

THE WEATHER.

Overcast Sunday, probably snow flurries in the mountains; Monday fair, not much change in temperature.

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CAPTURE OF FORT DOUAMONT AS CLAIMED BY THE GERMAN IS NOT ADMITTED IN FRENCH STATEMENT

However, the Battle at That Point is Described as Being Desperate.

GERMANS DRIVEN BACK

French Claim Recapture of Positions Taken by Enemy Saturday Morning.

Russians Capture Persian City of Kermanshah.

The French war office, in its latest official statement, describes the battle around Fort Douaumont—one of the outlying forts of Verdun—as desperate, but makes no actual admission of the capture of the fort by the Germans, as claimed in the official communication issued at Berlin.

Fort Douaumont, says the French statement, is an advance element of the old defensive organization of Verdun fortress, and goes on to say that the position captured Saturday morning by the Germans, after several fruitless assaults, was reached again by French troops, who succeeded in advancing beyond that point and have maintained their ground. Their position referred to is not clearly defined.

Berlin Says Fort Has Fallen.

Under the eyes of the emperor, whose presence at the front is officially announced, the German infantry has advanced to the charge on both sides of the salient wherein lies Verdun, and, according to Berlin, has stormed and taken the outlying fort of Douaumont, northeast of the fortress, while on the plain of the Woivre to the east and southeast it has swept back the French lines and broken their persistent slong a wide front, forcing them to retreat with the Germans in pursuit.

The Crown Prince's armies engaged in the terrific battle have had their way blasted out for them, according to correspondents near the scene, by what is said to be the greatest concentration of artillery fire known to history, in which the monster guns of the Germans and Austrians, brought from the Serbian and Russian fronts, have played a prominent part.

Heavy bombardments by the Germans to the east and west of the Meuse were met by vigorous counter attacks, the French have resisted the attempts of the German to capture Champeville and LaCote de Poivre (Pepper Hill), two positions of strategic importance.

Paris is Confident. Late dispatches from Paris say that utmost confidence is felt there in the ability of the French troops to withstand the German assaults, and in some quarters a continuation of the battle centering around Verdun for the next two weeks is looked for.

While this was going on, the Germans in the Woivre were assailing the French lines on the eastern side of the salient, the two operations apparently being designed to push in the sides of the projecting front, a buckling process which if kept up would soon result in the fall of the fortress war theatres.

The French, however, are defending their stronghold with notable tenacity, according to various accounts, inflicting terrible losses on the attacking forces. Paris has conceded the fall of Fort Douaumont, although admitting that the fighting there had taken an extremely sanguinary character and it only mentioned the Woivre region in an announcement that the advance of posts held for observation purposes along the line from Ornes to Hennefont had been attacked by the German front are declared by Paris to be made without regard to the losses sustained.

Notwithstanding the concentration of attention upon the great strategic of the western front, the current dispatches show that events of considerable interest, while not comparable in importance to those around Verdun, are happening in other war theatres.

Russians Capture Kermanshah. From Persia comes the Russian announcement that the important city of Kermanshah has been taken by storm by Russian forces. Recent Petrograd advices have indicated an expectation that the southern movement of this Russian army might eventually link it up with the British operation in neighboring Mesopotamia. The advance to Kermanshah places the Russian column within 150 miles of Kut-El-Amara, on the Persian frontier, which a British force is at present endeavoring to reach for the relief of General Townshend's beleaguered army at Kut.

In Albania the Austrians are evidently having things all their own way, particularly in the territory as far south as Durazzo. An official statement issued in Rome admits the evacuation of Durazzo by the Italians, who were reported to have been (Continued on Page Twelve.)

TURKS IN RETREAT FRENCH CONFIDENT ARE STILL PURSUED OF VERDUN VICTORY

Advancing Russians Meeting Little Resistance. Paris Unusually Calm, as the Great Battle is Waged.

ASCHKALA IS OCCUPIED FAITH IN THE FORTS

Russians Claim Capture of 235 Officers, 12,753 Men and 323 Guns at the Fall of Erzerum—Turkish Army Demoralized.

Petrograd, via London, Feb. 26.—The capture of 235 officers, 12,753 men and 323 guns in the operations about Erzerum was announced in the official statement from the Russian war office today. The pursuit of the Turkish army continues and the Russians have occupied the village of Aschkala, 50 miles west of Erzerum on the road to Trebizond. The statement follows:

"Western (Russian) front: In the Mikhalche region on the Dniester, in Galicia, the enemy, after prolonged bomb throwing, succeeded in occupying a crater, but our troops by an impetuous counter-attack, drove him out.

"Caucasus front: The result of the Erzerum operations was attained with relatively insignificant losses, considering the great success we achieved.

"We took prisoner 235 Turkish officers and 12,753 men and captured nine flags and 323 guns, besides taking in Erzerum, a Turkish fortress of the first-class with large depots of arms, telegraph and telephone apparatus.

"We continue the pursuit of the remainder of the defeated and demoralized Turkish army, without respite. Fifty miles west of Erzerum, on the road to Trebizond we threw back the enemy rear guards and occupied the village of Aschkala.

"The resistance offered by the Turkish forces, retreating from Erzerum, to the advancing Russians apparently has frittered out on account of the general lack of ammunition and supplies. Unable to defend points of natural advantage, the Turks are continuing their precipitate flight into the fastnesses of Asia Minor.

"The loss of Ishtir, which was an important munition and food depot serving the right wing, the Turkish coast troops and the left wing, the Erzerum forces, further crippled the power of Turkish resistance. It also cut off main road communication between Erzerum and Trebizond. This means that the Turkish troops which are retreating from Erzerum upon Trebizond can now only reach the coast through a difficult mountain district where they will be within striking distance of the Russian Black Sea fleet, whose bombardment of the Armenian littoral continues.

REQUIRED 30 MINUTES TO LOWER LIFE BOATS

Passengers Ordered in Them Without Investigation.

Dr. Frank A. Houser, a Passenger on Liner Cretan, Makes Signed Statement Regarding Collision Off Hatteras Friday.

Norfolk, Va., Feb. 26.—Rev. Frank A. Houser, pastor of the Trinity Baptist church, of Cleveland, O., and editor of the Trinity Baptist Herald and the Pennsylvania Labor Journal, who, with his wife was a passenger on the Merchants & Miners' Transportation Company's steamer Cretan when she was rammed by the steamer Dorothy off Hatteras Friday morning, declared in a signed statement today that it took the crew of the Cretan 30 minutes to launch the life boats.

"If the ship had been in danger of sudden sinking," he declared, "all the passengers would have been drowned before the first life boat was ready for launching. The boats were lowered after a half hour's hard work on the part of the crew who were trying to find out which way the boats were to be tossed from their davits."

THINKS WARNING IS BETTER THAN WAR

Overman Replies to Letters of North Carolinians.

WILL STAND BY WILSON

Replying to Mr. J. A. Taylor and Others, Senator Says, if Negotiations Fail, He Will Vote for Resolutions Now Pending.

(Special Star Telegram.)

Washington, Feb. 26.—Senator Overman today sent a joint letter to a number of North Carolinians, who have urged him to support the President. As already stated in these dispatches, Mr. Overman says that he is willing for President Wilson to steer the ship but should these negotiations fail, he will support a resolution warning Americans not to travel on armed merchantmen. This would not surrender any rights now guaranteed an American citizen, he says.

Yesterday Senator Overman received several telegrams asking him to support the President. One of these telegrams was from J. A. Taylor, of Wilmington, and another from W. H. Gibson, of Gastonia. His letter today is in answer to these and other letters and telegrams he received today. His letter follows:

"I thank you for your patriotic letter of recent date. I am glad to receive your views upon the very serious question which now confronts us. For my part I propose to let the captain of the ship steer us out of trouble if possible. I do not want to see any action taken that will in the least embarrass him or interfere with the diplomatic negotiations which he is now carrying on. I stand by the President to the limit except where my conscience dictates that I shall do otherwise.

"But if our negotiations shall be of no avail, while asserting our rights to ride upon the high seas, I shall support a resolution warning our citizens not to travel on belligerent armed merchantmen. I am willing to do anything to preserve peace except to sacrifice vital principles and our sacred honor.

"We advise the people to keep out of the war some in Mexico and I see no reason why we should not warn American citizens not to go upon armed merchant ships. If England and Germany still arbitrarily adhere to their present orders and contentions, to advise American citizens not to ride upon armed merchant vessels is in my judgment no sacrifice of principle or abridgement of the rights of our citizens. It simply cautions them and such a resolution I think will probably avert war. God forbid that we will be forced to take up arms. Let us maintain our dignity and our honor and at the same time preserve the peace.

"To preserve our national honor and vital principles I would be willing to sacrifice every dollar and every drop of blood. But let us not go to war if we can possibly help it. The President, under the most difficult, delicate and arduous conditions, has upheld our honor and kept us out of war and I confidently believe he will do so at this time."

P. R. A.

MOVEMENTS HAMPERED. Because of Bad Weather German Attack is Regarded Inopportune.

London, Feb. 26.—A delayed dispatch from the correspondent of Reuters at British headquarters in the field, dated Thursday, says that the Germans could not have chosen a more inopportune time for the offensive against Verdun. At the beginning of the attack the weather suddenly changed to the most severe winter spell in several years.

(Continued on Page Twelve.)

TRINITY WINS IN SERIES OF DEBATES WITH W. & L.

In Third and Final Contest at Durham Last Night.

Washington and Lee and the Methodists Each Had Won One Debate Already—Argument Subject Last Night.

(Special Star Telegram.)

Durham, N. C., Feb. 26.—Trinity defeated Washington & Lee by a two to one decision in Craven Memorial hall tonight in the third of a series of three debates, thereby winning the series. The argument, advanced by both sides was of a high order and the speakers held the attention of their hearers by reason of this fact.

The Trinity team, composed of W. R. Shelton, of Durham; H. C. Greenberg, of Durham; and W. W. Matthews, of Vidalia, Georgia, upheld the affirmative of the question, "Resolved, That the proposed administration policy of armament increase is demanded by the best interests of the United States."

The Washington and Lee team was composed of Charles Kuper, W. J. Cox and D. A. Falk and defended the negative.

The first debate of the series, held here two years ago, was won by Trinity and the second debate, held in Lexington last year, was won by Washington & Lee. The debate tonight was presided over by President W. P. Few, Mr. J. W. Spruney acted as timekeeper and the judges were Hon. T. P. Hicks, Henderson; Dr. Edwin Greenlaw, of the University of North Carolina, and Mr. W. L. Foushee, of the Durham bar. Mr. Greenberg was perhaps the most effective member of the Trinity team, with his rapid fire style, his keen sarcasm and his effective replies to the opposing arguments. For Washington & Lee Mr. Falk was undoubtedly the star.

NEGOTIATIONS MAY BE ENTERED INTO

Regarding Question of Defensive Armament.

DISCUSSION IS POSSIBLE

However, Germany Would Have to Give Assurances That Americans Aboard Armed Ships Would Be Protected in Peacetime.

Washington, Feb. 26.—Secretary Lansing indicated today that the United States was prepared under certain circumstances to discuss with the German government what may properly be regarded as defensive armament for merchant ships. In no event, however, according to authoritative information tonight, will the United States be a party to such negotiations, unless it is assured that the lives of American citizens aboard of ships armed for defensive purposes will not be endangered during the course of the discussion.

There was no indication today that orders to German and Austrian submarines to treat armed merchant ships as war vessels, announced in formal notifications from the Central Powers for February 23, would be postponed, although it was admitted that postponement would not come as a surprise.

Congress Not to Act. Leaders in both houses of Congress, who for several days have agitated passage of a resolution warning Americans not to travel on armed ships, seemed convinced tonight that no such a measure could be put through at present. Senator Gore, who has such a reputation for being a statesman, announced today that while he still favored a warning he believed the objects sought by his resolution already had been accomplished through public discussion. Representative McHenry, whose warning resolution in the House has been kept from coming up by administration leaders, said he was content to wait until the President and Secretary Lansing had opportunity to try out their plan of asserting determinedly the right to travel on ships bearing arms.

Administration officials still were awaiting the receipt of the appendices to the latest German memorandum on the subject which contain what is alleged to be a copy of confidential instructions given to British sea captains.

If this document contains what the German government claims, it is said to be probable that inquiries will be addressed to Great Britain on the subject. The British government sometime ago assured the United States that its merchant ships would not operate offensively.

Germany, in its memorandum, gives as one of the cardinal reasons for its determination to sink armed merchant ships of her belligerent allies, the fact that German submarines have been fired upon repeatedly by merchantmen which apparently were engaged in peaceful pursuits of commerce.

Germany Would Change Position? It also was indicated at the State Department today that Germany by its action in sinking a ship would change her original position in regard to the right of merchant ships to carry defensive armament. Originally the Berlin government declared that it was unwilling to permit merchant ships to arm at all. Now some officials here consider that Germany appears willing to admit that armament is legal if purely defensive.

(Continued on Page Twelve.)

PENSION VETERANS OF LIFE SAVING SERVICE

Purpose of Bill Introduced by Representative Small.

For Benefit of Those Injured or Disabled Through Active Service of the Government Under the Old System.

(Special Star Telegram.)

Washington, D. C., Feb. 26.—Representative Small, of North Carolina, today introduced in the House a bill proposing to pay a pension equal to that of a seaman or warrant officer of the United States Navy, respectively, to all members of the old life saving service (now the coast guard service) who have suffered disability due to a wound or injury received, or disease contracted in the said life saving service in line of duty.

Speaking with reference to his bill, Representative Small said: "As is well known, Congress at the last session enacted a law combining the former life saving service and the former revenue cutter service into a new organization known as the Coast Guard and providing a pension for all members of the new service based on disability and length of service. The Coast Guard act makes no provision for the men in the life saving service who were retired previous to the enactment of the law on January 28, 1915.

"Some of these men heretofore retired are helpless from disability and are dependent on charity. They devoted their manhood to the service of the government in its most humanitarian work, that of saving lives, and when they became incapacitated they were dropped from the rolls. It is only just that this government should now make some provision for them in their old age. Under existing law there is no relief for them."

P. R. A.

And Wilson "The Man to Keep the Game in Check."

Morganthau Tells How "The Spirit at Washington" Caused the Turks to Leave Educational Institutions Unmolested.

New York, Feb. 26.—Under the auspices of a committee appointed by the mayor, citizens of New York City participated today in a meeting of welcome to Henry Morganthau, United States ambassador to Turkey, who recently returned on leave of absence from Constantinople. Discussing his experiences in Turkey, Mr. Morganthau said: "My heart went out to the American missionaries. When I went to Constantinople I found the greatest man there was the treasurer of the American Board of Missions, W. W. Peet. I discovered I could get more statesmanlike advice from him than from any of my colleagues.

"We have united in Turkey in a God-like work. We have shown these people what it is to teach morality. Perhaps my most difficult task was to convince Turkish government officials that it was best to leave institutions of learning unmolested. When they tried to force regulations upon them, seeing the other nations of the world, engaged in war, I told them that if they dared to touch one of these institutions, they would be launching the attack on the heart of the city, this morning. Mrs. Twichell is still unconscious tonight, suffering from concussion of the brain and other injuries. The negro's condition is said to be serious. The car was completely wrecked.

ARMY RESERVE IS GROWING IN FAVOR

Congress Has Tendency to Provide Volunteer Force.

BESIDES STATE MILITIA

House Committee Agrees on Terms of Bill Providing For Standing Army of 143,000—Would Organize Training Camps.

Washington, Feb. 26.—A growing tendency to provide for a Federal army reserve in addition to the regular army and Federal National Guard was manifested today in both the House and Senate military committees. Members of both committees said they favored a practical test of the possibility of forming a federal volunteer army in peace times on lines somewhat similar to the continental army plan. The apparent intention to abandon the continental project wholly was one of the causes leading up to the resignation of Secretary Garrison.

The House committee agreed today upon the general terms of a bill it expects to get before the House in ten days providing for a regular army with an authorized peace strength of 143,000 men; a federalized National Guard, the maximum force to be raised in the continental project wholly was one of the causes leading up to the resignation of Secretary Garrison.

The Senate committee has agreed tentatively to a plan under which training camps would be authorized in every congressional district where sufficient men volunteered for training under an obligation for a war service. The maximum force to be raised in the continental project wholly was one of the causes leading up to the resignation of Secretary Garrison.

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