison shells for one hour. Their infantry, who were intrenched about 120 yards away, evidently expected some result from their use of the latter, for they put their heads above the parapets, as if to see what the effect had been on our men, and at intervals opened rapid rifle fire. The wind, however, was strong and dissipated the fumes quickly, our troops did not suffer seriously from their noxious effect, and the enemy did not attempt any advance.

On Saturday morning, just about dawn, an airship appeared in the sky to the east of our line at this point, and dropped four red stars, which floated downward slowly for some distance before they died out. When our men, whose eyes had not unnaturally been fixed on this display of pyrotechnics again turned to their front it was to find the German trenches rendered invisible by a wall of greenish-yellow vapor, similar to that observed on the Thursday afternoon, which was bearing down on them on the breeze. Through this the Germans started shooting. During Saturday they employed stupefying gas on several occasions in this quarter, but did not press on very quickly. One reason for this, given by a German prisoner, is that many of the enemy's infantry were so affected by the fumes that they could not advance.

To continue the narrative from the night of Sunday, April 25th. At 12.30 A.M., in face of repeated attacks, our infantry fell back from a part of the Grafenstafel Ridge, northwest of Zonnebeke, and the line then ran for some distance along the south bank of the little Haanebeek stream. The situation along the Yperlee Canal remained practically unchanged.

When the morning of the 26th dawned the Germans, who had been seen massing in St. Julien, and to the east of the village on the previous evening, made several assaults, which grew more and more fierce as the hours passed, but reinforcements were sent up and the position was secured. Further east, however, our line was pierced near Broodseinde, and a small body of the enemy established themselves in a portion of our trenches. In the afternoon a strong combined counter-attack was delivered by the French and British along the whole front from Steenstraete to the east of St. Julien, accompanied by a violent bombardment. This moment, so far as can be judged at present, marked the turning point of the battle, for, although it effected no great change in the situation, it caused a definite check to the enemy's offensive, relieved the pressure, and gained a certain amount of ground.

During this counter-attack the guns concentrated by both sides of this comparatively narrow front poured in a great volume of fire. From the right came the roar of the British batteries, from the left the rolling thunder of the soixante-quinze, and every now and then above the turmoil rose a dull boom as a huge howitzer shell burst in the vicinity of Ypres. On the right our infantry stormed the German trenches close to St. Julien, and in the evening gained the southern outskirts of the village. In the centre they captured the trenches a little to the south of the Bois des Cuisinirs, west of St. Julien, and still further west more trenches were taken. This represented an advance of some 600 or 700 yards, but the gain in ground could not at all points be maintained. Opposite St. Julien we fell back from the village to a position just south of the place, and in front of the Bois des Cuisinirs and on the left of the line a similar retirement took place, the enemy making extensive use of his gas cylinders and of machine guns placed in farms at or other points of vantage. None the less, the situation at nightfall was more satisfactory than it had been. We were holding our own well all along the line and had made progress at some points. On the right the enemy's attacks on the front of the Grafenstafel Ridge had all been repulsed.

In the meantime the French had achieved some success, having retaken Lizerne and also the trenches round Het Sast, captured some 250 prisoners, and made progress all along the west bank of the canal. Heavy as our losses were during the day, there is little doubt that the enemy suffered terribly. Both sides were attacking at different points, the fighting was conducted very largely in the open, and the close formations of the Germans on several occasions presented excellent targets to our artillery, which did not fail to seize its opportunities.

Nothing in particular occurred during the night.

The morning of the 27th found our troops occupying the following positions: North of Zonnebeke the right of the line still held the eastern end of the Grafenstafel Ridge, but from here it bent southwestward behind the Haanebeek stream, which it followed to a point about half a mile east of St. Julien. Thence it curved back again to the Vamheule Farm, on the Ypres-Poelcappelle road, running from here in a slight southerly curve to a point a little west of the Ypres-Langemarck road, where it joined the French. In the last mentioned quarter of the field it followed generally the line of a low ridge running from west to east. On the French front the Germans had been cleared from the west bank of the canal, except at one point, Steenstraate, where they continued to hold the bridgehead.

About 1 P.M. a counter-attack was made by us all along the line between the canal and the Ypres-Poelcappelle road, and for about an hour we continued to make progress. Then the right and centre were checked. A little later the left was also held up, and the situation remained very much as it had been on the previous day. The Germans were doubtless much encouraged by their initial success, and their previous boldness in attack was now matched by the stubborn manner in which they clung on to their positions. In the evening the French stormed some trenches east of the canal, but were again checked by the enemy's gas cylinders.

The night passed quietly, and was spent by us in reorganizing and consolidating our positions. The enemy did not interfere. This is not surprising, in view of the fact that by Tuesday evening they had been fighting for over five days. Their state of exhaustion is confirmed by the statements of the prisoners captured by the French, who also reported that the German losses had been very heavy.

On Wednesday, the 28th, there was a complete lull on this sector of our line, and the shelling was less severe. Some fighting, however, occurred along the canal, the French taking over 100 prisoners.

Nothing of any importance has occurred on other parts of the front. On the 27th, at the Railway Triangle, opposite Guinchy, the south side of the embankment held by the Germans was blown up by our miners. On the 28th a hostile aeroplane was forced to descend by our anti-aircraft guns. On coming down in rear of the German lines, it was at once fired upon and destroyed by our field artillery. Another hostile machine was brought down by rifle fire near Zonnebeke.

Splendid work has been done during the past few days by our airmen, who have kept all the area behind the hostile lines under close observation. On the 26th they bombed the stations of Staden, Thielt, Courtrai, Roubaix, and other places, and located an armored train near Langemarck, which was subsequently shelled and forced to retire. There have been several successful conflicts in the air, on one occasion a pilot in a single seater chasing a German machine to Roulers, and forcing it to land.

The raid on Courtrai unfortunately cost the nation a very gallant life, but it will live as one of the most heroic episodes of the war. The airman started on the enterprise alone in a biplane. On arrival at Courtrai he glided down to a



height of 300 feet and dropped a large bomb on the railway junction. While he did this he was the target of hundreds of rifles, of machine guns, and of anti-aircraft armament, and was severely wounded in the thigh. Though he might have saved his life by at once coming down in the enemy's lines, he decided to save his machine at all costs, and made for the British lines. Descending to a height of only 100 feet in order to increase his speed, he continued to fly and was again wounded, this time mortally. He still flew on, however, and without coming down at the nearest of our aerodromes went all the way back to his own base, where he executed a perfect landing and made his report. He died in hospital not long afterward.

The outstanding feature of the action of the past week has been the steadiness of our troops on the extreme left; but of the deeds of individual gallantry and devotion which have been performed it would be impossible to narrate one-hundredth part. At one place in this quarter a machine gun was stationed in the angle of a trench when the German rush took place. One man after another of the detachment was shot, but the gun still continued in action, though five bodies lay around it. When the sixth man took the place of his fallen comrades, of whom one was his brother, the Germans were still pressing on. He waited until they were only a few yards away, and then poured a stream of bullets on to the advancing ranks, which broke and fell back, leaving rows of dead. He was then wounded himself.

Under the hot fire to which our batteries were subjected in the early part of the engagement telephone wires were repeatedly cut. The wire connecting one battery with its observing officer was severed on nine separate occasions, and on each occasion repaired by a Sergeant, who did the work out in the open under a perfect hail of shells.

On May 5th the following account of the British Official Eyewitness, continuing the report of April 30th, was published:

About 5 P.M. a dense cloud of suffocating vapors was launched from their trenches along the whole front held by the French right and by our left from the Ypres-Langemarck road to a considerable distance east of St. Julien. The fumes did not carry much beyond our front trenches. But these were to a great extent rendered untenable, and a retirement from them was ordered.

No sooner had this started than the enemy opened a violent bombardment with asphyxiating shells and shrapnel on our trenches and on our infantry as they were withdrawing. Meanwhile our guns had not been idle. From a distance, perhaps owing to some peculiarity of the light, the gas on this occasion looked like a great reddish cloud, and the moment it was seen our batteries poured a concentrating fire on the German trenches.

Curious situations then arose between us and the enemy. The poison belt, the upper part shredding into thick wreaths of vapor as it was shaken by the wind, and the lower and denser part sinking into all inequalities of the ground, rolled slowly down the trenches. Shells would rend it for a moment, but it only settled down again as thickly as before.

Nevertheless, the German infantry faced it, and they faced a hail of shrapnel as well. In some cases where the gas had not reached our lines our troops held firm and shot through the cloud at the advancing Germans. In other cases the men holding the front line managed to move to the flank, where they were more or less beyond the affected area. Here they waited until the enemy came on and then bayoneted them when they reached our trenches.

On the extreme left our supports waited until the wall of vapor reached our trenches, when they charged through it and met the advancing Germans with the bayonet as they swarmed over the parapets.

South of St. Julien the denseness of the vapor compelled us to evacuate trenches, but reinforcements arrived who charged the enemy before they could



establish themselves in position. In every case the assaults failed completely. Large numbers were mown down by our artillery. Men were seen falling and others scattering and running back to their own lines. Many who reached the gas cloud could not make their way through it, and in all probability a great number of the wounded perished from the fumes.

It is to that extent, from a military standpoint, a sign of weakness. Another sign of weakness is the adoption of illegal methods of fighting, such as spreading poisonous gas. It is a confession by the Germans that they have lost their former great superiority in artillery and are, in any cost, seeking another technical advantage over their enemy as a substitute.

Nevertheless, this spirit, this determination on the part of our enemies to stick at nothing must not be underestimated. Though it may not pay the Germans in the long run, it renders it all the more obvious that they are a foe that can be overcome only by the force of overwhelming numbers of men and guns.

Further to the east a similar attack was made about 7 P.M. which seems to have been attended with even less success, and the assaulting infantry was at once beaten back by our artillery fire.

It was not long before all our trenches were reoccupied and the whole line re-established in its original position. The attack on the French met with the same result.

The Eyewitness then relates incidents showing the steadiness of the Indian troops, who, he says, "advanced under a murderous fire, their war cry swelling louder and louder above the din."

Prisoners captured in the recent fighting, the narrative continues, stated that one German corps lost 80 per cent. of its men in the first week; that the losses from our artillery fire, even during days when no attacks were taking place, had been very heavy and that many of their own men had suffered from the effects of the gas.

The writer concludes as follows:—

In regard to the recent fighting on our left, the German offensive, effected in the first instance by surprise, resulted in a considerable gain of ground for the enemy. Between all the earlier German efforts, the only difference was that on this latest occasion the attempt was carried out with the aid of poisonous gases.

There is no reason why we should not expect similar tactics in the future. They do not mean that the Allies have lost the initiative in the Western theatre, nor that they are likely to lose it. They do mean, however, and the fact has been repeatedly pointed out, that the enemy's defensive is an active one, that his confidence is still unshaken and that he still is able to strike in some strength where he sees the chance or where mere local advantage can be secured.

The true idea of the meaning of the operations of the Allies can be gained only by bearing in mind that it is their primary object to bring about the exhaustion of the enemy's resources in men.

In the form now assumed by this struggle—a war of attrition—the Germans are bound ultimately to lose, and it is the consciousness of this fact that inspires their present policy. This is to achieve as early as possible some success of sufficient magnitude to influence the neutrals, to discourage the Allies, to make them weary of the struggle and to induce the belief among the people ignorant of war that nothing has been gained by the past efforts of the Allies because the Germans have not yet been driven back. It is being undertaken with a political rather than a strategical object.

The official British Eyewitness, under date of May 11, 1915, gives an account of the German attempts on the previous Saturday and Sunday to break the

British lines around Ypres, and of the beginning of the Anglo-French offensive north of Arras. He said:

The calm that prevailed Thursday and Friday proved to be only the lull before the storm. Early Saturday morning it became apparent that the Germans were preparing an attack in strength against our line running east and northeast from Ypres, for they were concentrating under cover of a violent artillery fire, and at about 10 o'clock the battle began in earnest.

At that hour the Germans attacked our line from the Ypres-Poelcappelle road to within a short distance of the Menin highroad, it being evidently their intention while engaging us closely on the whole of this sector to break our front in the vicinity of the Ypres-Roulers Railway, to the north and to the south of which their strongest and most determined assaults were delivered.

Under this pressure our front was penetrated at some points around Frezenberg, and at 4.30 o'clock in the afternoon we made a counter-attack between the Zonnebeke road and the railway in order to recover the lost ground. Our offensive was conducted most gallantly, but was checked before long by the fire of machine guns.

Meanwhile, the enemy launched another attack through the woods south of the Menin road, and at the same time threatened our left to the north of Ypres with fresh masses. Most desperate fighting ensued, the German infantry coming on again and again and gradually forcing our troops back, though only for a short distance, in spite of repeated counter-attacks.

During the night the fighting continued to rage with ever-increasing fury. It is impossible to say at exactly what hour our line was broken at different points, but it is certain that at one time the enemy's infantry poured through along the Poelcappelle road, and even got as far as Wieltje at 9 P.M.

There was also a considerable gap in our front about Frezenberg, where hostile detachments had penetrated. At both points counter-attacks were organized without delay. To the east of the salient the Germans first were driven back to Frezenberg, but there they made a firm stand, and under pressure of fresh reinforcements we fell back again toward Verlorenhoek.

Northeast of the salient a counter-attack carried out by us about 1 A.M. was more successful. Our troops swept the enemy out of Wieltje at the bayonet's point, leaving the village strewn with German dead and, pushing on, regained most of the ground to the north of that point. And so the fight surged to and fro throughout the night. All around the scene of the conflict the sky was lit up by the flashes of the guns and the light of blazing villages and farms, while against this background of smoke and flame, looking out in the murky light over the crumbling ruins of the old town, rose the battered wreck of the cathedral town and the spires of Cloth Hall.

When Sunday dawned there came a short respite, and the firing for a time died down. The comparative lull enabled us to reorganize and consolidate our position on the new line we had taken up and to obtain some rest after the fatigue and strain of the night. It did not last long, however, and in the afternoon the climax of the battle was reached, for, under the cover of intense artillery fire, the Germans launched no less than five separate assaults against the east of the salient.

To the north and northeast their attacks were not at first pressed so hard as on the south of the Menin road, where the fighting was especially fierce. In the latter direction masses of infantry were hurled on with absolute desperation and were beaten off with corresponding slaughter.

At one point, north of the town, 500 of the enemy advanced from the wood, and it is affirmed by those present that not a single man of them escaped.

On the eastern face, at 6.30 P.M., an endeavor was made to storm the grounds of the Château Hooge, a little north of the Menin road, but the force

attempting it broke and fell back under the hail of shrapnel poured upon them by our guns. It was on this side, where they had to face the concentrated fire of guns, Maxims and rifles again and again in their efforts to break their way through, that the Germans incurred their heaviest losses, and the ground was literally heaped with dead.

They evidently, for the time being at least, were unable to renew their efforts, and as night came on the fury of their offensive gradually slackened, the hours of darkness passing in quietness.

During the day our troops saw some of the enemy busily employed in stripping the British dead in our abandoned trenches, east of the Hooge Château, and several Germans afterward were noticed dressed in khaki.

So far as the Ypres region is concerned, this for us was a most successful day. Our line, which on the northeast of the salient had, after the previous day's fighting, been reconstituted a short distance behind the original front, remained intact. Our losses were comparatively slight, and, owing to the targets presented by the enemy, the action resolved itself on our part into pure killing.

The reason for this very determined effort to crush our left on the part of the Germans is not far to seek. It is probable that for some days previously they had been in possession of information which led them to suppose that we intended to apply pressure on the right of our line, and that their great attack upon Ypres on the 7th, 8th and 9th was undertaken with a view to diverting us from our purpose.

In this the Germans were true to their principles, for they rightly hold that the best manner of meeting an expected hostile offensive is to forestall it by attacking in some other quarter. In this instance their leaders acted with the utmost determination and energy and their soldiers fought with the greatest courage.

The failure of their effort was due to the splendid endurance of our troops, who held the line around the salient under a fire which again and again blotted out whole lengths of defenses and killed the defenders by scores. Time after time along those parts of the front selected for assault were parapets destroyed, and time after time did the thinning band of survivors build them up again and await the next onset as steadily as before.

Here, in May, in defense of the same historic town, have our incomparable infantry repeated the great deeds their comrades performed half a year ago and beaten back most desperate onslaughts of hostile hordes backed by terrific artillery support.

The services rendered by our troops in this quarter cannot at present be estimated, for their full significance will only be realized in the light of future events. But so far their devotion has indirectly contributed in no small measure to the striking success already achieved by our allies.

Further south, in the meantime, on Sunday another struggle had been in progress on that portion of the front covered by the right of our line and the left of the French, for when the firing around Ypres was temporarily subsiding during the early hours of the morning another and even more tremendous cannonade was suddenly started by the artillery of the Allies some twenty miles to the south.

The morning was calm, bright, and clear, and opposite our right, as the sun rose, the scene in front of our line was the most peaceful imaginable. Away to the right were Guinchy, with its brick-fields and the ruins of Givenchy. To the north of them lay low ground, where, hidden by trees and hedgerows, ran the opposing lines that were about to become the scene of the conflict, and beyond, in the distance, rose the long ridge of Aubers, the villages crowning it standing out clear cut against the sky.

At 5 o'clock the bombardment began, slowly at the first and then growing in volume until the whole air quivered with the rush of the larger shells and the earth shook with the concussion of guns. In a few minutes the whole distant landscape disappeared in smoke and dust, which hung for a while in the still air and then drifted slowly across the line of battle.

Shortly before 6 o'clock our infantry advanced along our front between the Bois Grenier and Festubert. On the left, north of Fromelles, we stormed the German first line trenches. Hand-to-hand fighting went on for some time with bayonet, rifle and hand grenade, but we continued to hold on to this position throughout the day and caused the enemy very heavy loss, for not only were many Germans killed in the bombardment, but their repeated efforts to drive us from the captured positions proved most costly.

On the right, to the north of Festubert, our advance met with considerable opposition and was not pressed.

Meanwhile, the French, after a prolonged bombardment, had taken the German positions north of Arras on a front of nearly five miles, and had pushed forward from two to three miles, capturing 2,000 prisoners and six guns. This remarkable success was gained by our allies in the course of a few hours.

As may be supposed from the nature of the fighting which has been in progress, our losses have been heavy. On other parts of the front our action was confined to that of the artillery, but this proved most effective later, all the communications of the enemy being subjected to so heavy and accurate a fire that in some quarters all movement by daylight within range of our lines was rendered impracticable. At one place opposite our centre a convoy of ammunition was hit by a shell, which knocked out six motor lorries and caused two to blow up. Opposite our centre we fired two mines, which did considerable admage to the enemy's defenses.

During the day also our aeroplanes attacked several places of importance. One of our airmen, who was sent to bomb the canal bridge near Don, was wounded on his way there, but continued and fulfilled his mission. Near Wytshaete, one of our aviators pursued a German aeroplane and fired a whole belt from his machine gun at it. The Taube suddenly swerved, righted itself for a second, and then descended from a height of several thousand feet straight to the ground.

On the other hand, a British machine unfortunately was brought down over Lille by the enemy's anti-aircraft guns, but it is hoped that the aviator escaped.

In regard to the German allegation, that the British used gas in their attacks on Hill 60, the Eyewitness says:

No asphyxiating gases have been employed by us at any time, nor have they yet been brought into play by us.

## War with Poisonous Gases

### The Gap at Ypres Made By German Chlorine Vapor Bombs

Reports by the Official "Eyewitness" and Dr. J. S. Haldane, F.R.S.

**D**R. John Scott Haldane, F.R.S., who has conducted the investigation for the British War Office, is a brother of Lord Haldane. He is a graduate in medicine of Edinburgh University and an M.A. of Oxford and an LL.D. of Birmingham. For many years he has been engaged in scientific investigation, and has contributed largely to the elucidation of the causes of

death in colliery and mine explosions. He is the author of a work on the physiology of respiration and air analysis.

Professor Baker, F.R.S., who is carrying out chemical investigations into the nature of the gases, is Professor of Chemistry in the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London. He was a Scholar in Natural Science at Balliol. He has conducted important experiments into the nature of gases.

Sir Wilmot Herringham, M.D. Oxon., is a physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital and Vice-Chancellor of the London University.

Lieutenant McNee, M.B., M. Ch. Glasgow, a Carnegie Research Fellow, is assistant to the Professor of Pathology in Glasgow University and has conducted many investigations of an important character in pathology and chemical pathology.

General Headquarters,  
British Expeditionary Force,  
April 27th, 1915.

To Earl Kitchener, Secretary of State for War.

My Lord: I have the honor to report that, as requested by you yesterday morning, I proceeded to France to investigate the nature and effects of the asphyxiating gas employed in the recent fighting by the German troops. After reporting myself at General Headquarters I proceeded to Bailleul with Sir Wilmot Herringham, Consulting Physician to the British Force, and examined with him several men from Canadian battalions who were at the No. 2 Casualty Clearing Station, suffering from the effects of the gas.

These men were lying struggling for breath and blue in the face. On examining the blood with the spectroscope and by other means, I ascertained that the blueness was not due to the presence of any abnormal pigment. There was nothing to account for the blueness (cyanosis) and struggle for air but the one fact that they were suffering from acute bronchitis, such as is caused by inhalation of an irritant gas. Their statements were that when in the trenches they had been overwhelmed by an irritant gas produced in front of the German trenches and carried toward them by a gentle breeze.

One of them died shortly after our arrival. A post-mortem examination was conducted in our presence by Lieutenant McNee, a pathologist by profession, of Glasgow University. The examination showed that death was due to acute bronchitis and its secondary effects. There was no doubt that the bronchitis and accompanying slow asphyxiation were due to the irritant gas.

Lieutenant McNee had also examined yesterday the body of a Canadian Sergeant, who had died in the clearing station from the effects of the gas. In this case, also, very acute bronchitis and œdema of the lungs caused death by asphyxiation.

A deposition by Captain Bertram, Eighth Canadian Battalion, was carefully taken down by Lieutenant McNee. Captain Bertram was then in the clearing station, suffering from the effects of the gas and from a wound. From a support trench, about 600 yards from the German lines, he had observed the gas. He saw, first of all, a white smoke arising from the German trenches to a height of about three feet. Then in front of the white smoke appeared a greenish cloud, which drifted along the ground to our trenches, not rising more than about seven feet from the ground when it reached our first trenches. Men in these trenches were obliged to leave, and a number of them were killed by the effects of the gas. We made a counter-attack about fifteen minutes after the gas came over, and saw twenty-four men lying dead from the effects of the gas on a small stretch of road leading from the advanced trenches to the supports. He was himself much affected by the gas still present, and felt as if he could not breathe.

The symptoms and the other facts so far ascertained point to the use by the German troops of Chlorine or bromine for purposes of asphyxiation.

There are also facts pointing to the use in German shells of other irritant substances, though in some cases at least these agents are not of the same brutally barbarous character as the gas used in the attack on the Canadians. The effects are not those of any of the ordinary products of combustion of explosives. On this point the symptoms described left not the slightest doubt in my mind.

Professor H. B. Baker, F.R.S., who accompanied me, is making further inquiries from the chemical side.

I am, my Lord, your obedient servant,

J. S. HALDANE.

The following statement was issued by the British War Office on April 29th, 1915:

Thanks to the magnificent response already made to the appeal in the press for respirators for the troops, the War Office is in a position to announce that no further respirators need be made.

#### THE "EYEWITNESS" STORY

The following descriptive account was communicated by the British Official Eyewitness present with General Headquarters, supplementing his continuous narrative of the movements of the British force and the French armies in immediate touch with it:

April 27th, 1915.

Since the last summary there has been a sudden development in the situation on our front, and very heavy fighting has taken place to the north and northeast of Ypres, which can be said to have assumed the importance of a second battle for that town. With the aid of a method of warfare up to now never employed by nations sufficiently civilized to consider themselves bound by international agreements solemnly ratified by themselves, and favored by the atmospheric conditions, the Germans have put into effect an attack which they had evidently contemplated and prepared for some time.

Before the battle began our line in this quarter ran from the cross-roads at Broodseinde, east of Zonnebeke on the Ypres-Moorslede Road to the cross-roads half a mile north of St. Julien, on the Ypres-Poelcapelle Road, roughly following the crest of what is known as the Grafenstafel Ridge. The French prolonged the line west of the Ypres-Poelcapelle Road, whence their trenches ran around the north of Langemarck to Steenstraete on the Yperlee Canal. The area covered by the initial attack is that between the canal and the Ypres-Poelcapelle Road, though it was afterward extended to the west of the canal and to the east of the road.

An effort on the part of the Germans in this direction was not unexpected, since movements of troops and transport behind their front line had been detected for some days. Its peculiar and novel nature, however, was a surprise which was largely responsible for the measure of success achieved. Taking advantage of the fact that at this season of the year the wind not infrequently blows from the north, they secretly brought up apparatus for emitting asphyxiating vapor or gas, and distributed it along the section of their front line opposite that of our allies, west of Langemarck, which faced almost due north. Their plan was to make a sudden onslaught southwestward, which, if successful, might enable them to gain the crossings on the canal south of Bixschoote and place them well behind the British left in a position to threaten Ypres.

The attack was originally fixed for Tuesday, the 20th, but since all chances of success depended on the action of the asphyxiating vapor it was postponed, the weather being unfavorable. On Thursday, the 22nd, the wind blew steadily from the north, and that afternoon, all being ready, the Germans put their plan into execution. Since then events have moved so rapidly and the situation has moved so frequently that it is difficult to give a consecutive and clear story of what happened, but the following account represents as nearly as can be the general course of events. The details of the gas apparatus employed by them are given separately, as also those of the asphyxiating grenades, bombs, and shells of which they have been throwing hundreds.

At some time between 4 and 5 P.M. the Germans started operations by releasing gases with the result that a cloud of poisonous vapor rolled swiftly before the wind from their trenches toward those of the French west of Lange-marck, held by a portion of the French Colonial Division. Allowing sufficient time for the fumes to take full effect on the troops facing them, the Germans charged forward over the practically unresisting enemy in their immediate front, and, penetrating through the gap thus created, pressed on silently and swiftly to the south and west. By their sudden irruption they were able to overrun and surprise a large proportion of the French troops billeted behind the front line in this area and to bring some of the French guns as well as our own under a hot rifle fire at close range.

The first intimation that all was not well to the north was conveyed to our troops holding the left of the British line between 5 and 6 P.M. by the withdrawal of some of the French Colonials and the sight of the wall of vapor following them. Our flank being thus exposed the troops were ordered to retire on St. Julien, with their left parallel to, but to the west of the highroad. The splendid resistance of these troops, who saved the situation, has already been mentioned by the Commander in Chief.

Meanwhile, apparently waiting till their infantry had penetrated well behind the Allies' line, the Germans had opened a hot artillery fire upon the various tactical points to the north of Ypres, the bombardment being carried out with ordinary high-explosive shell and shrapnel of various calibres and also with projectiles containing asphyxiating gas. About this period our men in reserve near Ypres, seeing the shells bursting, had gathered in groups, discussing the situation and questioning some scattered bodies of Turcos who had appeared; suddenly a staff officer rode up shouting "Stand to your arms," and in a few minutes the troops had fallen in and were marching northward to the scene of the fight.

Nothing more impressive can be imagined than the sight of our men falling in quietly in perfect order on their alarm posts amid the scene of wild confusion caused by the panic-stricken refugees who swarmed along the roads.

In the meantime, to the north and northeast of the town, a confused fight was taking place, which gave proof not only of great gallantry and steadiness on the part of the troops referred to above, but of remarkable presence of mind on the part of their leaders. Behind the wall of vapor, which had swept across fields, through woods, and over hedgerows, came the German firing line, the men's mouths and noses, it is stated, protected by pads soaked in a solution of bicarbonate of soda. Closely following them again came the supports. These troops, hurrying forward with their formation somewhat broken up by the obstacles encountered in their path, looked like a huge mob bearing down upon the town. A battery of 4.7-inch guns a little beyond the left of our line was surprised and overwhelmed by them in a moment. Further to the rear and in a more easterly direction were several field batteries, and before they could come into action the Germans were within a few hundred yards. Not a gun, however, was lost.

One battery, taken in flank, swung around, fired on the enemy at point-blank range, and checked the rush. Another opened fire with the guns pointing in almost opposite directions, the enemy being on three sides of them. It was under the very heavy cannonade opened about this time by the Germans, and threatened by the advance of vastly superior numbers, that our infantry on our left steadily, and without any sign of confusion, slowly retired to St. Julien, fighting every step.

Help was not long in arriving, for some of our reserves near Ypres had stood to arms as soon as they were aware of the fact that the French line had been forced, and the officers on their own initiative, without waiting for orders, led them forward to meet the advancing enemy, who, by this time, were barely two miles from the town. These battalions attacked the Germans with the bayonet, and then ensued a *mêlée*, in which our men more than held their own, both sides losing very heavily.

One German battalion seems to have been especially severely handled, the Colonel being captured among several other prisoners. Other reinforcements were thrown in as they came up, and, when night fell, the fighting continued by moonlight, our troops driving back the enemy by repeated bayonet charges, in the course of which our heavy guns were recaptured.

By then the situation was somewhat restored in the area immediately north of Ypres. Further to the west, however, the enemy had forced their way over the canal, occupying Steenstraate and the crossing at Het Sast, about three-quarters of a mile south of the former place, and had established themselves at various points on the west bank. All night long the shelling continued, and about 1.30 A.M. two heavy attacks were made on our line in the neighborhood of Broodseinde, east of Zonnebeke. These were both repulsed. The bombardment of Ypres itself and its neighborhood had by now redoubled in intensity and a part of the town was in flames.

In the early morning of Friday, the 23rd, we delivered a strong counter-attack northward in co-operation with the French. Our advance progressed for some little distance, reaching the edge of the wood about half a mile west of St. Julien and penetrating it. Here our men got into the Germans with the bayonet, and the latter suffered heavily. The losses were also severe on our side, for the advance had to be carried out across the open. But in spite of this nothing could exceed the dash with which it was conducted. One man—and his case is typical of the spirit shown by the troops—who had had his rifle smashed by a bullet, continued to fight with an intrenching tool. Even many of the wounded made their way out of the fight with some article of German equipment as a memento.

About 11 A.M., not being able to progress further, our troops dug themselves in, the line then running from St. Julien practically due west for about a mile, whence it curved southwestward before turning north to the canal near Boesinghe. Broadly speaking, on the section of the front then occupied by us the result of the operations had been to remove to some extent the wedge which the Germans had driven into the allied line, and the immediate danger was over. During the afternoon our counter-attack made further progress south of Pilkem, thus straightening the line still more. Along the canal the fighting raged fiercely, our allies making some progress here and there. During the night, however, the Germans captured Lizerne, a village on the main road from Ypres to Steenstraate.

When the morning of the 24th came the situation remained much the same, but the enemy, who had thrown several bridges across the canal, continued to gain ground to the west. On our front the Germans, under cover of their gas, made a further attack between 3 and 4 A.M. to the east of St. Julien and forced



back a portion of our line. Nothing else in particular occurred until about mid-day, when large bodies of the enemy were seen advancing down the Ypres-Poelcapelle road toward St. Julien. Soon after a very strong attack developed against that village and the section of the line east of it. Under the pressure of these fresh masses our troops were compelled to fall back, contesting every inch of ground and making repeated counter-attacks; but until late at night a gallant handful, some 200 to 300 strong, held out in St. Julien. During the night the line was re-established north of the hamlet of Fortuin, about 700 yards further to the rear. All this time the fighting along the canal continued, the enemy forcing their way across near Boesinghe, and holding Het Sast, Steenstraate, and Lizerne strongly. The French counter-attacked in the afternoon capturing fifty prisoners, and made some further progress toward Pilkem. The Germans, however, were still holding the west bank firmly, although the Belgian artillery had broken the bridge behind them at Steenstraate.

On the morning of Sunday, the fourth day of the battle, we made a strong counter-attack on St. Julien, which gained some ground but was checked in front of the village. To the west of it we reached a point a few hundred yards south of the wood which had been the objective on the 23d and which we had had to relinquish subsequently. In the afternoon the Germans made repeated assaults in great strength on our line near Broodseinde. These were backed up by a tremendous artillery bombardment and the throwing of asphyxiating bombs; but all were beaten off with great slaughter to the enemy, and forty-five prisoners fell into our hands. When night came the situation remained unchanged.

This determined offensive on the part of the enemy, although it has menaced Ypres itself, has not so far the appearance of a great effort to break through the line and capture the Channel ports, such as that made in October. Its initial success was gained by the surprise rendered possible by the use of a device which Germany pledged herself not to employ. The only result upon our troops has been to fill them with an even greater determination to punish the enemy and to make him pay tenfold for every act of "frightfulness" he has perpetrated.

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### English Officer Tells of Big Part Canada Played at Langemarck

*(From the Montreal Star)*

"Its against the King's Regulations."

That is a very convenient phrase, but the necessity of saying nothing has been so hammered into the officers of the British Army that it comes naturally to their lips. And especially does it apply to the Royal Flying Corps, the success of whose work depends on developing surprise movements. Thus it was no surprise when Captain A. Ross-Hume, of that unit, repeated it to The Star shortly after he had come ashore from the S.S. Missanabie.

He admitted he had been at the front since the war began and had seen a great deal of the fighting from above. Beyond that, of his experience, he refused to say much.

"It may interest you to know," he said, "that I was probably the last man to speak to Lieutenant Sharpe, who went across with the Canadians as an aviator, before he fell to death. In my opinion Warneford, who destroyed the Zeppelin, was killed in the same way as Sharpe—that is he side-slipped. All of us who knew Sharpe were cut-up about his accident. He was a splendid

fellow and had the makings of a fine pilot. I hope to see his widow while I am over here."

Captain Ross-Hume left for Ottawa last night where he will begin to organize for the recruiting of young men with experience as aviators in Canada. He has to consult with the Governor-General, he stated and then expects to go on to Toronto.

"The Canadians at Langemarck saved three batteries of Field Artillery from annihilation and kept a number of guns from falling into the hands of the Germans." So said Lieut. Gordon Bell Robb, of the Royal Field Artillery, another passenger. He has come to Canada that his arm, shattered by shrapnel, may be treated. Curiously enough, Lieut. Robb may not visit his home. He lives at 6510 Woodlawn avenue, Chicago. He will spend his furlough with his uncle, W. D. Robb, general superintendent of Motive Power on the Grand Trunk Railway, in Westmount.

"I was peculiarly well situated to see what happened at Langemarck," said Lieut. Robb. "I went across with the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. Then I obtained my commission with the Royal Field Artillery and my brigade was supporting behind the Canadian lines. I had been sent forward to the trenches to observe the effect of our fire and signal back any changes in range or elevation. Then the gas came.

"I was not in the Canadian trenches, but over to their left where the French and Turcos held the line. They began to fall back. The gas was awful. I stuck, but I could see nothing ahead and the Germans were sweeping up in heavy columns. I fell back with the Turcos to warn the brigade.

"But we could not have held them if it had not been for the splendid work of the Canadians. How they held on, and not only held on but manoeuvred the men to hold the flank, and so save the whole line, I cannot understand. It was magnificent. Had they not done it, the artillery behind would have been wiped out and the position captured."

Lieut. Robb was wounded while stealing forward in the night, a short time later, to pick a good observation post for the next day. This work of observing is about the most dangerous that artillery officers have to do. It takes them, sometimes away ahead of the most advanced trenches. A shell burst near him, while he was trying to find a spot that would offer good cover, and his arm was badly torn. He expects to return to the front within two months.

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### Major Nasmyth Tells of Canadians' Attack on Wood at St. Julien

*(From the Montreal Star)*

Major W. W. Nasmyth, of Windsor, Ont., of the 15th Battalion, and one of the officers who led one of the many attacks at St. Julien, arrived in Montreal on Saturday, on board the Cassandra, in company with Captain Huggins, of the 4th Batt., who also took part in the St. Julien battle. Major Nasmyth was shot through the right lung, but had the satisfaction of seeing the wood in which the Germans were, come into the hands of his men before he fell.

"All of the officers of the 15th went down in the attack on the wood," he said to The Star. "It was when we got through it and found the Germans lodged in a trench, down in a hollow, that we had casualties. They did not give us much of a fight in the wood itself. Their machine-gun fire is their chief weapon in defence. They will not stand up to the bayonet.

"We were beginning the attack on the trench beyond the wood when I

was hit. Our boys advanced against a machine-gun fusillade, although every officer was down. Sergt. Martin led the men into the trench. The Germans were driven out with hand grenades and with the bayonet."

Speaking of the early part of the fight for this wood, Major Nasmyth stated that the German colonel in charge of the defending troops was wounded and captured. The German officer stated there were 7,000 Germans in his force. All these were routed by a force of 1,600 Canadians, and the attackers had to advance over 1,000 yards of open country.

"But," said the major, "the men did their work so finely that the Germans did not spot us until we were 100 yards off. Then they opened on us with the machine-guns. When we got through I saw our colonel fall and also Capt. Glover. Mine came almost immediately after."

Capt. Huggins, of the 4th Battalion, was wounded in the hip, and is now convalescent. "Our battalion was not in the St. Julien wood," he said. "We were at Ypres when the fight started. Our duty was to advance to the head of the salient and clean out the Germans in the intervening space who had worked round from the left. We found Germans behind our new front in great numbers. Yes, and we left them there," Capt. Huggins added grimly. "We had to advance through very open country, and suffered from shell fire. Four officers in our battalion were killed and another and myself wounded."

"That was the cleaning up process, however. There were no Germans left after our frontal attack was pressed home."

"And say," added the captain as he was hurried off for the Ottawa express, "the people of Canada can afford to be proud of the boys they sent over. Officers could not ask to see a cleaner piece of fighting than that the Canadians put up at St. Julien and Ypres."

Among the other passengers on the Cassandra were Capt. T. O. Kidd, of Burritt's Rapids, Ontario, of the 2nd Battalion. Major L. Robson, of Maple Creek, Saskatchewan; and Mrs. David Meikle, widow of Capt. Meikle, who was killed at the front.

Major Lorne Ross, of the 16th Victorias, which regiment was badly cut up last month, was at the Windsor yesterday on his way back to British Columbia. He said he was a soldier and was not talking. In fact, he stated that the people of Canada, who read the papers know more about the daily progress of the war than any individual officer or man at the firing line. Major Ross, who was not wounded and looks in first rate health, is going west to do some recruiting work for his regiment and he expects to return to France in a few weeks.

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### Major P. Hanson Tells of Fight at Langemarck Two Companies of Canadian Troops Held Back German Hordes

*(From the Montreal Star)*

"It was at the crossroads of Kersselaere, a few miles from St. Julien that two companies of Canadian troops met the German advance on the afternoon of April 22. It has been admitted that they saved the day for the Allies, but they paid the price."

In these words Major Paul Hanson, of the 14th Battalion, who reached home last night on the SS. Missanabie, invalided from the front with a semi-paralyzed leg, described to The Star part of the action in which the Canadians

won their laurels in the great war. The general battle is more commonly known to Canadians as Langemarck, St. Julien or Ypres.

"I don't like to talk too much about the fighting we went through, because so many versions have been published," said Major Hanson to *The Star* today. "We used to have much amusement in the trenches reading some of the 'war stories' that came back to us in the newspapers. But I can give you a general outline of what happened, and incidentally of how I obtained my own wounds.

"The 13th Battalion were in the trenches from the Poelcappelle road, west, when the Turcos, to their left, succumbed to the poisonous German gases, and broke back."

The 14th, 10th and 16th, were back at St. Jean and Ypres, six miles away, having come out of the trenches the night before. At St. Julien one company of the 14th was billeted and one company of the 13th.

"When the trouble came on the afternoon of April 22, these two companies were moved up to the cross-roads at Kersselaere. The Germans were advancing in a wedge, along the two roads that meet at this point, and the little group of Canadians held them. The resistance was so stubborn that the German advance was deflected to the left, and time was gained for the bringing up of reserves.

"It was at Kersselaere that all the officers of my company, Steacie, Brotherhood and Stairs, were wounded. I was shot through the leg. When it was over there remained 92 men out of the company of the 14th."

Major Hanson left the hospital, on a Wednesday, and sailed for Canada on the *Missanabie* the Friday of the same week. He is now resting at his home in St. Lambert.

"Back here in Canada it is hard to realize that there is such pandemonium going on over in France, and that thousands of Canadians are in the thick of it. I shall enjoy a rest."

Major Hanson received a German bullet through the thigh, injuring an important nerve. His leg below the knee is almost paralyzed.

A royal welcome was extended to Major Hanson by St. Lambert, when he reached home last evening. Hundreds of citizens gathered at the M. and S. C. railway on St. Denis street, and when the automobile containing Major and Mrs. Hanson reached that point, there was a triumphal procession to Major Hanson's home on Prince Arthur street.

The drum and bugle band of the St. Lambert Cadets, and a detachment of 120 of the boys, under Capt. Wilson, lead the procession, which included a number of automobiles. Throngs of people lined the streets and cheered lustily as the war hero passed.

At his home, in response to demands for a "Speech," Major Hanson said:

"Fellow soldiers and neighbors and friends: To endeavor to respond to this grand welcome, this wonderful expression of kindness and friendship is more difficult than any task which has fallen to my lot since I left St. Lambert. I would like to say many things to you, and yet I do not know what to say. Perhaps the day may come when we can arrange a meeting and I can have an opportunity to tell you some of the things I have seen since I went from among you. But now, even if I were not really overcome by this reception, I do not know whether I should be able to say very much for you must know that I had only been out of the hospital three days when I embarked on the *Missanabie*.

"This I can say every man from St. Lambert and every man and boy (for some of them were only boys after all) from Canada shared in the honors which were earned for Canada during those dreadful, but glorious days in April when so many gave their lives. It was no work for children, yet the

youngest and oldest contributed each his share in attaining the end we had in view. They were outnumbered ten to one in men and ten to one in artillery pieces, but they held. As you all know by this time, we were at the extreme end of the British line, next to us being the French and then the Belgians. We just knew that we must not let the enemy through, and I imagine that at that time this was about all we did know.

"I shall never forget seeing the gas for the first time. I was with Col. Loomis arranging for the selection of a graveyard at the time, for this was something which we invariably attended to on all occasions when fighting was imminent. In each of those graves, a foot below the ground, is placed a bottle which contains the name and regimental number of the one who has fallen, and any other particulars available. As we stood in the cemetery with Col. Loomis, I saw the first haze of greenish brown vapor rolling towards us from the German lines.

"'Colonel,' I said, 'there is that gas that we have heard so much about.' We were soon to see its effects, and I can tell you they were terrible. We saw the Turcos, as brave fellows as you could ask to have with you, writhing on the ground and gasping out their lives in horrible pain. It seemed especially awful because we had almost got used to the Germans themselves. For quite some time we had been within thirty yards of their lines, and we would cry for the waiter or chaff 'Fritz,' and occasionally even throw stones at them like schoolboys. Then this gas; it was too inhuman for words."

## Italy in the War

### Her Move Against Austro-Hungary. Last Phase of Italian Neutrality and Causes of the Struggle.

#### DECLARATION OF WAR

[By The Associated Press]

Vienna, May 23, (via Amsterdam and London, May 24.)—The Duke of Avarna, Italian Ambassador to Austria, presented this afternoon to Baron von Barian, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, the following declaration of war:

Vienna, May 23, 1915.

Conformably with the order of his Majesty the King, his august sovereign, the undersigned Ambassador of Italy has the honor to deliver to his Excellency, the Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary, the following communication:

"Declaration has been made, as from the fourth of this month, to the Imperial and Royal Government of the grave motives for which Italy, confident in her good right, proclaimed annulled and henceforth without effect her treaty of alliance with Austria-Hungary, which was violated by the Imperial and Royal Government, and resumed her liberty of action in this respect.

"The Government of the King, firmly resolved to provide by all means at its disposal for safeguarding Italian rights and interests, cannot fail in its duty to take against every existing and future menace measures which events impose upon it for the fulfillment of national aspirations.

"His Majesty the King declares that he considers himself from tomorrow in a state of war with Austria-Hungary."

The undersigned has the honor to make known at the same time to his Excellency, the Foreign Minister, that passports will be placed this very day

at the disposal of the Imperial and Royal Ambassador at Rome, and he will be obliged to his Excellency if he will kindly have his passports handed to him.

Avarna.

### FRANCIS JOSEPH'S DEFIANCE

[By The Associated Press]

London, May 24, 5:45 A. M.—A Reuter dispatch from Amsterdam says the Vienna Zeitung publishes the following autograph letter from Emperor Francis Joseph to Count Karl Stuerghk:

Dear Count Stuerghk: I request you to make public the attached manifesto to my troops:

“Vienna, May 23.—Francis Joseph to his troops:

“The King of Italy has declared war on me. Perfidy whose like history does not know was committed by the Kingdom of Italy against both allies. After an alliance of more than thirty years' duration, during which it was able to increase its territorial possessions and develop itself to an unthought of flourishing condition, Italy abandoned us in our hour of danger and went over with flying colors into the camp of our enemies.

“We did not menace Italy; did not curtail her authority; did not attack her honor or interests. We always responded loyally to the duties of our alliance and afforded her our protection when she took the field. We have done more. When Italy directed covetous glances across our frontier we, in order to maintain peace and our alliance relation, were resolved on great and painful sacrifices which particularly grieved our paternal heart. But the covetousness of Italy, which believed the moment should be used, was not to be appeased, so fate must be accommodated.

“My armies have victoriously withstood mighty armies in the north in ten months of this gigantic conflict in most loyal comradeship of arms with our illustrious ally. A new and treacherous enemy in the south is to you no new enemy. Great memories of Novara, Mortaro, and Lissa, which constituted the pride of my youth; the spirit of Radetzky, Archduke Albrecht, and Tegetthoff, which continues to live in my land and sea forces, guarantee that in the south also we shall successfully defend the frontiers of the monarchy.

“I salute my battle-trying troops, who are inured to victory. I rely on them and their leaders. I rely on my people for whose unexampled spirit of sacrifice my most paternal thanks are due. I pray the Almighty to bless our colors and take under His gracious protection our just cause.”

### ITALY'S CABINET EMPOWERED

[By The Associated Press]

Rome, May 20.—Amid tremendous enthusiasm the Chamber of Deputies late today adopted, by a vote of 407 to 74, the bill conferring upon the Government full power to make war.

The bill is composed of a single article and reads as follows:

The Government is authorized in case of war and during the duration of war to make decisions with due authority of law, in every respect required, for the defense of the State, the guarantee of public order, and urgent economic national necessities. The provisions contained in Articles 243 to 251 of the Military Code continue in force. The Government is authorized also to have recourse until Dec. 31, 1915, to monthly provisional appropriations for balancing the budget. This law shall come into force the day it is passed.

All members of the Cabinet maintain absolute silence regarding what step will follow the action of the Chamber. Former Ministers and other men prominent in public affairs declare, however, that the action of Parliament virtually was a declaration of war.

When the Chamber reassembled this afternoon after its long recess there were present 482 Deputies out of 500, the absentees remaining away on account of illness. The Deputies especially applauded were those who wore military uniforms and who had asked permission for leave from their military duties to be present at the sitting.

All the tribunes were filled to overflowing. No representatives of Germany, Austria, or Turkey were to be seen in the diplomatic Tribune. The first envoy to arrive was Thomas Nelson Page, the American Ambassador, who was accompanied by his staff. M. Barrere, Sir J. Bennell Rodd, and Michel de Giers, the French, British and Russian Ambassadors, respectively, appeared a few minutes later and all were greeted with applause, which was shared by the Belgian, Greek, and Roumanian Ministers. George B. McClellan, former Mayor of New York, occupied a seat in the President's tribune.

A few minutes before the session began the poet, Gabriele d'Annunzio, one of the strongest advocates of war, appeared in the rear of the public tribune, which was so crowded that it seemed impossible to squeeze in anybody else. But the moment the people saw him they lifted him shoulder high and passed him over their heads to the first row. The entire Chamber and all those occupying the other tribunes rose and applauded for five minutes, crying, "Viva d'Annunzio!" Later thousands sent him their cards, and in return received his autograph, bearing the date of this eventful day.

Signor Marcora, President of the Chamber, took his place at 3 o'clock. All the members of the House and everybody in the galleries stood up to acclaim the old follower of Garibaldi.

Premier Salandra, followed by all the members of the Cabinet, entered shortly afterward. It was a solemn moment. Then a delirium of cries broke out. "Viva Salandra!" roared the Deputies, and the cheering lasted for five minutes. Premier Salandra appeared to be much moved by the demonstration.

After the formalities of the opening Premier Salandra arose and said:

"Gentlemen: I have the honor to present to you a bill to meet the eventual expenditure of a national war"—an announcement that was greeted by further prolonged applause.

The Premier began an exposition of the situation of Italy before the opening of hostilities in Europe. He declared that Italy had submitted to every humiliation from Austria-Hungary for the love of peace. By her ultimatum to Serbia, Austria had annulled the equilibrium of the Balkans and prejudiced Italian Interests there.

Notwithstanding this evident violation of the treaty of the Triple Alliance, Italy endeavored during long months to avoid a conflict, but these efforts were bound to have a limit in time and dignity. "This is why the Government felt itself forced to present its denunciation of the Triple Alliance on May 4," said Premier Salandra, who had difficulty in quieting the wild cheering that ensued. When he had succeeded in so doing he continued amid frequent enthusiastic interruptions:

Italy must be united at this moment, when her destinies are being decided. We have confidence in our august chief, who is preparing to lead the army towards a glorious future. Let us gather around this well-beloved sovereign.

Since Italy's resurrection as a State she has asserted herself in the world of nations as a factor of moderation, concord, and

peace, and she can proudly proclaim that she has accomplished this mission with a firmness which has not wavered before even the most painful sacrifices.

In the last period, extending over thirty years, she maintained her system of alliances and friendships chiefly with the object of thus assuring the European equilibrium, and, at the same time, peace. In view of the nobility of this aim Italy not only subordinated her most sacred aspiration, but has also been forced to look on, with sorrow, at the methodical attempts to suppress specifically the Italian characteristics which nature and history imprinted on those regions.

The ultimatum which the Austro-Hungarian Empire addressed last July to Serbia annulled at one blow the effects of a long-sustained effort by violating the pact which bound us to that State, violated the pact, in form, for it omitted to conclude a preliminary agreement with us or even give us notification, and violated it also in substance, for it sought to disturb, to our detriment, the delicate system of territorial possessions and spheres of influence which had been set up in the Balkan Peninsula.

But, more than any particular point, it was the whole spirit of the treaty which was wronged, and even suppressed, for by unloosing in the world a most terrible war, in direct contravention of our interests and sentiments, the balance which the Triple Alliance should have helped to assure was destroyed and the problem of Italy's national integrity was virtually and irresistibly revived.

Nevertheless, for long months, the Government has patiently striven to find a compromise, with the object of restoring to the agreement the reason for being which it had lost. These negotiations were, however, limited not only by time, but by our national dignity. Beyond these limits the interests both of our honor and of our country would have been compromised.

Signor Salandra was interrupted time and time again by rounds of applause from all sides, and the climax was reached when he made a reference to the army and navy. Then the cries seemed interminable, and those on the floor of the House and in the galleries turned to the Military Tribune, from which the officers answered by waving their hands and handkerchiefs. At the end of the Premier's speech there were deafening "vivas" for the King, war, and Italy.

Only thirty-four Intransigent Socialists refused to join in the cheers, even in the cry "Viva Italia!" and they were hooted and hissed.

After the presentation of the bill conferring full powers upon the Government the President of the Chamber submitted the question whether a committee of eighteen members should be elected. Out of the 421 Deputies who voted 367 cast their ballot in the affirmative. The other 54 were against. The opposition was composed of Socialists and some adherents of ex-Premier Giolitti.

Foreign Minister Sonnino then rose, and, taking a copy of the "Green Book" from his pocket, said: "I have the honor to present to the Chamber a book containing an account of all the pourparlers with Austria from the 9th of September to the 4th of May." He handed the book to Signor Macora.

The Chamber then adjourned until 5 o'clock, when the committee reported in favor of the bill, and it was adopted.



## ITALY'S JUSTIFICATION

The first complete official statement of the difficulties between Italy and Austria-Hungary, which forced the Italian declaration of war against the Dual Monarchy, was made public in Washington on May 25 by Count V. Macchi di Cellere, the Italian Ambassador. It took the form of a carefully prepared telegraphic statement to the Ambassador from Signor Sonnino, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, with instructions that it be delivered in the form of a note to the Government of the United States. After presenting the communication to Secretary Bryan, Count Cellere made public the following translation of its full text:

The Triple Alliance was essentially defensive and designed solely to preserve the status quo, in other words, the equilibrium, in Europe. That these were its only objects and purposes is established by the letter and spirit of the treaty as well as by the intentions clearly described and set forth in official acts of the Ministers who created the alliance and confirmed and renewed it in the interest of peace, which always has inspired Italian policy.

The treaty, as long as its intents and purposes had been loyally interpreted and regarded and as long as it had not been used as a pretext for aggression against others, greatly contributed to the elimination and settlement of causes of conflict, and for many years assured to Europe the inestimable benefits of peace.

But Austria-Hungary severed the treaty by her own hands. She rejected the response of Serbia, which gave to her all the satisfaction she could legitimately claim. She refused to listen to the conciliatory proposals presented by Italy in conjunction with other powers in the effort to spare Europe from a vast conflict certain to drench the Continent with blood and to reduce it to ruin beyond the conception of human imagination, and finally she provoked that conflict.

Article I. of the treaty embodied the usual and necessary obligation of such pacts—the pledge to exchange views upon any fact and economic questions of a general nature that might arise pursuant to its terms. Nine of the contracting parties had the right to undertake, without a previous agreement, any step the consequence of which might impose a duty upon the other signatories arising out of the Alliance, or which would in any way whatsoever encroach upon their vital interests. This article was violated by Austria-Hungary when she sent to Serbia her note taken without the previous assent of Italy.

Thus, Austria-Hungary violated beyond doubt one of the fundamental provisions of the treaty. The obligation of Austria-Hungary to come to a previous understanding with Italy was the greater because her obstinate policy against Serbia gave rise to a situation which directly tended to the provocation of a European war.

As far back as the beginning of July, 1914, the Italian Government, pre-occupied by the prevailing feeling in Vienna, caused to be laid before the Austro-Hungarian Government a number of suggestions advising moderation, and warning it of the impending danger of a European outbreak. The course adopted by Austria-Hungary against Serbia constituted, moreover, a direct encroachment upon the general interests of Italy, both political and economical, in the Balkan Peninsula. Austria-Hungary could not for a moment imagine that Italy could remain indifferent while Serbian independence was being trodden upon.

On a number of occasions theretofore Italy gave Austria to understand, in friendly but clear terms, that the independence of Serbia was considered by Italy as essential to the Balkan equilibrium. Austria-Hungary was further advised that Italy could never permit that equilibrium to be disturbed to her

prejudice. This warning had been conveyed not only by her diplomats in private conversations with responsible Austro-Hungarian officials, but was proclaimed publicly by Italian statesmen on the floors of Parliament.

Therefore when Austria-Hungary ignored the usual practices and menaced Serbia by sending her an ultimatum without in any way notifying the Italian Government of what she proposed to do, indeed leaving that Government to learn of her action through the press rather than through the usual channels of diplomacy, when Austria-Hungary took this unprecedented course she not only severed her alliance with Italy but committed an act inimical to Italy's interests.

The Italian Government had obtained trustworthy information that the complete program laid down by Austria-Hungary with reference to the Balkans was prompted by a desire to decrease Italy's economical and political influence in that section, and tended directly and indirectly to the subservience of Serbia to Austria-Hungary, the political and territorial isolation of Montenegro, and the isolation and political decadence of Roumania.

This attempted diminution of the influence of Italy in the Balkans would have been brought about by the Austro-Hungarian program, even though Austria-Hungary had no intention of making further territorial acquisitions. Furthermore, attention should be called to the fact that the Austro-Hungarian Government had assumed the solemn obligation of prior consultation of Italy as required by the special provisions of Article VII. of the treaty of the Triple Alliance, which, in addition to the obligation of previous agreements, recognized the right of compensation to the other contracting parties in case one should occupy temporarily or permanently any section of the Balkans.

To this end, the Italian Government approached the Austro-Hungarian Government immediately upon the inauguration of Austria-Hungarian hostilities against Serbia, and succeeded in obtaining reluctant acquiescence in the Italian representations. Conversations were initiated immediately after July 23, for the purpose of giving a new lease of life to the treaty which had been violated and thereby annulled by the act of Austria-Hungary.

This object could be obtained only by the conclusion of new agreements. The conversations were renewed, with additional propositions as the basis, in December, 1914. The Italian Ambassador at Vienna at that time received instructions to inform Count Berchtold, the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, that the Italian Government considered it necessary to proceed without delay to an exchange of views and consequently to concrete negotiations with the Austro-Hungarian Government concerning the complex situation arising out of the conflict which that Government had provoked.

Count Berchtold at first refused. He declared that the time had not arrived for negotiations. Subsequently, upon our rejoinder, in which the German Government united, Count Berchtold agreed to exchange views as suggested. We promptly declared, as one of our fundamental objects, that the compensation on which the agreement should be based should relate to territories at the time under the dominion of Austria-Hungary.

The discussion continued for months, from the first days of December to March, and it was not until the end of March that Baron Burian offered a zone of territory comprised within a line extending from the existing boundary to a point just north of the City of Trent.

In exchange for this proposed cession the Austro-Hungarian Government demanded a number of pledges, including among them an assurance of entire liberty of action in the Balkans. Note should be made of the fact that the cession of the territory around Trent was not intended to be immediately effective as we demanded, but was to be made only upon the termination of the European war. We replied that the offer was not acceptable, and then presented the minimum concessions which could meet in part our national aspira-

tions and strengthen in an equitable manner our strategic position in the Adriatic.

These demands comprised: The extension of the boundary in Trentino, a new boundary on the Isonzo, special provision for Trieste, the cession of certain islands of the Curzolari Archipelago, the abandonment of Austrian claims in Albania, and the recognition of our possession of Avlona and the islands of the Aegean Sea, which we occupied during our war with Turkey.

At first our demands were categorically rejected. It was not until another month of conversation that Austria-Hungary was induced to increase the zone of territory she was prepared to cede in the Trentino and then only as far as Mezzo Lombardo, thereby excluding the territory inhabited by people of the Italian race, such as the Valle del Noce, Val di Fasso, and Val di Ampezzo. Such a proposal would have given to Italy a boundary of no strategical value. In addition the Austro-Hungarian Government maintained its determination not to make the cession effective before the end of the war.

The repeated refusals of Austria-Hungary were expressly confirmed in a conversation between Baron Burian and the Italian Ambassador at Vienna on April 29. While admitting the possibility of recognizing some of our interests in Avlona and granting the above-mentioned territorial cession in the Trentino, the Austro-Hungarian Government persisted in its opposition to all our other demands, especially those regarding the boundary of the Isonzo, Trieste, and the islands.

The attitude assumed by Austria-Hungary from the beginning of December until the end of April made it evident that she was attempting to temporize without coming to a conclusion. Under such circumstances Italy was confronted by the danger of losing forever the opportunity of realizing her aspirations based upon tradition, nationality, and her desire for a safe position in the Adriatic, while other contingencies in the European conflict menaced her principal interests in other seas.

Hence Italy faced the necessity and duty of recovering that liberty of action to which she was entitled and of seeking protection for her interests, apart from the negotiations which had been dragging uselessly along for five months and without reference to the Treaty of Alliance which had virtually failed as a result of its annulment by the action of Austria-Hungary in July, 1914.

It would not be out of place to observe that the alliance having terminated and there existing no longer any reason for the Italian people to be bound by it, though they had loyally stood by it for so many years because of their desire for peace, there naturally revived in the public mind the grievances against Austria-Hungary which for so many years had been voluntarily repressed.

While the Treaty of Alliance contained no formal agreement for the use of the Italian language or the maintenance of Italian tradition and Italian civilization in the Italian provinces of Austria, nevertheless if the alliance was to be effective in preserving peace and harmony it was indisputably clear that Austria-Hungary, as our ally, should have taken into account the moral obligation of respecting what constituted some of the most vital interests of Italy.

Instead, the constant policy of the Austro-Hungarian Government was to destroy Italian nationality and Italian civilization all along the coast of the Adriatic. A brief statement of the facts and of the tendencies well known to all will suffice.

Substitution of officials of the Italian race by officials of other nationalities; artificial immigration of hundreds of families of a different nationality; replacement of Italian by other labor; exclusion from Trieste by the decree of Prince Hohenlohe of employes who were subjects of Italy; denationalization of the judicial administration; refusal of Austria to permit an Italian university in

Trieste, which formed the subject of diplomatic negotiations; denationalization of navigation companies; encouragement of other nationalities to the detriment of the Italian, and, finally, the methodical and unjustifiable expulsion of Italians in ever-increasing numbers.

This deliberate and persistent policy of the Austro-Hungarian Government with reference to the Italian population was not only due to internal conditions brought about by the competition of the different nationalities within its territory, but was inspired in great part by a deep sentiment of hostility and aversion toward Italy, which prevailed particularly in the quarters closest to the Austro-Hungarian Government and influenced decisively its course of action.

Of the many instances which could be cited it is enough to say that in 1911, while Italy was engaged in war with Turkey, the Austro-Hungarian General Staff prepared a campaign against us, and the military party prosecuted energetically a political intrigue designed to drag in other responsible elements of Austria. The mobilization of an army upon our frontier left us in no doubt of our neighbor's sentiment and intentions.

The crisis was settled pacifically through the influence, so far as known, of outside factors; but since that time we have been constantly under apprehension of a sudden attack whenever the party opposed to us should get the upper hand in Vienna. All of this was known in Italy, and it was only the sincere desire for peace prevailing among the Italian people which prevented a rupture.

After the European war broke out, Italy sought to come to an understanding with Austria-Hungary with a view to a settlement satisfactory to both parties which might avert existing and future trouble. Her efforts were in vain, notwithstanding the efforts of Germany, which for months endeavored to induce Austria-Hungary to comply with Italy's suggestions, thereby recognizing the propriety and legitimacy of the Italian attitude. Therefore, Italy found herself compelled by the force of events to seek other solutions.

Inasmuch as the Treaty of Alliance with Austria-Hungary had ceased virtually to exist and served only to prolong a state of continual friction and mutual suspicion, the Italian Ambassador at Vienna was instructed to declare to the Austro-Hungarian Government that the Italian Government considered itself free from the ties arising out of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance in so far as Austria-Hungary was concerned. This communication was delivered in Vienna on May 4.

Subsequently to this declaration, and after we had been obliged to take steps for the protection of our interests, the Austro-Hungarian Government submitted new concessions, which, however, were deemed insufficient and by no means met our minimum demands. These offers could not be considered under the circumstances.

The Italian Government, taking into consideration what has been stated above, and supported by the vote of Parliament and the solemn manifestation of the country, came to the decision that any further delay would be inadvisable. Therefore, on this day (May 23) it was declared in the name of the King to the Austro-Hungary Ambassador at Rome that, beginning tomorrow, May 24, it will consider itself in a state of war with Austria-Hungary. Orders to this effect were also telegraphed yesterday to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

### ITALY'S NEUTRALITY

*(From the Frankfurter Zeitung of March 3)*

Article VII. of the Austro-German-Italian Treaty, the terms of which have never before been made public, not only provides for the right of compensation in case one party to the contract enriches itself territorially in the Balkans, but also forbids either Austria or Italy to undertake anything in the Balkans without the consent of the other.

In the Tripoli war, when the energetic Duca degli Abruzzi made his advance in the Adriatic against Prevesa and wished to force the Porte to yield through a serious action in the Dardanelles, and when Italy wished to extend her occupation of the Aegean Islands, which lie as advance posts before the Dardanelles, she was obliged to forego her aims, and did loyally forego them, because Austria at that time did not yet desire a movement on the then still quiescent Balkan Peninsula. According to the Italian view, Austria, in determining to liquidate her matured account with Serbia without coming to an agreement in the matter with Italy, cancelled the treaty in an important and essential part, irrespective of the assurance that she contemplated merely punishment of Serbia and not the acquisition of territory in the Balkans. The Italian policy considered itself from that moment free from every obligation, even if the speech of Premier Salandra in December could not be interpreted as a formal denunciation of the Dreibund.

We have today good grounds for assuming that much as we must reckon with the fact that the country is determined to go to war if nothing is granted to it, just so little would it support a Government bent on making war because it does not receive anything.

It will be as impossible to solve the Trentino question from the point of view of abstract right as to solve any other iridescent question in that way. The Trentino question, which was long a question of national, historical and ethnological idealism, has now become a real question of power. The European war and its developments have placed Italy in a position to use her power in order to expand. This is not unusual in history.

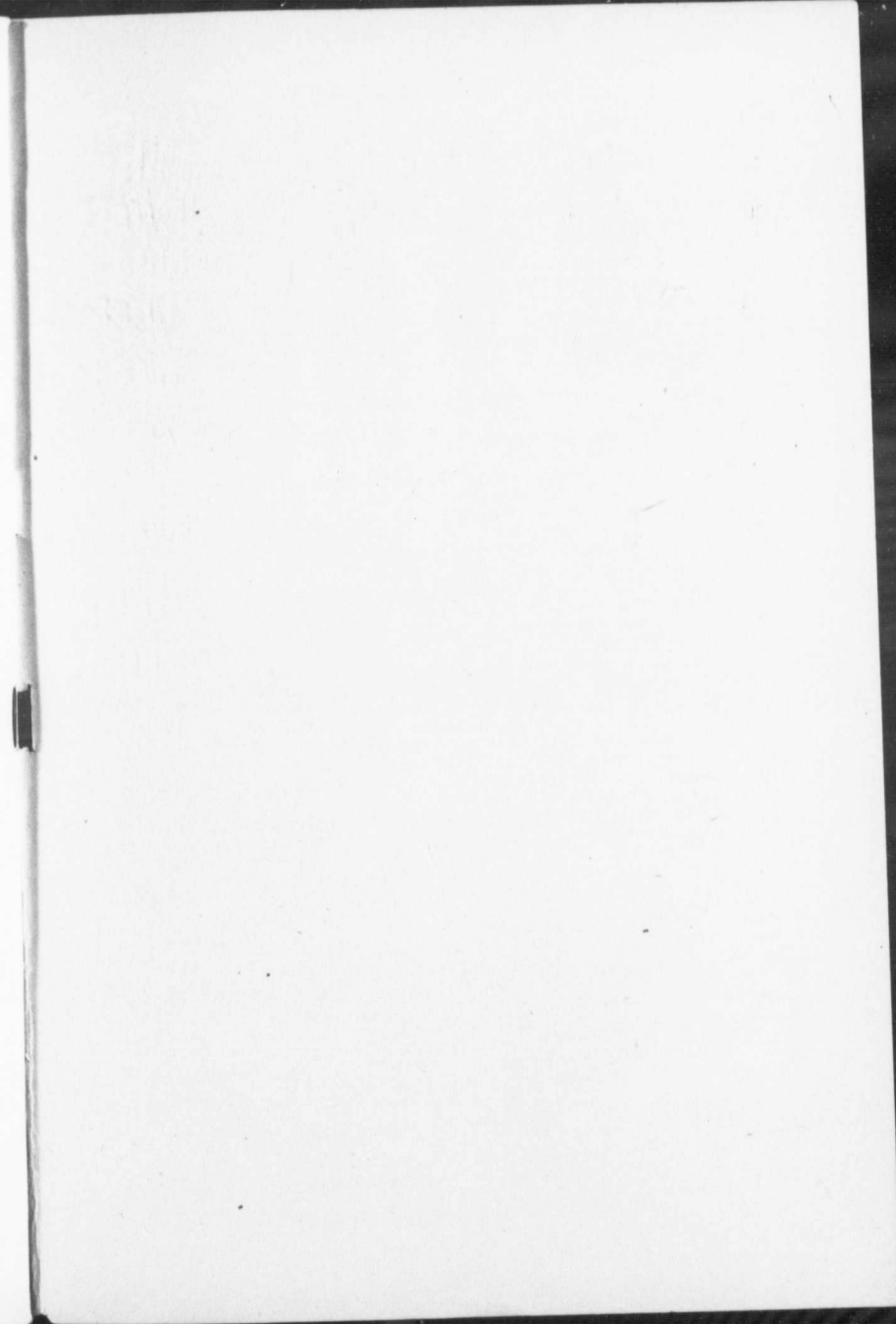
But it should be carefully noted that only to Italy remaining within the Triple Alliance can compensation be given, and, of course, only on the basis of complete reciprocity—(zug um zugleistung gegen leistung). To demand anything whatsoever Italy has no right. On the other hand, the ignoble exploitation of the needs of an ally fighting for her existence would correspond neither with the generosity of the Italian nature nor with her real interests.

The honest path for Italy, who finds herself unable to enter the war on the side of her allies in accordance with the spirit of the Alliance, is to preserve unconditional neutrality. A simple discussion between the leading statesmen of all the three powers will banish every shade of misunderstanding and clear the situation. Italy will spare her strength for the great task on the other side of the Mediterranean and for her correct and sensible attitude will receive, under the guarantee of her friend, (Germany,) the promise of the fulfillment of her comprehensible desire. Any other policy would be foolish and criminal.

### The Canadians at Ypres.

Tears for the dead,  
 And laurels for the brave;  
 And glory ever more  
 For those who found the victors' grave  
 Upon an alien shore.  
 In freedom's right they fell,  
 For freedom did they stand,  
 For freedom, and the love  
 Of that dear Motherland,  
 "They saved the day," that bloody day,  
 For freedom and for right;  
 But many a gallant lad went down  
 Beneath the moon that night.

—George Mullane, in *Glasgow Herald*.



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