

The Weather Full data concerning the weather will be found today on Page Three

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EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA RUMORED TO BE DYING

Rome Hears The Aged Francis Joseph Has Taken The Last Sacraments—Battles in Poland, Galicia and East Prussia, Fought With Supreme Intensity, Sway Back and Forth With Only Slight Gains—Advance of Allies in the West Must Be at Terrible Cost in Lives.

(By the Associated Press.) Rome, Dec. 23.—4:50 p. m.—A rumor is in circulation here that Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary, is dying. The report has it that the Emperor-King has received the last sacraments.

London, Dec. 23.—(10:15 p. m.)—The allies in the west, the Germans in Poland and the Russians in East Prussia and Galicia continue offensive operations but the advances have been so slight as to be almost imperceptible. In the long run, however, the ground gained may prove vital and the various armies are fighting with an intensity not exceeded since the war began.

Poland Interest Shifts.

In Poland the center of interest has shifted slightly to the south. Finding the direct road to Warsaw blocked by Russian reinforcements the Germans made an attack from the southwest and have reached Kishinev, some 40 miles from the Polish capital. They thus far have failed to pierce the Russian lines, but have forced Grand Duke Nicholas to withdraw from before Cracow. In this one of the chief aims of their offensive against Russia, the Germans have been successful. In Galicia the Austrians have resumed the offensive against the Austro-German forces which have poured in from the west and across the Carpathians. According to the latest Petrograd report the Russians have inflicted heavy losses on these forces, while in the north they have pushed back into the interior of East Prussia a small German army which made a feat at Warsaw from the northwest.

Germany's Stubbornly.

Although the allies have scored some successes in the west, they are meeting with stubborn resistance and military men warn the public that very heavy casualty lists must be expected before any serious breakthrough can be made on the German entrenchments.

Activity seems to have resumed along the Belgian coast, for it is announced that the allies have made slight progress between the sea and the road from Neuport to Westende. At other points similar fighting is proceeding, with here success and there reverse or failure of attack.

Aviators Busy Again.

Armies on both sides have been busy again, aeroplanes have been swarming over Belgium, the fliers reconnoitering movements of the opposing troops and occasionally dropping bombs. Brussels and Bruges have been visited by aviators from the ranks of the allies, while Bethune and other towns in Northern France have received attention from the Germans.

Some Reports Overdrawn.

Amsterdam, Dec. 23.—Via London, 8:25 p. m.—The Stius (Holland) correspondent of the Tjid says: "The undeniable advantages won by the allies along the coast have given rise to some exaggerated reports. The fact is that the allies have prosecuted a vigorous offensive and gained successes at Ypres and Neuport and other points. The Germans have evacuated some small towns and villages which the allies have not yet occupied, for instance Itoulers and Middelkerke, where only patrols of the allies so far have appeared. The Germans now occupy good positions captured on Saturday from a British detachment. Along this new line of defense they are digging trenches and strengthening them with reinforced concrete."

PROHIBITION MEN PLAN NEW FIGHT

Next December Congress Will Be Confronted By Another Amendment

(By the Associated Press.) Washington, D. C., Dec. 23.—Undismayed by the defeat in the House last night of the Hobson resolution for a prohibition constitutional amendment, prohibition leaders began aligning their forces today for another fight in the 64th Congress, which meets next December.

Representative Hobson declared a vote at the next session would show a material gain for the cause and reiterated his prediction that should the amendment fall again the question would be a paramount issue in the campaign of 1916.

Prohibition leaders in Congress generally are inclined to believe it would be a waste of time to attempt to get action in the Senate this session on Senator Sheppard's prohibition amendment resolution in the House measure.

South Trimble, clerk of the House, examined last night's final roll call for opponents of the Hobson resolution and found that 136 of those who voted against the measure will meet here January 3 to launch a new campaign to get the names of five million voters on petitions for national prohibition. Among the speakers announced are Richmond P. Hobson and Eugene N. Chaffin.

The campaign will last 120 days and to facilitate the canvass the country has been divided in 11 districts.

HEROIC ALBERT, KING OF BELGIUM, GIVES INTERVIEW

Correspondent Meets Youthful King and Warrior in Bare Room at Battle Front

HE SENDS GREETINGS TO AMERICAN PEOPLE

And Expresses Deep Gratitude For Aid To Suffering Countrymen; He Tells of The Heroic Stand of His Little Army On The Yser That Saved Calais and Dunkirk To France; His Queen Is Manager of a Hospital Nearby and Her Waiting Maids Are Trained Nurses; King Expects To Ride Home Some Day at Head of Army

(By the Associated Press.) Grand Headquarters of the King of the Belgians, in West Flanders, Belgium, Sunday, Dec. 20.—(Via London, Dec. 23.) 8:10 p. m.—In the council chamber of an ancient Flemish town hall, from which he is directing, under German shell fire, the resistance of his war-worn little army blocking the road to Dunkirk and Calais, King Albert of the Belgians today told the Associated Press of the stand his soldiers are making against the German invaders. The King's headquarters is located on one of the remaining dry areas of that small corner of Belgium still under Belgian living virtually under campaign conditions. The Queen is the patron saint of the Belgian wounded, who prefer her hospital to those located on the safer bases. The Queen occasionally goes to England to see her children but every waking moment to her hospital.

Lines of Care Showing.

Physically King Albert looks hardened, but lines of care show in his eyes. When Edward Senger, Belgian attaché to the American commission for the relief of Belgium, entered and presented King Albert with a report from the commission showing that enough food was in sight to feed his people until February 12, the King turned quickly to the correspondent saying:

Gratitude to Americans.

"Will you be kind enough to convey to the American people my deep gratitude. He then wrote in English the following message: "The magnificent generosity of the American people in forwarding immense quantities of gifts and food-stuffs to my suffering people affords me intense satisfaction and touches me very deeply. In this, my country's hour of trial, nothing has supported me more than the sympathy and the superb generosity of those who have assisted in materially lessening the same. I desire to offer my deepest thanks and at the same time to convey a message of good will for the new year. (Signed) "Albert, King of the Belgians."

Brave Stand of His Army.

King Albert is anxious to have the American people know, as he put it, the facts of the story of how his troops, demoralized and disorganized by their disheartening retreat almost across the limits of their own country, turned at bay along the Yser and held back the Germans there at frightful cost in killed and wounded to their army, and of the almost incalculable loss suffered in the gathering inundation by its owners of the most valuable agricultural part of the country.

Saved Dunkirk and Calais.

King Albert continued: "I believe I am now claiming too much to say that our army saved Dunkirk and Calais at the battle of the Yser."

The King praised the good spirits of his soldiers now in the trenches. When the correspondent expressed a desire to see the Belgian soldiers actually in the trenches, he said: "You may, but I cannot promise that this will be without risk. Mrs. Aquith expressed the same desire while she was visiting my wife short time ago. When the party was taken to the second line of trenches a big German shell fell nearby and it did not make our guests feel comfortable."

Living Under Shell Fire.

When the correspondent inquired as to the King's own safety King Albert smilingly replied: "We must live under shell fire here."

Later inspection showed this remark literally true, as scarcely a square mile of Belgium left under

MOTHER ENGLAND SENDS GREETINGS OF PEACE TODAY

One Hundred Years Without War Between English-Speaking People

WAR HAS INTERRUPTED PLANS OF CELEBRATION

Germans Now Hold Historic Ghent, Where Treaty Was Signed On Christmas Eve a Century Ago; English Say They Will Celebrate More Properly When War Is Over and Ghent Given Back to Belgium; But Send Note of Gratification of The Victories of Peace and Mutual Defense of Self Respect

(By the Associated Press.) New York, Dec. 23.—The people of the United States and Great Britain tomorrow will observe the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the treaty of Ghent, which brought a close to the last war between these great English speaking peoples. There have been many and difficult since that time, they have all been dealt with successfully by the machinery of conciliation and arbitration. Today these two nations join in rejoicing over the significance of the centennial of a completed century of peace.

The Disarmed Frontier.

The British statement expresses the hope that "the disarmed frontier between the United States and Canada has long continued as an example to the world of the safe defence of mutual respect and trust in the affairs of the nations" and prays that "the peace between the British and American democracies which has so long endured, may never be broken."

Schwab Declares Prosperity Near Three Hundred Millions' Worth of Contracts Placed in America By Europe

(By the Associated Press.) New York, Dec. 23.—European nations have placed contracts in the United States for more than \$300,000,000 worth of supplies since the beginning of the war, according to Chas. H. Schwab, president of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, who returned from England today on the Louisiana. Mr. Schwab declared that as a result of this buying the United States now was at the threshold of the "greatest period of prosperity it has seen in many years."

Supremacy of Justice.

"Even at such a time we must avoid once more our emphatic faith in the supremacy of justice as a force, or law over might. We rejoice in the peaceful relations of a hundred years among all English speaking peoples which each of these people has undevoted and unfortified line nearly four thousand miles in length which divides the territory of the United States from that of the Dominion of Canada. The mutual confidence and helpfulness which make that undefended boundary a link and not a barrier between two peoples, we offer as an example to our warring brothers across the sea. It has been our purpose, through our committee was organized in 1910, to plan for a great celebration of the centenary anniversary by various methods which have now, because of the terrible war which is still convulsing Europe and disturbing the whole world, become impracticable until the close of the conflict."

Celebration in February.

All the States and to a large number to mark this notable anniversary by suitable exercises in churches of all denominations on the 14th of February, the date agreed upon for that purpose without exception. The Canadian committee will be invited to address at the Capitals of their respective States on the 17th and 18th of February, the dates of the ratification and proclamation of the treaty.

THE DAY IN CONGRESS

Washington, D. C., Dec. 23. SENATE: Lands committee closed public hearings on water power site leasing bill. Senator Newlands spoke on his plan to coordinate River and Harbor improvements into a broad national plan of development. Adjourned at 1:10 p. m. to noon December 29.

HOUSE:

Colorado officials urged lands committee to create a Rocky Mountain National Park. Adjourned at 12:50 p. m. until noon December 29.

SMALL AND POU READY FOR TEST

If People of Districts Favor National Prohibition They Will Obey

REFERENDUM SUGGESTED

Both Congressmen Are Willing That Constituents Should Declare Themselves On The Proposition; This Is Their Answer To Threats of Political Reprisal

(W. E. YELVERTON.) Washington, Dec. 24.—If the First and Fourth congressional districts of North Carolina will hold a referendum and declare themselves in favor of national prohibition law, their Representatives in Congress, Messrs. Small and Pou, respectively, will cast a vote for National prohibition in the 64th Congress. Unless these two members of the delegation will stick to their course of yesterday, when they voted against the adoption of the Hobson resolution.

Mr. Pou's Statement.

Mr. Pou's statement is as follows: "I think my position on the national prohibition amendment is absolutely correct. If I am wrong, then the cardinal principle of the Democratic party is wrong. "However, this may be. I want to represent the people of the district faithfully. I have pledged myself to no one. I will be a member of the 64th Congress and if the people of the fourth district wish to hold a referendum on national prohibition, I will be a party primary or by means of any other primary fairly conducted, I stand ready to carry into effect the wishes of the majority."

Mr. Small Concur.

Mr. Small's statement was read to Representative Small, who said he concurred in the statement. The case and would be willing to abide by such a vote in his district. In further explanation of his position, Mr. Small said: "Nothing in the national Democratic platform declares for nation wide prohibition, nor has any convention in the First congressional district ever declared for national prohibition. The people of my district have never had an opportunity to express themselves on it. An amendment to the Federal constitution is a very serious proposition and a member of the House must stand on his own responsibility first pass upon the advisability of such an amendment."

Delegation Comes Home.

Though Congress will take only a brief holiday for Christmas, not a single member of the North Carolina delegation will be absent tonight in Washington. The exodus began with Senator Simmons last Saturday. Senator Overman and Representative Denton left last night. Representatives Ritchie and Stedman today, and Representatives Small, Webb, Tolson, Page, Godwin and Guder tonight.

FOR HICKS' PARDON.

Delegation of Rowan Citizens To Call on Governor Today. A delegation of prominent citizens of Salisbury and Spencer will come to city today and appear before Governor Coker asking for a pardon for W. H. Hicks.

DARY SCHOOL'S SCHEDULE.

Dates Made for Holding Fourteen of the following places during January: Ashe county, Friendship, Ala. county, Patterson Farm, Call well county, 14th; Rowan county, Guilford county, 15th; Athens county, 22d; Onslow county, 24-24th; Lincoln county, 27-28th; Rowan county, 29th-30th.

FOR HICKS' PARDON.

Delegation of Rowan Citizens To Call on Governor Today. A delegation of prominent citizens of Salisbury and Spencer will come to city today and appear before Governor Coker asking for a pardon for W. H. Hicks.

Mr. Hicks was cashier of a bank at Spencer and was convicted in Rowan court for some irregularity in handling the funds of the bank and sentenced to two years in the State prison. He came to the prison unattended by any officer and gave himself into the keeping of the warden about six months ago and has made a model prisoner. His friends argue that he has been unfairly punished and will make a powerful plea to the Governor this morning for his freedom, that he may spend Christmas at home with his family. Many of the most influential men of Rowan have interested themselves in Hicks' behalf. Mr. Hicks was one of the most progressive citizens of Spencer, being editor of the Spencer Crescent and was active in everything tending to uplift his town and community. He has a wife and several children, the oldest son James having edited his father's paper since he has been behind prison bars.