

TWO SHIPS IN RUSSIAN SERVICE AND BIG PIER DESTROYED BY FIRE OF SUSPICIOUS ORIGIN AT NEW YORK; DAMAGE 4 MILLION

Bomb on Bolton Castle May Have Caused Explosion That Started Costly Blaze—Steamer Pacific Shared Fate of Other Vessel—Loaded With Combustibles for Russian Ports—Million and Half Dollars' Damage by Big Blaze in Business District of Fall River—Attempt to Burn Evidence Being Held Against Capture of Jean Crones Discovered in Chicago City Hall

(By the United Press)

Fall River, Mass., Feb. 16.—Fire causing damage of \$1,500,000 swept the business district here today. The flames were checked by the aid of firemen from nearby cities. They started in the basement of the Steiger Department Store.

Four Million Dollar Fire in New York; 2 Ships Burned.
New York, Feb. 16.—The steamers Bolton Castle and Pacific were burned to the water's edge and the pier at which they were laying, with four million dollars' damage today, under suspicious circumstances.

Both ships were serving the Russians. The first was loaded with paraffine, oils and gasoline, and the second was half loaded. The Bolton Castle burst into flames, which quickly spread to the pier and Pacific. The pier contained a million dollars worth of merchandise.

The blaze was started by an explosion on the Bolton Castle, perhaps from a bomb. A Federal investigation by Justice Department agents and the customs and neutrality squad has been started.

Effort to Burn Evidence Against Crones.

Chicago, Feb. 16.—A mysterious fire, believed to have been incendiary, was found in the City Hall, near a laboratory containing poison evidence against Jean Crones, accused of the poisoned soup plot, today. There was little damage.

American Club at Toronto Burned.

Toronto, Feb. 16.—An explosion started a fire and completely destroyed the big American Club here today. One person was killed and two injured. A Teutonic plot is hinted at.

PINK HILL IS RARE SORT OF A VILLAGE

Believed to Be Only Round Town in the World—Story of a Hustling Lenoir County Community That Has Everything Surrounded Entirely by a Circle—New State High School

The hustling town of Pink Hill isn't straight, nor is it crooked in any sense. It's the roundest town in the world, and even Lenoir county officials were not aware of the fact until today, when a citizen of that place brought to the Courthouse a map of the town to give those concerned an idea of just where the new State High School to be established there will be located.

Pink Hill's corporate line is singular in number—it is just one line in a perfect circle. The distance across the town in any direction is precisely 1,200 yards. The ticket office in the Carolina R. R. station is the exact center of the village. The population of several hundred persons is contained within that circle and not one house laps over. The streets, however, extend beyond the circle in some directions, although there isn't anything but trees in the "suburbs."

The late Hon. George Turner was the "father" of Pink Hill. The land occupied by the town originally was his property—every inch of it. He gave the land necessary for public purposes. Pink Hill was incorporated about 10 years ago. There was a board of commissioners, town clerk, etc. The "administration" lagged on without anything to do until the aldermen and all forgot that they were public servants and when election time came no one bothered about electing them over. Five years ago or such a matter the citizens acquired a remarkable civic spirit, and now Pink Hill has a business like town government and a Chamber of Commerce that is said to be thinking about organizing a brass band. Geo. S. Willard, banker, is the present Mayor of the roundest town in the world. He is one of the squarest men in the community, his admirers assert.

The town has given two blocks, about 4-1-16 acres of ground, for the State High School. The building,

KINSTON SEAT ONLY TOY FACTORY IN N. C.

One-Man Plant in East Kinston Is Thriving and Will "Branch Out"—Doll Furniture to Be Made for the Local Market for Coming Christmas—Product O. K., Say Interested Persons

Kinston has had a toy factory, the only one in the State, probably, all the time, it now crops out.

Some time ago Mr. E. W. J. Proffitt of New England in an address to the Chamber of Commerce called the attention of the business men to the facts that since Germany's toy manufacturers have lost the world monopoly in that line Japan has entered the market and is likely to acquire the monopoly unless this country gets a move on, and that enough wood products are wasted in this vicinity to supply the United States with wooden Christmas goods. He said the same things in New Bern, and considerable interest was aroused in both cities. There has been earnest consideration, it is known, of his suggestion that Northern capitalists be invited to come to the section to look over the opportunities.

Today Mr. John C. Hay, a cabinet-maker of 109 South Tiffany avenue, told The Free Press that he has been making wooden toys for months. Quite a bit of stuff has been turned out from his one-man factory, located conveniently near a sawmill from which Mr. Hay gets his raw material, scrap wood from the mill yards. He has confined his efforts solely to doll furniture, cradles, bedsteads, wardrobes, bureaus, etc., but is contemplating branching out into the lines of novelties, wheeled toys, etc. His business so far as it goes, has been profitable, Mr. Hay said. The product of the "plant" is not lacking in paint and varnish, and persons who have seen specimens say the goods are as substantial and nicely finished as any on the market. Mr. Hay is to make up large quantities this spring and summer in the hope of supplying the local toy dealers, and those in neighboring towns with the wooden goods for holiday trade.

Work on which is expected to commence about March 1, will cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000.

CARRANZA GOVERNMENT IS WEAKENING, SAY MEXICAN REPORTS

Lost Heavily in Past Two Months—Agents of the Administration Have Not Been Paid—Another Revolt Could Be Started

(By the United Press)

Washington, Feb. 16.—The Carranza government is in desperate straits, mail advices from Mexico state. Carranza has lost immensely in the past sixty days, and it needs but a strong leader to start a new revolt.

Many consuls and interior officials are unpaid, it is claimed.

BIG STEAMER SINKS OFF BRITISH COAST

Tergestea Was Probably Seized From Austrians Early in War and Had Been Employed by English as a Freighter—Was of 4,200 Tons and Not Very Old Vessel—Crew Reported Safe

(By the United Press)

London, Feb. 16.—The steamer Tergestea of 4,200 tons, has been sunk on the east coast. The crew is safe. The ship was built in 1911, and registered in Austria. She was probably captured by the British early in the war. The vessel had been serving as a British freighter.

FOUR OF SEVENTEEN ALL OPPOSED TO THE KEATING BILL, SAID

(By the United Press)

Washington, Feb. 16.—Passage of the child labor bill is inevitable, Senator Newlands, chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee, today told S. F. Patterson of Roanoke Rapids, N. C.

Washington, Feb. 16.—A speedy report and vote on the child labor bill is expected following the hearings of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee. Only four of the committee of seventeen are unfavorable to the measure.

THIRD WRECK FLA. LIMITED IN EIGHT DAYS—ONE KILLED

(Special to The Free Press)

Raleigh, Feb. 16.—James Hollowell, a colored fireman was killed, and H. J. Wells and Frank Stockwell, engineers, were injured, the former seriously, when the Seaboard Air Line Florida Limited from New York to the South crashed into a freight train at a switch near Franklinton yesterday. Wells and Stockwell both live here.

It was the third wreck of the Florida Limited in eight days. A week ago its engineer, David K. Wright of Raleigh, was killed near Southern Pines.

NEWS OF THE DAY IN NEIGHBORING PLACES

Bethel school district, in Pitt county, as well as Grifton, is to hold a bond election for a new building. The voters are to be asked to pass on a \$20,000 issue, as at Grifton. The bonds in each case would be for twenty years, interest payable semi-annually at not more than 6 per cent. per annum.

The funeral of Mrs. Katherine Mumford, who died in Greenville, was held at Grifton Tuesday.

It was four degrees warmer at New Bern Tuesday morning than in Kinston—17 and 13 degrees above, respectively. At Raleigh it was nine above.

Bishop T. C. Davst has confirmed a class of 10 in the Episcopal church at Beaufort, besides baptizing 16.

RUSSIANS NOW HOLD NINE OUTER FORTS FRONTING ERZERUM

Drove Turks Out With Bayonets In Charges In Zero Weather

GAINS ARE IMPORTANT

Fortress Has Heretofore Proved Bulwark Against Advances of Slavs—Captulation might Mean the Defeat of Ottoman Govt.

(By the United Press)

Petrograd, Feb. 16.—The huge Turkish fortress of Erzerum, the bulwark that stopped Russian invasions in previous wars, is threatened with capture by Grand Duke Nicholas. Nine of the outer forts are now in Russian hands, it is officially taken at the point of bayonets in struggles in zero weather on the mountain sides. The capture of the fortress would be more important than that of Przemyel, paving the way for a spring drive into Armenia and possibly forcing Turkey to sue for peace.

Britain's Soul in the War.

London, Feb. 16.—England is putting her soul into the war. The orders for assuming control of nearly all merchantmen and banning importation of all materials used for manufacturing paper and tobacco are being applauded.

SHALL BE NO PEACE UNTIL BELGIUM HAS BEEN SAVED, STATE

Allies Will Not Desert Little Nation—All Renew Pledges and Ministers Convey Them to King Albert in Ceremony

(By the United Press)

Hayre, Feb. 16.—The Allies have formally renewed their pledges never to consent to peace until Belgium's political and economical existence has been completely re-established.

The message was conveyed with ceremony by the Allies' ministers to the Belgian government at the government's seat here. The Entente diplomats went in a body to present the message.

KILLED, EMBALMED AND BURIED WIFE; FORGED THE PERMIT

(By the United Press)

New York, Feb. 16.—Harry Schroeffel, an undertaker, confessed today that he killed his wife on December 29, because of her loud talking, embalmed and buried her, and forged the death certificate. The woman's disappearance was not discovered for several weeks.

Schroeffel was arrested as the result of anonymous letters to the police, telling of his wife's screams.

AYDEN TO HAVE NEW MORNING NEWSPAPER

(Special to The Free Press)

Ayden, Feb. 16.—Five thousand dollars has been subscribed toward a morning paper for this town. The Chamber of Commerce is backing the move. H. D. Utley of Ayden will be manager and editor. It is understood that an order has been placed for a linotype and other equipment. Publication is expected to be started by March 10.

BERLIN'S DECISION ON LUSITANIA HAD AT CAPITAL TODAY

Publication Won't Be Made Until Friday, It Is Announced

ORDER VS. ARMED SHIPS

May Not Be Approved by U. S., But No Action Likely to Be Taken Until Return of Col. House, Not Due for Several Weeks

(By the United Press)

Washington, Feb. 16.—Germany's latest Lusitania proposal is up to the President. It was delivered to Secretary Lansing today by Von Bernstorff. Both refused to comment. It is believed Lansing and the President will confer.

Washington, Feb. 16.—What America will say and do regarding Germany's plan to sink armed merchantmen is unlikely to be determined until Col. House returns from London. He was given advance information of the plan, it is learned. Ambassador Von Bernstorff was due at the State Department at noon, bringing Germany's decision on the Lusitania matter. The note will be published Friday, the time that the American note reaches Berlin.

Col. House is not due for several weeks.

It is possible that action on the armed merchantmen orders in the Senate will be postponed, since the Senate foreign relations committee today decided not to meet.

U. S. Won't Approve Austro-German Policy.

Washington, Feb. 16.—It is believed here that the United States will not under any circumstances give formal approval to the Berlin and Vienna orders to the navies of Austria and Germany to sink all armed merchantmen as vessels of war after March 1. Some high officials are satisfied that the Austro-German position is justified, however. The Government, though, is apt to concede that the Allies are within their rights under prevailing international law in arming ships for defensive purposes, no matter what the conditions on the seas.

HOW THE FIRST DRAFT OF DERBY VOLUNTEERS ANSWERED THE SUMMONS

By WILBUR S. FORREST.

London, Feb. 5.—(By Mail)—The first drafts of England's Derby army mobilized today. Youths of years ranging from nineteen to twenty-two who, weeks ago, answered Lord Derby's group system of enlistment, gathered throughout England to get into khaki. They came from workshops, bank desks, department stores and other walks of life. They are now being distributed in scores of training camps learning to form fours, salute their officers properly and wield the shovel and rifle.

There were remarkable scenes in London today. Recruits had been instructed to come in shifts at two-hour intervals. They flocked to the great central recruiting depot in Whitehall. The first recruit was a little early. He came from a big banking establishment where he had just bade fellow clerks farewell. He had been instructed to appear in his oldest clothes in order that they could be thrown away when he donned his suit of khaki.

The boy followed instructions. His coat and trousers might have been worn by a weary Willie. His shoes were run down at the heel. Yesterday he wore a morning coat and shiny silk hat to the bank. He had borrowed today's togs. A brief medical examination followed his arrival in Whitehall. Ten minutes later he left for a railroad station to join a regiment to which he had been assigned.

NOTED PROHIBITION SPEAKER AT GORDON ST. CH'RH TONIGHT

Dr. Sam Small to Lecture in the Anti-Saloon League's Cause—Famous Orator and Humorist—Interdenominational Meeting

It is probable that a house-filling audience will hear Dr. Sam W. Small, the noted Georgia evangelist, speak in Gordon Street church tonight. Dr. Small comes to Kinston under the auspices of the North Carolina Anti-Saloon League. He is to visit nearly all the important cities and towns in the State, and Kinston is one of the first places in his itinerary.

The meeting will open promptly at 8 o'clock. Dr. J. M. Parrott will introduce the speaker. An interdenominational committee has charge of the arrangements for the occasion.

Dr. Small is one of the liquor traffic's most deadly and active foes. He is a captivating orator—of the old school, with a wonderful command of words, an effective use of figures, an ability to mingle humor with seriousness. He is a great force in the fight for prohibition, and has had a wonderful influence for the success of that cause.

The choir of Gordon Street church will lead the music.

BULLETINS

(By the United Press)

JAP STEAMER SUNK.
London, Feb. 16.—The Japanese steamer Kenkou Maru, No. 11, of 3,500 tons, has foundered in a storm. The crew was landed at Plymouth.

ORPET'S DEFENSE: GIRL DECEIVED HIM.
Chicago, Feb. 16.—William Orpet's defense will be that Mariette Lambert, the girl he is accused of poisoning, deceived him. Orpet had a third sweetheart in Madison, it was learned today.

NEWSPAPER TRIBUTE TO DAVID K. WRIGHT

The Raleigh News & Observer says of David Wright, Seaboard Air Line engineer killed in a wreck last week who was brother-in-law of Mrs. W. B. Douglass of this city: "He was a man of high character and sterling worth. He was noted for his efficiency, attention to duty, level head, strength of character and courage. He was a man who stood high with the Seaboard management."

The paper gives half a column of space to its eulogy of the engineer and in the concluding paragraph states that "he was a man good and true. He met life with determination in his heart and a smile on his face. He made friends, for his friendship was worth while. And his going leaves many a heart sad."

BRAZIL WANTS HIGHER TARIFF ON AMERICAN GOODS, GOVT LEARNS

Rio De Janeiro, Feb. 5.—(By Mail)—Because they believed American flour and other American products imported by Brazil are crippling the home industries here, Brazilian business interests have asked the Brazilian federal senate to build up the tariff wall and keep United States manufacturers from running away with the Brazilian domestic market. Certain American goods now pay 20 per cent. less import duty into Brazil than is paid on the same class of goods imported into Brazil from other countries. This favor is shown to these American goods because the United States abandoned the idea of charging a 3-cent duty on coffee imported into the United States from Brazil.

The Brazilian flour

WITNESS TELLS THE COMM'TEE BRANDEIS ACTED QUEST'NABLY

Winslow, Shoe Machinery Man, Cross-Examined By Senators

WOULD NOT TAKE IT BACK

President's Friends Start Movement to Beat Bryan to Nomination, Fearing That to Be Plan of Com-moner—Root Unheeded

(By the United Press)

Washington, Feb. 16.—The Brandeis committee today cross-examined S. W. Winslow, president of the United Shoe Machinery Co., but failed to make him retract a statement of his belief that Brandeis acted dishonorably in forming a shot trust and then trying to attack the latter. Wilson and Bryan.

A "Beat-Bryan-to-It" movement has been started by friends of the President who fear Bryan will be a candidate for the presidency, opposing Mr. Wilson. President Wilson will make no reply to Root.

ROOT'S SPEECH FIRST CAMPAIGN LITERATURE

Spoke in the New York Republican Convention Tuesday Night, Arranging Wilson and the Administration—May Be Endorsed for Nomination—Sounded Battle Cry of Conservatives

(By the United Press)

New York, Feb. 16.—The battle cry of the conservative Republicans was sounded by Elihu Root's speech to the State convention here last evening, attacking Wilson and the Administration's foreign policy and tariff.

Copies of the speech will be the first campaign document. Endorsement of Root for the presidency by the convention is possible.

POLITE MR. EDWARDS JUST WANTED TO BE NICE TO THE MAYOR

Mayor Sutton, in Greensboro Sunday night, almost kidnapped Mr. D. T. Edwards, who has been in Greensboro attending the Laymen's Convention as representative of The Free Press. "It reminded me of the joke about the man in a car who gave up his seat to a woman, as she thought, and when she declined to accept it and tried to shove him back, insisted that it was his stop, and that he wanted to get off," said the Mayor. "I was in an automobile with my brother-in-law, headed for the station to come home. I saw Mr. Edwards on the street, and called him. He rode on to the station with me. Then I hustled him out of the car, and into the ticket office. I thought he was coming home. Up at the ticket he protested, 'But, Mr. Sutton, I'm not going home yet—not tonight,' and then it dawned upon me that he hadn't said anything at all about coming back to Kinston." Mr. Edwards had permitted the courteous other Kinstonian to drag him all the way to the depot just to be nice.

THE DAY ON LOCAL COTTON EXCHANGE

About 15 bales of cotton were sold here today, 11 cents being the best price paid. New York futures quotations were:

	Open	Close
March	11.75	11.71
May	12.00	11.93
July	12.18	12.11
October	12.22	12.33
December	12.34	12.25

The Commercial Association of Brazil all now say this agreement is working great benefit to the United States.