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TO RUSH TROOPS TO FRONT.

Agreement Made at Recent Inter-Allied Conference in Paris American Troops At Once Considered Vital. It is Believed With Heavy Reinforcements Drawn From The Eastern to Western Front The Germans Are Preparing For Big Offensive. Snow Aids Italians.

The Associated Press War Summary for Wednesday published in yesterday's daily papers state that entire unity henceforth is to be the watchword of the United States and her Allies in the prosecution of the war.

American troops are to be rushed to the fighting fronts in large numbers as quickly as possible, and there is to be perfect co-ordination in naval, military, financial, food, war industries and diplomatic matters.

The agreement between the Allies for unified action was reached at the recent inter-allied conference in Paris, which was attended by an American mission headed by Col. E. M. House and arrangements already have been made for the United States to carry out its part of the compact.

In order that American troops may be dispatched in a constant stream to Europe, the Allied nations are so to arrange their merchant shipping that the necessary transports will be available for the huge task. That quick work in getting the American army to the front is most vital is indicated by a statement of Major General Maurice, chief director of military operations at the British war office. General Maurice says it is probable that with their heavy reinforcements, drawn from the eastern to the western front the Germans shortly will make a strong offensive against the British and French armies and that the enemy may be expected to make some gains.

Optimism was expressed, however, that the enemy would not be able to inflict the same degree of damage upon the Allies as he has sustained at the hands of the British during the last year.

Apparent proof that the Germans are preparing for a big offensive is the almost continuous sentiment of various sectors along the British and French fronts. Aside from these bombardments there has been little activity except by small raiding parties. A heavy snow is falling and another cold wave has set in on the French front from St. Quentin to the Vosges mountains.

Snow and cold weather also are giving the Italians a chance further to strengthen their northern line against the Austro-Germans. Aside from reciprocal artillery duels little fighting of moment is in progress. In an endeavor to offset their loss of ground resulting from having been driven back across the lower Piave river the enemy has tried to effect a landing on the west bank of the stream a short distance from the mouth of the Piave. His boats, however, were caught under the fire of the Italian guns, and the project had to be given up.

Austro-German airmen continue to bomb towns on the Venetian plains. Treviso and Bassano have again been attacked, and bombs also were

dropped on Mestre. Little damage was done by the bombs. Three of the enemy aircraft were shot down in aerial battles or by anti-aircraft guns.

Reports from Russia indicate that the negotiations for peace between the Bolshevik government and the Teutonic Allies have reached a virtual impasse owing to the unreasonable demands of the Teutons. Particularly distasteful to the Russians is the attitude of the Central Powers with regard to holding Poland, Lithuania and Courland and their determination to retain garrisons at Riga, Libau and other Baltic ports.

Twenty-one British merchantmen were sunk by mines or submarines last week, as compared with twelve the previous week.

RUSH COAL TO NEW ENGLAND.

Four Government Departments Decide Upon Quick Measures for Relief. Two Hundred Cars of Coal Diverted From Hampton Roads to North Carolina Points—1,500 Cars on the Pennsylvania Released.

Quick measures to relieve the New England coal shortage have taken up jointly by the fuel administration, the navy department, the shipping board and the new director-general of railroads.

The shipping board has ordered nine steamers to Hampton Roads for coal cargoes for New England and directed them to remain in the service until the shortage is over.

The navy department put at the disposal of the fuel administration a part of a large store of steam coal at the Boston navy yard and arranged to employ idle naval tugs and colliers in transportation of coal from Hampton Roads to New England ports. It also instructed navy yard commanders to distribute to the poor scraps of timber at the yards.

The director of railroads has released 1,500 cars of coal standing on Pennsylvania railroad tracks between New York and Harrisburg, Pa., and directed they go immediately to New England cities.

In addition to the nine ships turned over to the New England coal carrying trade the shipping board will try to supply other vessels, and will utilize all tugs and barges that may be spared from other work.

Authority has been granted by the director-general to railroads to disregard priority orders when it is necessary to relieve car congestion is expected to expedite the movement of coal. Priority orders, officials say have hampered rather than hurried coal movement. Under these orders railroad traffic men use their judgment as to what to move first, always bearing in mind that coal and food must move rapidly.

The fuel administration's plan for zone distribution of coal submitted by Dr. Garfield could not easily be worked out with the railroads still in private hands, but under government operation fuel administration officials think it can be put into practice successfully. Carried to the point to which officials hope to see it operating, it will help to eliminate cross-hauling of coal and make for a more equitable distribution than possible now. Every producing district would be required to serve a particular territory and no contracts for the sale of coal would be approved if a producer sought to sell outside the territory allotted him.

Two hundred cars of coal have been already sent to North Carolina.

Tilley-Stephenson.

Varina, N. C., Jan. 2.—Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Stephenson announce the marriage of their daughter Barbara Inez to Mr. Alvin Alfred Tilley, of Fuquay Springs, North Carolina, Jan. second, nineteen hundred and eighteen.

Six deaths one that of a nurse, among members of the American expeditionary force were reported Monday by General Pershing. The nurse was May Berry, of Frankton, Ind. Among the soldiers reported dead was Private Garland E. McCoy, of Portsmouth, Va., a member of the aero squadron. He was a victim of pneumonia.

NORFOLK HAS BIG FIRE.

Loss of Property Estimated at Two Million Dollars. Almost Two Whole Blocks Burned. Fire Supposed to Be of Incendiary Origin. Three Men Killed.

Norfolk had a disastrous fire Tuesday. The account given out by the Associated Press to Wednesday's daily papers, in part follows:

Norfolk, Va., Jan. 1.—Nearly two blocks in the heart of Norfolk's business district, including the Monticello Hotel, were destroyed, three men were killed and a score more injured in a series of explosions and fires today which both police and naval authorities believe were incendiary. The fire had been checked tonight, but still was burning fiercely in the ruins. The loss is roughly estimated at more than \$2,000,000.

Three distinct explosions in as many buildings, one after the fire once virtually had been brought under control, led to the general belief that enemy agents were at work. Mayor Mayo practically placed the city under martial law by turning the situation over to naval officers, and some 2,500 marines and blue-jackets from nearby naval stations assisted the police and home guards in maintaining order and preventing vandalism.

Naval patrols rounded up suspicious persons throughout the afternoon, while five men were arrested as suspects. Two of these Hugo Schmidt and H. K. Lassing, said to be Germans, were turned over to the Department of Justice agents. Tonight there were reports that two Germans had been shot by sailors during the day, but neither the police nor naval authorities would confirm this.

The fire started before dawn in the old Granby Theater on Granby street and gained rapid headway as the firemen were handicapped by frozen fire hydrants, low water pressure and near zero temperature. It quickly spread to the Monticello Hotel and other nearby buildings in the block. It was brought under control late in the day, but broke out anew early tonight, leaping across Granby street and leveled half of the block there before being checked.

Falling floors and walls took toll of firemen and naval guards. One fireman, Charles McCoy, was killed and seven others hurt in the collapse of an upper floor of the Monticello Hotel in the day. Tonight two firemen and several sailors were caught in a falling wall of the Lenox building. Three were brought out badly hurt, but two others were left in the debris.

Firemen of Norfolk, Portsmouth and Suffolk, with organized sailor fire brigades, fought heroically amid ice and blinding smoke, and bluejackets led the rescue work when the fighters were trapped. Several of the firemen caught in the hotel were brought out alive through the daring of a score of the Jack Tars.

A snowstorm raged through South Carolina Monday morning, according to reports to the local weather bureau at Columbia, accentuating the already acute conditions caused by the fuel shortage. The lowest temperature reported at Columbia Monday morning was 12 degrees above zero, or four degrees higher than the reading Sunday morning, which was the coldest December day there in 31 years.

AT THE CAPITAL OF BANNER.

Newsy Batch of Items from Benson. Death of Mr. J. Ransom Beasley. Cold Spell Played Havoc With Water Pipes in School Building and in the Homes of the Town. People Who Come and Go. Maybe Your Name is in the List.

Benson, January 3.—Presiding Elder J. E. Underwood, of the Raleigh District, will be here at the Benson Circuit Saturday, the 5th day of January. The Conference will be held Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Bosie Barbour, of Elevation Township, has accepted a position with Mr. Preston Johnson.

Mrs. Willie Weeks, of Rocky Mount, visited relatives here for several days recently, returning to her home yesterday.

Miss Gertrude Stallings, of Selma, was here for several days this week, the guest of Mrs. J. H. Rose.

Mrs. A. S. Thomas, who has been quite sick in the Sanford Hospital for some time, is somewhat improved at this time.

Mr. Felton Stone returned the first of the week from Emporia, Va., where he spent the holidays with relatives.

Mr. J. Ransom Beasley died at his home a few miles below here yesterday after a short illness with pneumonia. His remains were laid away in the family burying ground today. He leaves a wife and several children.

Miss Neta Penny returned to her home the first of the week after spending a few days here with friends.

Mr. L. A. Hodges returned the first of the week to Camp Sevier, S. C., after a short visit to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Hodges.

Miss Kate Hamilton returned to her home at Jonesboro the first of the week. She formerly held a position with the Farmers Commercial Bank of this city.

Mr. Wade Brady, after spending the holidays here with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bras. Brady, returned this week to Winterville where he is employed.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Lassiter, of Four Oaks, are here for a few days at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Moore.

Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Crowder and children returned to Buies Creek the first of the week, after visiting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Williams.

Mr. William Canaday, of Richmond, returned home yesterday after spending a few days at the home of Mr. and Mrs. O. A. Barbour.

Mr. Jeffrey, who is with the Peacock Drug Company, returned yesterday from a few days visit to relatives at Elm City.

Mr. Claud Canaday returned Tuesday from a business trip to Richmond, Va.

Mrs. Brosia returned the first of the week from Camp Sevier where she spent a few days with her husband, Mr. Brosia Porter.

Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Hobbs and children left last week for Athens, Tenn., on a visit to the home of Mr. Richard Creech. They will be away for two weeks or more on the trip.

Messrs. Henry P. Johnson, Claud Bryant and Haywood Dixon, of Sampson County, are in Benson today on business matters.

Mr. Charlis Max McLamb left the first of the week for Camp Sevier, S. C., after spending a few days here with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. W. McLamb.

Mr. J. T. Coats, of Harnett County, returned Sunday from Nash County where he has been attending a Union Meeting. He spent Sunday night here with friends.

Misses Livia Williams and Myrtle Wood returned the first of the week from Roseboro where they visited relatives for several days the past week.

Mr. W. D. Boon was a business visitor to Lillington Tuesday.

Quite a bit of damage was done in and around Benson by the recent very cold weather. At the School Building the engine froze up and several of the pipes thereto burst doing quite considerable damage. Many pipes in private homes were frozen up and burst also.

The prize of a \$50 Liberty Bond, offered by J. B. Ivey, of Charlotte, State merchants' representative under the food administration, for the best article on food conservation, was awarded to Miss Ethel Abernathy, of Charlotte. Several score papers were offered.

OLD NORTH STATE NEWS.

Live Items of Interest Clipped And Culled From North Carolina Newspapers.

The taxidermist at Morganton says large game seems to be plentiful this year, and western Carolina sportsmen are getting their share. He is now mounting a large buck head for J. M. Barnhardt, of Lenoir, and one for Ernest Ervin, of Morganton.

A saving each month of more than 6,500 pounds of white flour, approximately the same quantity of beef and pork, and more than 2,600 pounds of sugar is reported by 56 hotels and cafes in North Carolina which answered a recent questionnaire sent out by the Food Administration in terms of pounds. Others report a saving in these products of from 10 to 50 per cent of the normal consumption.

Saturday night at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. James Gantt at Newton, their little nine-months daughter was burned to death. The mother had only been out of the room a few minutes when she returned to find her child laying on a bed of coals, it having crawled to the fire and falling in face foremost. It only lived a few minutes after it was found. The little one was frightfully burned about the face and head.

A call was made on Governor Bickett Monday for the \$20,000 appropriation by the last legislature for the buildings to be erected in the establishment of the North Carolina State Orthopaedic hospital and school, the location for which has been chosen near Gastonia, which town, and the other friends of the movement, have raised a like sum of \$20,000 to assure a \$40,000 plant, not including the site, which is of ample acreage.

Dr. Kemp P. Battle, Chapel Hill, recently celebrated his 86th birthday, still full of vigor and of love for the State University. For nearly three-quarters of a century Dr. Battle has been closely connected with the life of the University of North Carolina. In 1845 he entered there as a freshman. After the war he was elected president of the institution and it was under his wise and beneficent management that the University again established its prestige in the country.

Internal revenue collections at Winston-Salem during 1917 amounted to \$24,842,237.88. The receipts in 1915 were slightly more than nine million dollars and amounted to a little more than \$15,000,000 during 1916. The receipts for January, 1915, were \$575,803.56 compared with \$3,240,098.49, for November, 1917, the December receipts having been less by about two and a third millions, because of the holidays. All of the receipts were from the sale of stamps for tobacco and tobacco products.

Eighty-nine counties of the 100 in North Carolina are represented in the student body at the State University. Orange leads with 47, Wake has 45; Mecklenburg 38; Guilford 38; Buncombe 34; Forsyth 33; Gaston 25; Iredell 23; Wayne 23; Rowan 22; Johnston 20; Durham 18; Alamance 16; Pitt 16; Burke 15; Edgecombe 15; Lenoir 15; Halifax 14; Craven 13; Richmond 13; Randolph 13; Duplin 12; Rockingham 12; Surry 12; Wilson 12; Beaufort 10; Cumberland 10; Nash 10; Union 10; Vance 10. The other counties have from 1 to 9 each.

Plans for the new Presbyterian church at Chapel Hill have now been approved, and are being sent out to contractors. It is expected that construction work will begin on the church early in March. The Colonial style of architecture will be followed. The church is to be constructed according to plans made by Mr. Hobart B. Upjohn, of New York, architect. Mr. Upjohn is a church architect of national prominence, having designed churches and cathedrals in New York city and elsewhere. This church is the gift of Dr. James Sprunt, of Wilmington, in memory of his wife.

The state hospital weather bureau report at Morganton Monday morning showed that the temperature went down to 11 below zero Sunday night, by far the lowest ever recorded there. A three-inch snow fell Sunday on top of the previous snow of two weeks ago which had melted but very little. One of the oldest residents says that only once in the last 50 years has the temperature gone down to 10 below, so that Sunday night was probably the coldest ever known in Morganton. People have been crossing the smaller streams with teams and loaded wagons on the ice for several days.

NEWS AROUND BENTONVILLE.

Soldier Boys Home for Holidays. Books Close Saturday for Bond Election. Two Couples Wed During the Holiday Season. Many Visitors Come and Go.

Bentonville Jan. 2.—Christmas was the quietest ever witnessed in this section.

Rev. T. W. Siler preached a very able sermon at Ebenezer church on Sunday night, after which the people gave him a pounding.

Mr. E. J. Williams, of Clayton, spent the holidays in this section with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. D. J. Williams.

Miss Maude Westbrook, who is attending school at Greenville, N. C., spent the holidays at home with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Westbrook.

Messrs. W. B. Beasley, H. V. Rose and J. M. Massey, all of Camp Jackson, S. C., and Mr. Kirk Cole, of the United States Navy, spent part of the holidays at home. The boys are looking fine, and say they are faring good.

Th registration books for the road bond election which will be held on Tuesday, January 15, will close on Saturday, January 5. All who wish to take part in this election and have not yet registered should get busy and get their names on the books.

Mrs. H. Cole and daughters, Misses Elsie and Margaret, returned to their home in Wilmington last Monday after spending a few days in this section.

Prof. N. M. Eason, of Smithfield, spent the holidays in this section with the St. John's Choir in preparing for the Vocal. On account of bad weather the Vocal was a failure.

On Christmas Day at 2:30 P. M., Mr. Edgar Barfield drove over in Wayne and was united in marriage to Miss Roxie Porter. Rev. T. W. Siler, Newton Grove, performed the ceremony.

Last Wednesday night Mr. Pete Graham and Miss Lettie Thornton drove over to Squire C. Williams' and were united in the holy bonds of matrimony.

On Christmas morning about 10:30 A. M., while our people were enjoying the Christmas goodies our hearts were saddened by the sad news of the accidental death of one of our best citizens, Mr. Alonzo Hood. Mr. Hood was laid to rest on Wednesday in the family burying ground under the auspices of the Mill Creek Camp 469 Woodmen of the World.

Mrs. D. Stephenson and children, of McCullers and Mr. and Mrs. Howard Casey, of Mt. Olive, spent the holidays in this section with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Beasley.

Mr. Mat Blackman, of Charlotte, N. C., spent the holidays in this section with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Blackman. Mat is one of Bentonville's sons who has made good in Charlotte.

PRICE OF COTTON SEED MEAL.

Ten Tons Minimum Quantity to Be Sold at Wholesale Figures.

Raleigh, Jan. 3.—The minimum wholesale quantity of cottonseed meal which must be sold by the crusher at \$49.50 per ton was today reduced from 30 tons to 10 tons by a ruling issued by State Food Administrator Henry A. Page. The ruling sent by Mr. Page to all of the crushers in the State is as follows:

"Any quantity of cottonseed meal consisting of less than ten tons may be considered as a retail sale, for which not exceeding \$2.50 per ton above the agreed retail price may be charged, and any quantity of 10 tons or more shall be considered a wholesale proposition and the buyer of same shall not be charged exceeding the agreed price plus any drayage or cartage that may be necessary to make delivery."

Exports of merchandise of New York during the calendar year ending December 31, amounted to \$2,937,512,242, according to a statement on foreign commerce issued at the custom house. The figures for 1916 were \$2,790,932,975. Imports of merchandise for 1916 were \$1,360,514,517 while the year previous the total was \$1,257,184,587. Exports of gold and silver during the year totaled \$152,383,992 and in 1916, \$143,394,077 while imports amounted to \$28,168,247, and the year previous \$80,482,342.