

French Confident: Battle of Verdun Bloodiest of War

Paris, Feb. 28.—"Serious, but not disquieting," is the common phrase which was used today in official and parliamentary circles regarding the program of the Germans in their attack against Verdun. Unaffected by the snow, the Germans hammered away all day long, the French lines which although unbroken at the end of the sixth day of battle, was, however, again rectified as a measure of prudence, the left wing being drawn into Champagneville and the right being brought back a little south of Omes. The new front barely three miles in length, extends along the heights, offering every advantage for defense and forming one of the most formidable obstacles before the entrenched camp of Verdun.

It is in this narrow space that the crown prince is hurling his masses. Military observers here express the belief that the counter offensive will be launched from this line at a precise and decisive moment and that it will drive back across the ground already covered with the bodies of their comrades, the battalions which are being hurled forward in the most bloody assault which this war has yet seen.

"The work up there is hot, indeed," said an officer who has just arrived in Paris from the Verdun battlefield. "They are gnawing at our lines a little faster, but with no positive advantage for themselves. Previous attacks made by the Germans in that section are nothing to what they are now delivering. I cannot, of course, give details, but I can say that we are holding well against their formidable attacks. The artillery exchanges are intense. Our batteries, admirably handled, have changed ground in masterly style and the losses to the enemy are really fabulous. Ours are slight, a feeble percentage of theirs."

SAFETY FEINT ATTACK FAILED.

Paris, Feb. 28.—The Petit Parisien says that the battle now raging before Verdun was preceded on February 12 by a feint in Champagne intended to divert attention from the coming attack on Verdun. The attack in the

WILD RUMORS SEND WHEAT PRICES DOWN WITH CRASH

Chicago, Feb. 28.—Wheat values broke about 6c a bushel today on account of depression in the New York stock market. Apparently many traders here jumped at the conclusion that the Wall street declines pointed to increased tension over the plans of Germany for attacks on armed merchant vessels.

May wheat dropped to \$1.13 1/2 as against \$1.18 1/2 at yesterday's finish. Heavy stoploss selling took place. Rumors that Verdun had fallen accompanied the fall of prices. Denials of the rumors failed to check to material extent the downward plunge of the market.

At the extreme lowest figures reached, May wheat was down 5 1/2c at \$1.13 1/2. The market closed excited at 5 1/2c net decline, with May at \$1.13 1/2 and July at \$1.10 1/2.

Minneapolis, Minn., Feb. 26.—Wheat prices broke more than 6 cents a bushel today, following receipts of a report that Verdun had been captured by the Germans. May wheat which closed at \$1.17 yesterday, closed on a range today of \$1.10 1/2 to \$1.11 1/2, and July which closed at \$1.16 yesterday, closed today at \$1.10.

LARGER STANDING ARMY PLAN VOTED

House Military Committee on Record For Regular Force of 140,000—More Than Asked.

Washington, Feb. 26.—The House military committee late today voted for a regular standing army of 137,000 men with a 2 per cent allowance for recruiting, bringing the number up to 140,000, which is slightly more than the war department asked. The republicans and three democrats carried the vote.

Voting in the committee began at a proposal for 220,000 men. The number was gradually scaled down until a proposal for 150,000 men was beaten by one vote. Then the republicans and three democrats put through the proposal for 140,000 men, which was finally accepted by the committee, to be incorporated in the bill to be presented to the public.

The war department's estimate of additional officers for the regular army was increased from 736 to 1,000. The section regarding the national guard was framed to provide for a maximum strength of 424,000 men, of which 50 per cent must be recruited within two years.

MISTOOK PETROLITE FOR AN ENEMY SHIP

Washington, Feb. 26.—Austria supplementing her request for more information concerning the American protest against the submarine attack on the Mediterranean, has informed the United States that her version of the affair is that the submarine commander thought the Petrolite was an enemy ship disguised under the American flag, and that he fired upon her as the ship changed course and he believed she was about to ram him and that the Petrolite's captain voluntarily furnished provisions to the submarine.

NORRIS MAKES ATTACK ON WATER POWER BILL

Washington, D. C., Feb. 26.—A scathing attack in a vigorous speech was made today by Senator Norris against the Shields water power bill. This is the bill pending in the Senate which a powerful group of reactionary democrats and reactionary republicans are trying to drive through and which the administration is not opposing. Senator Norris described the magnitude of the grab planned by the power trust under this measure. He pleaded with senators not to give away without compensation to the water power trust the wonderful resources of the country.

More than 500 women are serving in the Russian army.

KAISER OVERRODE OLDEST GENERALS TO VINDICATE SON

Petrograd, via London, Feb. 28.—The Russky Invalid, the official organ of the Russian army published today an account of the war council held in Berlin at which the decision to attack Verdun was taken. It asserts that the German and Bavarian crown princes strongly favored an attack on the French front at Verdun, but both Field Marshal von Mackensen and Field Marshal von Hindenburg opposed the plan, contending that it would be better to develop the operations already planned against the Russian front, because it would be necessary, if the plan of the princes was adopted, to send to France reserves especially trained for Russian warfare. Further Field Marshal von Hindenburg is reported to have said that the chances of success on the Russian front were greater. He is declared to have had little hope of the operation against Verdun and to have feared an adverse effect on the morale of the army in case of their failure. These arguments, the newspapers adds, did not prevail and Emperor Wilhelm supported the crown prince, who first failed to take Verdun.

Champagne on February 12, which was conducted in three successive waves, failed chiefly because the change of wind, the Petit Parisien says, rendered ineffective a large quantity of asphyxiating gas and flame throwers which were relied on for the success of the attack.

PORTUGAL TO CUT GERMAN RELATIONS

Lisbon, Feb. 26, (via Paris, Feb. 28.)—The Portuguese premier stated in the chamber of deputies today that attempts have been made to damage seven of the Teutonic ships requisitioned by the government, and that an explosive had been found on the steamer Buelow, of the North German-Lloyd company. The premier added that he considered it in the best interests of Portugal that the existing treaty with Germany be allowed to lapse, and said that the Portuguese government was prepared for all eventualities that might arise from the exercise by Portugal of her rights.

Dr. Alfonso Costa, the premier, in answer to a question by Deputy Camacho regarding the employment to which the requisitioned German and Austrian vessels would be put, said the government's action in requisitioning them had been prompted by the necessities of the nation's economic situation. The requisition, he said, had been carried out simultaneously in order to prevent as far as possible attempts at willful damage of the ships which there was reason to believe could and in fact had been on seven of them. An explosive apparatus had been found in the boilers of the steamer Buelow; which would have caused an explosion when the vessel moved. An explosion was prevented, but the machinery was damaged.

Dr. Costa further said that he considered it was in the best interests of the country that the existing treaty with Germany should be denounced and allowed to lapse on June 5, 1917. In conclusion, he said: "We are prepared for all eventualities that may arise from our exercising our rights."

The North German Lloyd steamship Buelow is of 8,365 gross tons, 462 feet long, and 57 feet beam.

REV. GEORGE J. KELLEY IS HARBORING DELUSION

Des Moines, Ia., Feb. 26.—"Rev. Geo. J. Kelley, now at Sutton, Neb., had no connection whatever with the brutal ax murders in Villisca, in June, 1912," declared Henry Sampson, assistant attorney general, today.

"Shortly after the crime I went over the whole ground at Villisca with Kelley, who was preaching in a small town near there at the time. Evidently he has brooded over the gruesome details of the murder until his mind is temporarily unbalanced."

Villisca authorities are investigating alleged statements attributed to Kelley by Dr. L. K. Strate, a Sutton, Neb., physician in a letter received yesterday by Chief of Detectives MacDonald.

BLUFFS DOCTOR INJURED WHEN AUTO TURNS OVER

Council Bluffs, Ia., Feb. 26.—A Ford car driven by Dr. Harry Kelley skidded on a bridge early this morning, when he turned sharply to avoid crashing into an obstruction, and turned turtle, plunging the doctor beneath it. He lay 15 minutes before railroad men found him and lifted off the car. His condition is said to be serious, but not dangerous.

Uruguayan banks have gold reserves aggregating \$20,945,667.

FORT DOUAUMONT FALLS BEFORE FURIOUS ONSLAUGHT OF GERMAN ARMY; FRENCH LINES BADLY BENT

EPIDEMIC OF CHOLERA IS RAGING IN CROATIA

Victims, Chiefly Women and Children, Said to Number Thousands.

London, Feb. 28.—The Exchange Telegraph company's Rome correspondent says that advices have been received in that city from Zurich to the effect that an epidemic of cholera is raging in Croatia and that its victims are numbered in the thousands and are chiefly women and children.

AUSTRIAN FORCES CAPTURE DURAZZO

Italians Evacuate Great Port on Adriatic Coast—Mastery of Adriatic Is Assured.

Rome, (via Paris), Feb. 28.—The report that Durazzo, an Albanian port on the Adriatic sea, had been evacuated by the Italian troops stationed there, is confirmed.

Berlin, Feb. 28, (via London).—Reports from Austrian press headquarters predict the early fall of the Albanian city of Durazzo, as a result of the defeat on Wednesday of the Italians and the Albanian forces under Essad Pasha, the provisional president. A strong line of outer defenses for the city have been constructed and the indications were that spirited resistance would be offered.

The Austrians and Germans attacked at daybreak, yesterday. The defenders were soon ejected from their positions at Barzarsjak. Shortly afterward, the Italians on the southern bank of the lower Arzen were forced to abandon their positions. The Austrians crossed the river and proceeded southward.

At noon a decisive action east of Barzarsjak forced the Italians from strong positions. The same fate was suffered by the defenders of Sazobianco, six miles east of Durazzo. By evening the entire outer girdle of defenses was taken. The attackers, advancing to their inner line positions, established the fact that the Italians were embarking their troops hurriedly.

BAY STATE MOOSERS MILITANT AS EVER

Bird Serves Notice Party Split Is "Inevitable" If T. R. Delegates Fail.

Boston, Feb. 28.—A prediction that another split in the republican party would be "inevitable" if the Roosevelt candidates for delegates at large from this state to the national convention were defeated in the primaries was contained in a letter addressed by one of these candidates, Charles Sumner Bird, to T. R. Delegates.

SELF ACCUSED BURGLARS CONVICTED OF MURDER

Danville, Ill., Feb. 26.—"Big John" Murphy and Milton Armstrong, negroes, were found guilty of murder by a jury here today and sentenced to the penitentiary for 99 years each, for murdering two Greek track workers. Murphy and Armstrong set up an alibi, claiming they were robbing a store in Champaign at the time of the murder.

ARMED ITALIAN SHIP IN PORT OF NEW YORK

New York, Feb. 26.—The Napoli, the third Italian steamer to arrive here within the last few days with guns mounted, arrived today. The Napoli carried two three-inch guns mounted on the poop deck. She is a freighter and carries no passengers.

YEAR IN FEDERAL PRISON PENALTY FOR ELOPEMENT

Council Bluffs, Ia., Feb. 26.—Ralph Myers, who pleaded guilty in federal court yesterday afternoon to white slavery, was sentenced to a year and a day at Leavenworth prison by Judge Wade this morning. He ran away from Centerville, Ia., with Mrs. Myrtle Gott, wife of a Salvation army captain, going to Berwyn, Neb.

ITALIAN CONVICTED OF KILLING AN AMERICAN

Rome, (via Paris), Feb. 26.—Pietro Rossi was found guilty today at Arezzo on the charge of murderous assault against Mrs. Mary Flavelle, of Chicago, in a railroad train between Florence and Arezzo on May 21, 1914, for the purpose of robbery. He was sentenced to eight years and four months imprisonment.

Mrs. Flavelle returned to the United States following the attack and died in Chicago on December 11, 1914.

INSURRECTO MEETING OF IOWA DEMOCRATS

Opponents of Present Organization Plan to Contest on State Nominations.

Des Moines, Ia., Feb. 26.—The full democratic state tickets may be placed before Iowa voters at the June 5 primary this year, as the result of a decision early today by leaders of so-called progressive democrats to enter a slate of their own.

After an all night session the conference unanimously selected Senator John T. Clarkson, of Albia, leader of the "dry" forces in the 36th general assembly, to head the new ticket as candidate for governor in opposition to the regular democratic ticket.

Edward C. Dunn, of Mason City, who was a candidate for governor in 1912 was selected as a candidate for democratic national committeeman against Wilbur W. Marsh, of Waterloo. Senator Clarkson refused to say whether he would be a candidate.

Should Senator Clarkson be a candidate for governor, it was said, he will represent the conference as delegate at large. Homer W. Johnston, of Sioux City, was the conference's second choice for delegate at large.

Four cardinal propositions will occupy the attention of progressive democrats from now on according to the insurgents.

They are to open headquarters in Des Moines as a campaign to elect progressive democrats as delegates to the national convention at St. Louis; to overthrow State Chairman J. W. Reynolds and other committeemen and elect a progressive democrat in their places; to defeat W. W. Marsh as national committeeman and place E. C. Dunn, of Mason City in that place; to bring out a progressive democrat as candidate for governor.

TURKS DISPATCH AID TO ARMENIA

Distance From Railroad Requires Months' March—Believed Relief Troops Will Be Too Late.

Paris, Feb. 28.—Turkey is making great efforts to dispatch troops to the Russian front in an endeavor to recapture Erzerum, says the Bucharest correspondent of the Times. All ordinary traffic on the railway from the Bosphorus to Angora has been stopped, according to the correspondent and trains conveying troops and supplies are running incessantly but as the distance from Angora to Erzerum will consume at least a month's march there is likelihood of the success of the movement.

RUSSIANS WIN BATTLE TEN MILES FROM BITLIS

London, Feb. 28.—The Amsterdam correspondent of the Central News learns that heavy fighting has taken place 10 miles from Bitlis between Russian and Turkish troops. The former coming from the direction of Mush and that the Turks fought bravely, but were obliged to retire before superior forces.

RUSSIANS TAKE PERSIAN CITY IN GIANTIC SWEEP

London, Feb. 28.—A Reuter dispatch from Tiflis states the Russians have taken by storm Kermanshah, the important Persian city in the neighborhood of which serious fighting has recently taken place.

The capture of Kermanshah brings the Russians to within 150 miles of Kut-el-Amara where a British force of 10,000 has been beleaguered nearly two months, following the failure to capture Bagdad.

RETAIL LUMBERMEN FAVOR PREPAREDNESS

Portland, Ore., Feb. 26.—The Western Retail Lumbermen's association adopted resolutions here today calling upon members of congress to support President Wilson's program for national preparedness and pledging the undivided support of the organization for adequate measures of defense.

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO IS REPORTED INJURED

Paris, Feb. 26.—Gabriele D'Annunzio has been injured in the right eye in an airplane accident and taken to a hospital in Venice, says the Rome correspondent of the Petit Parisien. There is a possibility that the sight of the injured eye may be preserved.

The Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio took a prominent part in the popular agitation which preceded the declaration of war by Italy on Austria in May, 1915. He volunteered for service and was appointed lieutenant in the army.

NINE DIE IN WRECK. Cortona, Italy, (via Paris), Feb. 26.—A military train was derailed here today and the locomotive, baggage car and four coaches were wrecked. Nine persons were killed and more than 50 injured.

Great 15-Inch and 17-Inch Cannon of Crown Prince's Army Slowly Beating Back Opposition and One of Strongest of Great Chain of Steel Forts Is Captured By Crack Brandenburg Troops—No Army In History So Well Prepared For Assault as That Which Is Hammering at Gateway to Paris.

BOTH SIDES HAVE SUFFERED ENORMOUS LOSSES

Paris Declares Teutons Sustained Loss of 150,000 Men In First Four Days—Both Sides Are Rushing Up All Available Reserves For Final Stage of What Has Developed Into Bloodiest Fray of Present War—Kaiser Apparently Determined to Break Joffre's Lines No Matter What the Cost.

The tremendous German offensive aimed at Verdun is gaining force hourly, and new and serious breaches have been made in the French lines, Berlin announces today. The fortress is now menaced from the east and southeast as well as from the north and the northeast.

Not only has fort Douaumont, one of the outlying defenses of the stronghold been taken, but French resistance on the plain of the Woivre to the east has been broken according to the German bulletin which reports that the Germans are pursuing their beaten foe along the Woivre front.

Although the substantial successes noted are officially claimed by the Germans, Paris has not conceded them. Regarding Douaumont, the outlying fort whose capture is announced by Berlin, the French statement only declares that in this region the battle is still raging and has assumed a most sanguinary character.

The presence of Emperor William with his troops, on the German front is confirmed by Berlin's today official statement.

All along the Verdun front the Germans are hurling their men against the French lines without regard to sacrifices, Paris declares, the fighting being particularly desperate in the region of Beaumont, almost directly north of Verdun.

The rain of shell fire in the September offensive of the allies was at the time without precedent, but correspondents near the front declare that it was feeble in comparison with the deluge of projectiles which at present is being poured upon the French trenches and fortifications from the massed batteries of the Germans.

Berlin, Feb. 26, (via London).—It is officially announced that Fort Douaumont, one of the fortifications of Verdun, was taken by storm, yesterday afternoon, and is now firmly held by the Germans.

The official announcement is as follows: "The armored fort Douaumont, the northeastern corner pillar of the permanent line fortifications of the stronghold of Verdun was stormed yesterday afternoon by the twenty-fourth regiment of Brandenburg Infantry and is now firmly in German hands."

Fort Douaumont lies four miles northeast of Verdun. It is one of nearly a score of forts protecting Verdun and is situated just north of the railroad running east from the city to Metz. Douaumont is one of a cluster of seven forts protecting Verdun from the east. Forts De Sauvilly, De Tavannes and St. Michel lie directly between the position conquered by the Germans and the city of Verdun.

The capture of Douaumont is the most important achievement since the inauguration of the German drive at Verdun—an onslaught which, for fury and for weight of men and guns, has few precedents in the war. Verdun is the strongest fortress of France and is of particular importance from the fact that it offers direct communication with Paris, which is 150 miles to the west. Verdun marks the northerly point of the great French defenses against direct attacks from German territory, the most southerly being Belfort and, between these points, lies the stretch of frontier on which Germany touches France.

Today's German statement indicates a development of the attack along a wide front south and east of the region north of Verdun along which pressure hitherto has been exerted. The high road from Paris to Metz runs through Verdun, passing slightly to the southeast. It is crossed at a point about 15 miles east of Verdun by the German line, bending southward in the salient to St. Mihiel. Verdun is thus being assaulted simultaneously from the north, northeast, east and southeast.

Apparently the Germans are developing an attack similar to that employed frequently, with marked success, against the Russian fortified positions in the campaign of last summer. Their tactics were to bend back the Russian lines on both sides of the selected point of attack and compel evacuation of the fortress itself.

The town referred to in the German statement as marking the southern end of the portion of the French front which has been broken is probably Marcheville-en-Woevre. This town is just south of the Paris-Metz highway, 13 miles east of Verdun.

German Gun Fire at Verdun Is Most Terrific of All History

London, Feb. 28.—While the confidence of the military court has not been shaken by it, the seriousness of the German thrust toward Verdun is recognized.

"Times" Paris correspondent reports the feeling of French people of equal anxiety, though he says, there is less apprehension than prevailed during the great Marne struggle. The correspondent adds that all accounts from the front agree that the tremendous artillery fighting in the Champagne offensive was as the mere firing of quills when compared with the pitiless bombardment which has been going throughout the Meuse heights during the past week, largely owing to the

12-inch and a 17-inch guns brought from the Russian and Serbian fronts to swell the chaos.

"Never before," says the correspondent, "has a battle been so intensively prepared nor any army been so abundantly provided with material means for victory. Nothing has been neglected that is likely to lead to success. The Germans doubtless noting the slow but sure efforts of the allies toward a reorganization of their tremendous industrial resources and the prospect of a flood of new troops from Great Britain, have realized that unless they get the knockout blow in soon, they are bound to be beaten, not on points, but by sheer exhaustion."

Germans Taking No Account of Losses In Terrific Onslaught

Paris, Feb. 28.—The Germans are continuing their violent attacks north of Verdun without regard to their sacrifices, the war office announced this afternoon.

The German attacks in the region of Beaumont, east of the Meuse have failed, the war office said, notwithstanding repeated attacks and tremendous slaughter.

The text of the statement follows: "The fighting is still carried on bitterly in the region of North Verdun, where the enemy continues his efforts on the front east of the Meuse. After the last engagement our troops retained their positions in spite of the repeated assaults of the enemy, who no longer counts his sacrifices."

"Nothing of importance has occurred on the remainder of the front."

Berlin, (via London), Feb. 26.—An official statement issued today says that considerable advances have been made east of the Meuse in the region north of Verdun in the presence of Emperor William.

The war office also announced the capture of the hills southwest of the village of Louvemont and the fortified positions to the east thereof.

The official statement says: "Resistance of the French broke down on the Woivre plain along the entire front to Marpoivre south of the high road from Paris to Metz."

"We are pursuing the retreating enemy."

NO REPLY FROM LONDON CONCERNING SEIZURES

London, Feb. 26.—Pursuant to instructions from Washington, Ambassador Page made inquiries concerning the removal by men from the British converted cruiser, Laurentic, of 38 Germans, Austrians and Turks from the American steamship China, off Shanghai. The subject is still under consideration by the British authorities and there are no indications what reply will be given.

Although the circumstances of this particular case cannot be ascertained here at present, it is understood the action taken was in accordance with the policy of the British government, adopted early in the war.

STEELE BILL PROPOSES EXTENSIVE INSTRUCTION

Washington, D. C., Feb. 26.—The government may maintain a skilled veterinarian in every county in Iowa and other great swine raising states to give instructions in use of hog cholera serum.

This is one feature of the bill dealing with federal inspection of serum which Representative Steele and a subcommittee of the House committee on agriculture have outlined.

Steele today said he has hoped the bill will be soon perfected, and that it would be added to the agricultural appropriation bill as an amendment if possible.