

WEATHER
North and South
Carolina: Fair and
colder tonight with a
moderate cold wave.
Tuesday, fair, cold.

THE WILMINGTON DISPATCH

TODAY'S NEWS
TODAY

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AMERICAN TROOPS OCCUPY A PORTION OF BATTLE FRONT

Secretary Baker Makes Official Announcement of the Taking Over

ALLIES ARE SUPERIOR ON WESTERN FRONT

Germans Outnumbered in Both Guns and Men—Must Slow up Preparations

Washington, Feb. 4.—Warning the nation not to let reports of strikes and other internal disturbances in Germany slacken its war preparations, Secretary Baker, in his weekly military review today, also makes the official announcement that American troops are at last holding a portion of the actual battlefront.

For the first time also Secretary Baker declares that it is fully believed that the Allies have a preponderance of men and guns on the Western front, despite the fact that the German line has been strengthened by troops from the Russian field. Secretary Baker declared the reports of numerical superiority have been spread by the enemy himself.

Reviewing operations for the week ending February 2, Secretary Baker says:

"American troops which have now completed their training are occupying a portion of the actual battlefront. The operations in which our troops have so far been engaged were of a minor character."

"On January 30, the Germans attempted a strongly pushed raid against our line for purposes of identification. Under cover of a heavy mist the enemy was able to reach our advanced positions. A short brush ensued and the raiders were compelled to withdraw in haste, after inflicting slight casualties."

"Two days later the enemy apparently attempted another reconnoitering thrust, but was dispersed before any headway could be made."

"Our patrols have been active in No Man's Land, and our scouts have made themselves familiar with the details of the hostile positions opposite them."

"Another event of importance took place in France. The Inter-Allied Supreme War Council met at Versailles, attended by General Bliss, chief of staff of the army, and General Pershing, as well as the representatives of France, Great Britain and Italy. Complete and close cooperation between the Allies and our forces, and a harmonious understanding between the supreme commands of all the forces engaged, promises to bring positive results. Unity of purpose on all fronts will thus be attained."

"During the past seven-day period the world has been flooded with the news of very serious internal unrest in Germany. Widespread strikes among munition workers are reported. While dissatisfaction is no doubt increasing in Germany, and strikes of increasing seriousness have occurred, we must not allow any reported disturbance within the German empire to affect the effectiveness or speed of our own preparations."

"During the week hostile concentrations in the West continued. In certain quarters the reports spread by the enemy that he holds a preponderant numerical superiority in the West, have gained some credence. While positive proof has been received that the enemy has removed troops from the Eastern theatre, and is stripping other fronts for the coming struggle in the West, nevertheless the Allies are believed still to hold a very appreciable numerical superiority, both in men and guns."

"In the British theatre numerous raids took place. South of Lens and northeast of Langemarck, as well as south of the Scarpe, the Germans sent out reconnoitering detachments. The British forces were also busily engaged sounding the enemy line, identifying new units, taking measure of the value of the new contingents which are arriving along the German line in the West from other theatres."

"Northeast of Havrincourt and near Epehy, British patrols brought in prisoners."

"Hostile artillery kept up a heavy fire throughout the week in the Ypres and Cambrai salients."

"Passchendaele was the scene of very lively shelling and the regions of Arras and Lens were also principal targets for the Germans."

"The French were also busy raiding the enemy and kept a careful out-

THE GERMAN REPLY TO GEDDES' STATEMENT

Declares British First Lord of Admiralty is Merely Talking

Amsterdam, Feb. 4.—A dispatch received here today from Berlin gives the German reply to the statement last week of Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the British Admiralty, who in reviewing the first year of unrestricted submarine warfare said the submarine menace was being held, that the sinking of merchant men, was decreasing and the destruction of U-boats increasing and that the morale of the submarine crews was deteriorating on account of the British policy of secrecy in regard to the fate of the men on submarines which failed to return to their bases. The German reply in the form of a semi-official statement follows:

"What Sir Eric Geddes said is not new. It is merely repetition of familiar assertions which are disproved by the facts and appear periodically in the speeches of talkative wire pullers in England."

"If that brave optimist Geddes expects by such means to lower the morale and the power of resistance of our U-boat crews, he will have a little success as has been met with in the attempts to bluff the German people who long ago realized that English secrecy was nothing but an expression of consciousness of weakness."

IMPORTANT MEETING HELD IN BERLIN

Asterdam, Feb. 4.—Dr. von Kuhlman, Foreign Minister; Count Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, and General von Ludendorff, the German chief quartermaster general, a semi-official announcement from Berlin says, will arrive in Berlin Monday to participate in deliberation of political and economic questions affecting the common interests and territories of Germany and Austro-Hungary. Count Botho von Wedel, the German Ambassador to Vienna,

look along their entire front. Opposite the French, the Germans confined operations to minor raids north of the Aisne and Upper Alsace.

"Profiting by the favorable atmospheric conditions which prevailed, air raids on a large scale were undertaken. The British successfully bombed railway centers in Flanders and air squadrons undertook attacks upon munition plants and other military objectives in the Rhine area. London and Paris, as well as Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne, were visited by hostile aircraft."

"In Italy a further improvement in the combat situation is noted. The Italians were very successful in following up their plans to regain points of particular strategic importance along their battlefront. As a counterpart of the French assault in the region of the Monte Tomba, the Italians early in the week launched a powerful offensive thrust against the Austrian positions along the Asiago plateau. This attack was directed against the strongly entrenched enemy positions in the region between the Frenzola and the Brenta."

"The Italians succeeded in capturing the hostile strongholds of the important peaks of the Col Del Rosso and the Monte Di Val Bella, which resulted in an appreciable advance of the Italian line in this area, the capture of 100 officers, 2,500 men and a large quantity of munitions. By this very fortunate operation the Italians were able to regain the important ground lost in this area in December, and their hold on their positions is rendered more secure."

"Austrian reaction was prompt. An assault against the new Italian positions on the Monte Di Val Bella was undertaken. The attacking forces were stopped and the Italians immediately drove a fierce counter attack and inflicted further serious casualties on the enemy. Patrol encounters took place in the Val d'Asio and in the Val Giudicaria, a hostile raiding party was driven off by hand grenades."

"Along the Balkan front a renewed activity is recorded. Patrol encounters took place west of Lake Doirou. Bulgarian and Serb detachments raided Bulgarian positions and enemy concentration in the vicinity of Serez and in the valley of the Vardar were bombed by aircraft."

"In Palestine the British are pushing slowly but steadily forward, enlarging their sphere of operations and consolidating the ground won."

LONDON NEWSPAPERS ON THE WAR COUNCIL

Few Discordant Notes on the Report Are Heard From the Press

London, Feb. 4.—The only discordant notes heard in the editorial judgment of the morning newspapers on the results of the meeting at Versailles of the Supreme War Council Commission are from the Daily News and the Daily Chronicle, which declare that the report of the conference will be received with very tempered satisfaction. Several other important newspapers announce that the report was not received in time for comment.

Additional information regarding the development and the nature of the enlargement of the Council's functions is wanted by the Daily News, and it hopes that Premier Lloyd-George, when he speaks in the House of Commons on Tuesday, will let the country know if this means the overruling of the high commands of the individual powers.

The Daily Chronicle appears to be afraid that the Council is assuming executive functions and it expects enlightenment through Parliament.

The Times calls the Versailles statement eminently satisfactory, and says:

"It tends to dispel the deceptive fog of peace which has been gathering and has been artificially thickened in many allied capitals during the past months of winter. It reaffirms the determination and objects of the Allies in unmistakable terms with a welcome note of fidelity."

The Morning Post says:

"We find it reassuring to have this unaltered conviction that the only way to peace is through an unflinching prosecution of war to victory. The surest way to peace is to dismiss thought of it. As President Wilson has said, in effect, the greatest foes of peace are the pacifists, for they do not know how to get what they want."

WANT AN INCREASE IN WATER RATE ON COTTON

Clyde and Mallory Lines Join in Movement for Higher Rate

Washington, Feb. 4.—The Clyde and Mallory steamship companies today joined in the movement to increase water rates on cotton from Southern ports to New York and Boston. They ask increases of six cents per hundred pounds to Boston and seven cents to New York on upland cotton and cotton linters from Brunswick, Charleston and Jacksonville, in applications filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The Clyde Steamship Company also applied for increased rates on transferring turpentine, rosin and other naval stores by lighters from its North river pier, in the New York harbor to the National Transportation and Terminal Company's yards, Union Naval Stores Company's piers and the, South Brooklyn Naval Stores yards, eighteen cents a barrel being asked.

CARMEN'S STRIKE TIES UP ST. LOUIS

St. Louis, Feb. 4.—Long before dawn today thousands of people left their homes on the tramp to work, on account of the demoralization of the street car service, caused by a strike of conductors and motormen begun late Saturday night.

Although the United Railway announced last night that service would be resumed at daybreak today under police protection, at 8 o'clock no cars had left the barns.

Early today no violence had been reported at police headquarters.

LAST INCREMENT

Washington, Feb. 4.—Provost General Crowder today announced that the movement of last increments of men selected in the first draft will begin on February 23 and continue for a period of five days. This will complete the operation of the first draft as all States will have furnished their full quotas.

The movement will be by the strength of the nation by up to 685,000 men contained in the first draft.

The numbers of men will be started to the South and West on February 23 are:

Camp Lee, Virginia, 3,000; Jackson, S. C., 3,903 (negroes); Gordon, Ga., 2,800 (negroes); Travis, Texas, 7,558; and Pike, Ark., 2,000 (negroes). West Virginia will send 1,520 men to Camp Meade, Md., instead of to Camp Lee.

WILMINGTON WAS NOT OVERLOOKED AS EXPORT PORT

McAdoo Assures Congressman North Carolina Port Will Get Its Share

THIS CITY TO RECEIVE FULL CONSIDERATION

As the Plan for Relieving New York's Congestion is Worked Out, Wilmington Will Be Used

(By George H. Manning.)
Washington, D. C., Feb. 4.—The interests of the Port of Wilmington as a point of exportation for supplies to Europe are being well taken care of, and North Carolina's principal harbor is to receive the fullest consideration from the Shipping Board and Director of Railroads, Congressman Godwin said today.

"I have talked with Director of Railroads McAdoo about Wilmington and urged the port's greater utilization as a point of embarkation," said Mr. Godwin. "Senators Simmons and Overman have also done what they could in this connection."

"Mr. McAdoo told me there was no intention of overlooking Wilmington when he directed that large shipments of cotton be exported through Savannah and Charleston. He said he had thought Georgia and South Carolina better cotton States than North Carolina. That was the way he expressed it."

"He assured me that officials of his bureau and the Shipping Board have Wilmington in mind, and when it is possible to go along further with the plan of further utilizing the Southern ports to relieve congestion at New York and Philadelphia, Wilmington will receive the fullest consideration."

ALL ACCOUNTANTS TO BE MOBILIZED

Washington, Feb. 4.—Mobilization of all certified accountants who come within the draft law, has been ordered so as to supply vacancies in the army business organization.

Henry E. Wise, attorney for paper manufacturers, appearing at a hearing today before the Federal commission, told the commission he had received as chairman of a draft board in New York, orders from the adjutant general to call in at once all registered accountants, put them through a physical examination and mobilize them.

CHICAGO IS FACING SERIOUS SITUATION To Take Over Oil Control

Washington, Feb. 4.—The presidential proclamation placing the oil industry under the Fuel Administration is expected to be issued today.

BRITISH CASUALTIES DECREASE

London, Feb. 4.—The British casualties reported during the week ended today totalled 6,354, divided as follows:

Killed or died of wounds: Officers, 51; men, 1,325. Wounded or missing: Officers, 173; men, 4,805.

The lowest mark for many months past is reached by last week's casualties. They compare with 8,588, the previous week, with 17,043 the week immediately preceding that and with 9,951 for the week ending December 31, the previous low figure for any week in recent months.

It was charged that he gave her a number of pills and that she had taken other medicine he had given her. The fatal dose was taken while the bride was visiting the home of a friend.

HALIFAX DISASTER BLAMED ON PILOT AND SHIP OFFICER

Pilot Mackay and Captain of French Munitions Ship Are Arrested

RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLISION PLACED

The Investigating Commission Makes Reports That Captain and Pilot Violated Rules of the Road

Halifax, N. S., Feb. 4.—Blame for the collision between the French munitions ship, Mont Blanc, and the Belgian relief ship, Imo, resulting in the explosion of the former vessel which destroyed a large part of Halifax, on December 6, was placed upon Pilot Mackay, of Halifax, and Captain Lamodec, of the French ship, in a judgment announced today by the government commission, which investigated the collision.

With the announcement of the commission's judgment, Pilot Mackay was arrested, charged with manslaughter, the commission having recommended that he be criminally prosecuted and his license cancelled.

The commission also recommended to the French authorities the cancellation of the license of Captain Lamodec, and that he be dealt with according to the laws of his country."

Captain Lamodec was also arrested, charged with manslaughter. The commission held that Captain Lamodec and the pilot violated the rules of the road.

Captain Lamodec and Pilot Mackay are in addition found guilty by the commission of neglect of public safety on the ground they did not take proper steps to warn the inhabitants of the city of a probable explosion. The commission further "considers the pilotage authorities deserving of censure" for permitting Mackay to pilot ships since the disaster.

Captain Wyatt, chief examination officer of the port, is found guilty of neglect in performance of duties requiring him to keep himself informed of the movements, actual and intended, of ships in the harbor, and in not taking adequate steps to enforce various regulations.

Fifteen hundred persons were killed, several thousand injured and an area of two and a half square miles adjacent to the narrows was laid bare by the explosion aboard the Mont Blanc. Pilot Mackay was bringing the Mont Blanc into port when the vessel was rammed amidships by the Imo, outward bound. The weather was clear and as the ships passed in the narrow channel signals were confused, it was said, and the crash came before the pilot of the Imo, now dead, was able to have her swung about into free waters.

The accident set to tanks of benzol on the deck of the Mont Blanc and instantly great volumes of smoke shot skyward. Realizing the danger, Mackay, Captain Lamodec and the ship's crew took to the boats and proceeded at top speed toward shore. As they landed they continued to run. They were more than a mile from the water when the ship blew up. Every man in the party was knocked down and two were injured by flying bits of steel, one fatally.

Smoke from the burning ship was observed 50 miles at sea half an hour before the explosion. The spectacle attracted thousands of persons to the water front and none dreamed of the impending danger. As the flames from the deck reached down to the ground and ripped out nearly every window in Halifax. Several hundred persons standing along the water front were hurled into the harbor and it is believed by the authorities that many bodies are still under water, frozen to the bottom.

The greatest loss of life and damage occurred in the north end of the city, largely populated by working people.

DR. JOHNSON'S CASE CALLED BEFORE JURY

Richmond, Va., Feb. 4.—Dr. Lemuel J. Johnson, of Middlesex, N. C., was indicted by the grand jury today for the murder of his bride, Mrs. Alice Knight Johnson, here last December. It is charged that poison taken by Mrs. Johnson in the belief that it was ordinary medicinal preparation was administered by Dr. Johnson with criminal intent.

It was charged that he gave her a number of pills and that she had taken other medicine he had given her. The fatal dose was taken while the bride was visiting the home of a friend.

(Continued on Page Two).

HITCHCOCK SPEAKS IN FAVOR OF WAR CABINET MEASURE

Nebraska Senator Follows the Line of Argument Laid by Chamberlain

MAKES ATTACK ON WAR DEPARTMENT

Says Preposterous to Talk of Million and a Half Men in France This Year. Sincere But Misled

Washington, Feb. 4.—Secretary Bakers recent statement to the Senate Military Committee that the United States would have half a million soldiers in France early this year and that prospects were not unpromising for ships to carry 1,000,000 more who would be ready during the year, were characterized by Senator Hitchcock in an address to the Senate today as "absolutely preposterous and so exaggerated as to convey an entirely false impression as to what we can do and what we are doing."

Supporting the committee's bills for a war cabinet and munitions director, Senator Hitchcock declared that Secretary Baker was no doubt sincere but was misled by lack of information regarding secrecy of ships into making sanguine predictions. He said President Wilson himself "does not know the real situation," and cited this feature as an illustration of the absence of government co-ordination.

Administration leaders prepared to reply to Senator Hitchcock, whose speech launched the debate which has been impending since Secretary Baker made his statement and the President made known his opposition to the Military Committee's plans for reorganizing the government's war machinery.

"Concerning that much of a big task has been credibly done, the Nebraska Senator insisted that centralized and co-ordinated war operations through a war cabinet and centralized purchasing through a munitions director are imperative. He asserted that the President and Secretary Baker had tried but failed to attain the object and that the government's system was obsolete. The committee's explanation, he argued, would not embarrass or interfere with the President's direction of the war."

Sharp criticism of many government war activities but without attacking individuals, was made by the Senator in illustrating his arguments. "Blunders that almost surpass belief have occurred in the War Department," he said, and the shipbuilding situation he described as a "farce and almost a crime." He described the transportation system as "broken down" and is a "gigantic wreck" with 2,000,000 tons of freight piled up at New York, without shipping facilities; that the fuel administration orders have paralyzed fuel and other industries and that food distribution also has been inefficient.

In flatly denying Secretary Baker's statement that the government has a plan for the war, the Senator said the Military Committee was thunder-struck by the war secretary's optimistic assertions.

"I am afraid to go too deeply into shipping figures," he added, "for one might be charged with giving information to the enemy. All who are informed as to the present supply of our shipping were thunder-struck at the statements of Secretary Baker. His sanguine predictions as to our ability to ship men to Europe and supply them when there are exaggerations of the wildest sort."

"To supply 1,000,000 men in France, supposing we could get them over there, it will require five million tons of shipping in constant use. Where is that coming from and when is it coming? We all know the total tonnage now available is nothing like that amount. We all fear it will not approximate that a year from now."

"Yet the Secretary of War is so out of touch with the shipping board and shipping authorities that he makes a statement that is absolutely preposterous. I have no doubt of his sincerity to which one department is out of touch with another department."

Turning to Secretary Baker's war plan, Senator Hitchcock said:

"Secretary Baker says we have plans. I am sorry to disagree with him if there is one thing more conspicuous by its absence than any other in the operation of the various departments and bureaus in Washington. I do not deny that the various departments have planned as far as they could in advance but who has prepared the master-plan which will harmonize all the other plans? Nobody. Nobody could."

Referring to the President's opposition to the two committee bills, the

AMERICANS ELATED OVER GOOD WORK OF THE ARTILLERY

First Big Gun Duel With Germans Was Highly Successful

INFLECTED DAMAGE ON ENEMY WORKS

American Gunners Reveal Their Effectiveness in Live-ly Exchange of Shots, Doing Much Injury

With the American Army in France, Sunday, Feb. 3.—American officers are elated over the results of the first artillery duel between American and German gunners, which followed a preliminary shelling in official reports to the headquarters of their organizations, the infantry commanders today paid tribute to the promptness with which the artillery responded to the call for a barrage and the effectiveness of the artillery fire.

Aerial reconnaissances today showed that the American gunfire had had a very destructive effect. It will require several nights of hard work under artillery fire for the Germans to repair the first line trenches carved in by the American 75s and to patch the gaps in the barbed wire. It is known that at least three enemy dugouts were demolished, probably with some casualties. On the other hand, the damage done to the American trenches will be repaired before tomorrow morning.

In a regimental headquarters village shelled by the enemy, many buildings were wrecked completely or in part, the debris being piled in the streets. There were no casualties among the officers. The whistle of two big shells gave warning of the coming bombardment and officers and men sought shelter in the dugouts. The bombardment of the headquarters village came at the end of a period of shelling which had extended gradually along several kilometers of the front.

The German artillery opened the engagement with a desultory bombardment of the American trenches at a certain point, firing many shrapnel shells. In the midst of this a red rocket calling for a barrage ascended from the German first lines.

Before the German artillery could respond the American 75s summoned into action by a signal from the first line laid a curtain of fire along the enemy first lines. Then began the battle of the gunners. The increased intensity of the German fire was met immediately by the Americans, who not only showered shells on the original sector, but quickly extended their activity to a wide front.

Within 20 minutes the 75s and larger pieces were booming all along the valley, the shelling finally spreading to a town in which regimental headquarters was located. As darkness settled down the guns grew quiet.

Heavy mists again overhung the American sector today. Consequently there was little artillery work and no aerial activity.

LIKELY TO ABANDON HEATLESS MONDAYS

Order Expected to Follow Conference of Administrators in Washington

Washington, Feb. 4.—Heatless Monday, being observed for the third time today, may be abandoned by the Fuel Administration as the result of a conference of State administrators being held here.

The conference was called by Fuel Administrator Garfield to ascertain the saving of coal effected by the five day industrial closing order and the heatless Mondays already observed. Fuel officials have indicated that reports of the closing showed satisfactory results, the heatless holidays might be discontinued.

Final decision in the matter is expected tomorrow at a conference between Administrator Garfield and Director General McAdoo.

German Trenches Raided.
London, Feb. 4.—"Early last night a party of our troops raided the enemy's trenches east of Hargicourt," says today's official announcement. "The hostile artillery was active during the night in the neighborhood of Lens and northeast of Gavrelle."