

WEATHER FORECAST.
North Carolina—Fair tonight;
warmer in north. Friday partly
cloudy; warmer in east.
South Carolina—Cloudy tonight
and Friday; probably rain, except
fair in east portion tonight.

THE WILMINGTON DISPATCH

FINAL EDITION

FULL LEASED WIRE SERVICE

VOL. XXIII. NO. 63.

WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA, THURSDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 22, 1917.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

SLICK MOVE TO STOP WILSON

GERMANY PROBABLY MAKING EFFORT TO BLOCK THE PATH

Would Have Neutrals Make Offer to Mediate—Must Abandon Sub. Policy

MAY BE SLICK GAME TO EMBARRASS WILSON.

Will Not Work, Declare Officials, and In Meantime Preparations for Clash Are Being Rushed In Different Parts of the Country.

(By Associated Press.) Washington, March 22.—Offers of mediation, to prevent actual war between the United States and Germany, are expected among the next developments.

Administration officials today heard that a European neutral was contemplating such a plan, and they frankly recoiled at it as another effort, backed by Germany, to divide sentiment in Congress and embarrass the President.

All administration officials, from the President down, take the position that the United States never has and does not now desire war with Germany, but is being forced into it to protect lives and rights of its citizens against unlawful aggression.

Unless Germany is prepared to completely change her position, it was declared today, offers of mediation and discussion are useless. Germany, it was recalled, never accepted former Secretary Bryan's proposal to sign one of the "peace investigation" treaties, which would have bound the United States to inaction for a year, while a commission investigated the situation.

Meanwhile every preparation for an eventual war is being carried forward by the army and navy and the President is awaiting the assembling of Congress.

Unless there is some great change in the situation before April 2, it is expected he will detail, in his address, how Germany has in fact, been making war against the United States by the seizure of her U-boats and her efforts to "congress" a state of war existing and provide money and men to protect the interests of the United States.

A deluge of applications for cargo and ship insurance from virtually every section of the American seaboard, including South Atlantic and Gulf ports, poured into the government's fire risk insurance bureau today, notwithstanding the rate increases announced yesterday.

The government's rates are still below those charged by most private companies and removal of the restrictive anti-trust insuring contraband, except arms and ammunition, has resulted in the diversion to the bureau of a great volume of business which previously had been written by private concerns.

SPENT HIS BIRTHDAY IN TAR HEEL TOWN.

(By Associated Press.) New York, March 22.—William Dean Howells celebrated his 80th birthday yesterday at Tryon, N. C., where he has been spending the winter and was present last night at the National Arts Club, where representatives of nearly all the literary organizations of the country met to do him honor.

Messages of congratulation, numbering more than 100, including letters from General Roosevelt and former President Taft, will be bound and presented to Mr. Howells.

GERMAN SPIES MUST SERVE PRISON TERMS.

(By Associated Press.) New York, March 22.—Albert O. Wynn and Charles N. Wunnenberg, who pleaded guilty yesterday to charges of having sent spies to England, were sentenced to 2 years in the Atlanta penitentiary and to pay a fine of \$2,000 each.

AMERICAN CONSULS HELD BY GERMANY

(By Associated Press.) Washington, March 22.—Alarm over the fate of the four American consuls captured from Germany to Turkey on the severance of relations and last reported at Munich, Germany, has caused the State Department to inquire about them again through the Spanish Ambassador. An inquiry was first sent about two weeks ago.

The four consuls were ordered transferred to Turkish posts. After some delay, Germany declared they were being held until the United States assured the uninterrupted voyage of former German Consul Mueller at Atlanta, from Havana to Ecuador.

NAVY STILL MANY RECRUITS SHORT

Steps to Speed Up Taken—Present Month Has Been Largest of All.

(By Associated Press.) Washington, March 22.—The navy is short 13,514 men of its present authorized enlisted strength of 74,500, and efforts to speed up recruiting are being redoubled. This month has seen the largest recruitment on record, with a net increase of 1,947. Since Congress authorized the 74,500 total in September, 5,454 men have been added to the navy's personnel.

It was stated today that the authorized strength is sufficient to put all ships immediately available in commission and no effort will be spared in bringing the force to that figure.

To induce recruiting, Congress provided that 100 enlisted men a year should be selected by examination for appointment to the naval academy. Navy officials say that a very high type of officer material is being secured in this fashion.

Commissions in the marine corps and the responsible and well paid positions as warrant or petty officers are also being opened as fully as possible to boys who enlist.

A recruit need serve only one year in the navy to be eligible for examination for appointment to Annapolis, and every possible opportunity for study and instruction to enable him to pass the examinations is furnished aboard the ships or at the training stations.

BOTH SIDES PREPARING FOR ORGANIZATION.

(By Associated Press.) Washington, March 22.—A caucus of Republican representatives in Congress Saturday night, March 31, was called today to discuss organization and legislative programme. A Democratic caucus was called yesterday for Friday morning, March 30. About half of the Democrats notified Speaker Clark's office today they would be here on time.

An unofficial list of members of the next House, published today, states that the Democrats number 214, Republicans 214, Progressives 2, Independent 1, Prohibitionists 1, Socialist 1, vacancies 2.

INSANE PATIENTS ESCAPE.

(Associated Press.) Raleigh, N. C., March 22.—Three prisoners, all white, escaped from the ward for the criminal insane at the State prison here early today and still are at liberty. Those who got away were R. R. Jones, of Greensboro; Jesse Mowis, of Davidson county, and Trep Johnson, of Forsyth county. The prisoners, with a crow bar, forced a door in the basement of the ward, officials said.

WOMEN AND LITTLE ONES ARE SAVED BY AMERICAN MERCY

DESOLATION FOUND IN THE WAKE OF GERMAN ARMIES

Nearly One Thousand Square Miles Laid Waste by the Retiring Forces.

RUTHLESS DESTRUCTION OF THE PROPERTY.

Entire Villages Reduced to Ashes—Everything on the Farms Destroyed—Many Women Deported.

French Front in France, Wednesday, March 21.—(Via Paris, March 22, From a Staff Correspondent of the Associated Press.)—Destruction and desolation are salient features along the track of the German retreat between the important towns of Roye and Ham and beyond.

The correspondent has accompanied the French army in the advance over an area since the beginning of the German retrograde movement, which has reached a total of approximately 950 square miles.

Following closely on the heels of the retiring Germans, the correspondent passed through many villages whose ashes were still smoldering, all having been fired by German troops belonging to the Seventeenth army corps.

Large towns, such as Roye, Nesle and Ham, suffered less than the villages. All road junctions were mined and blown up. Although in many towns the houses appeared outwardly as intact, they proved to be merely skeletons whose contents had been ruthlessly destroyed with picks and shovels. In the country districts, the devastation everywhere is most complete, both inside and out. Old peasants, with the women and children, who for some time had been gathered by the Germans in the large centers, attempted today, after being liberated by the French and British, to find traces of their former homes. They discovered nothing but heaps of debris. Their agricultural implements and machinery had been broken, all fruit trees sawed through close to the ground and grain and grass seeds trampled.

This destruction added to the previous confiscation of all domestic animals and poultry in the occupied French provinces during the last thirty months, caused many to give way.

French Declare They Would Have Starved But For Relief by United States.

GERMANS LEFT RUIN AS THEY RETREATED.

Associated Press Correspondent Tells Sickly Tale of What He Found—Belgians Made to Work On New Fortifications.

War Correspondents Headquarters with the British armies in France, Wednesday, March 21. (From a staff correspondent of the Associated Press.)

"We would have starved if it had not been for the American relief commission," declared a French woman in the city hall of Nesle today to the correspondent, speaking for herself and her two little children, their pallid faces and high cheek bones giving evidence of their privations.

Wherever one went in the territory recently evacuated by the Germans the same story was repeated. There are many other stories of hardships being told, although most of the inhabitants said the German soldiers had been well disciplined and kept strictly under control.

It was repeatedly asserted, however, that within the past few weeks the Germans had appropriated some of the American relief stores to their own use, even three fourths of the supplies. It was also said that the Germans took the white flour, issuing black flour instead to the inhabitants.

Some of the peasants encountered in the evacuated territory were joyous at their liberation. Others appeared to have their spirits broken. Their attitude was one of absolute submission to anything that might happen. Many young children who had seen nothing but German soldiers in their lives started today in almost stupid wonder at the British Tommies.

One of the greatest ordeals the people said they had to endure was to stand by and see their homes broken up by the Germans as the soldiers were leaving.

In some instances the French inhabitants who had been held virtually as prisoners during the German occupation had been segregated in certain parts of the villages while the work of destruction was going on elsewhere. At Roye, however, it was stated and reiterated by scores of persons that the inhabitants of this village and of several other villages had been gathered at Roye-le-Petit in certain houses and told to remain in them a certain number of hours while the Germans got away.

While so herded together, they declared, the Germans had sent 200 shells into the village, killing several persons. The funerals which were in progress in the village today lent color to the story.

GERMANS' RETREAT CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY ALLIED TROOPS

HAILS RETREAT IN THE WEST AS GERMAN SUCCESS

Teuton Military Writer Declares Aim of Von Hindenburg Accomplished.

NOW IN BETTER POSITION TO FIGHT

Front Shortened and Germans In Better Position to Strike Powerful Blow, He Asserts.

(By Associated Press.)

Berlin, March 22.—(Via Sayville.)—A "German success" is the characterization given the German retreat on the Western front in the headline of an editorial today by Major Morahr, military writer for the Lokai Anzeiger. "A great resolution was taken," writes Major Morahr. "The boldness of the general who carried it out is overwhelming and only the power of Von Hindenburg's personality could cause such proof of the grand style of initiative to be accompanied by perfect calm and security."

"That the plan of a strategical shortening of the front was brought into being at great headquarters and that it succeeded must give joy to every German heart and simultaneously give rise to a feeling of satisfaction when the hostile war aims are remembered, for now the opportunity is offered to inflict more damage upon the enemy in future days than could be inflicted upon him at the moment during a sanguinary defensive. Although people are often mistaken as to the surmises regarding Von Hindenburg's actions, the critics on all sides who look somewhat deeper into things admit that the Germans will obtain economic advantage, an improvement of the front and a gain of time by this move. The British, however, must again begin the preparations of their offensive. Their heavy artillery must be moved ahead with enormous pains. Roads and bridges must be constructed, often under hostile fire. Ammunition transport will be possible only in a very slow fashion. The condition of the evacuated territory makes each advance movement difficult, as it does the lodging and provisioning of the troops and observation work."

"They will reproach us with the charge that we acted like the Russians in Poland. As to this, France may settle accounts with England. The law of our warfare is and will be that everything necessary and possible in a military way will be done in this defensive war. Whether the population of the war theatre suffered more through our measures or the enemy's measures, may be asked them in the time to come."

INDIAN THORPE WILL NOT LEAVE THE GIANTS

(By Associated Press.) Louisville, Ky., March 22.—Jim Thorpe will not become a member of the Louisville club, according to word received today from the training camp at Athens. Thorpe is with the Giants at the Marlin training camp and Manager McGraw has no present intention of trading him for Pitcher Middleton.

BRITONS CHEER RUSSIAN DUMA.

(By Associated Press.) London, March 22.—A resolution of greeting to the Russian Duma, proposed by Andrew Bonair-Law, was carried in the House of Commons today amid cheering.

GERMAN STATEMENT REPORTS A REVIVAL OF ACTIVITY ON THE RUMANIAN FRONT.

(Continued on Page Eight)

Additional Territory Required Along the Western Battle Front.

A PITCHED BATTLE IN OPEN ANTICIPATED

Germans Make Stand—Cavalry on Both Sides in Action—German Plans Discarded by Rapid Advance of French—British Pushing Forward.

French troops are in contact with the main German army and what may prove to be the initial stage of the great battle of history has opened before the gates of La Fere.

For the first time since the great German retreat began patrol and rear guard fighting has given way to the thunder of artillery and the clash of major forces. The Germans are making a stand on a line running north and south of La Fere, from St. Simon to the forest of Coucy, a distance roughly estimated at about 20 miles.

The position selected by the Germans is protected by the Crozat canal and the Ailette river, a tributary of the Oise, but in this line the French have driven a great wedge directly in front of La Fere and reaching to within two miles of that important town.

On this wedge is based the hopes of French military critics that General Nivelle has out-manuevered Field Marshal Von Hindenburg and La Fere is doomed, and with it the whole of the famous Hindenburg line. Paris believes that the extraordinary speed with which the French have advanced has disconcerted the German plans and renders probable a continuation of the retirement to the Belgian frontier. The official Berlin reports throw no light on the situation, but it seems certain that a few days or even hours must decide the fate of La Fere. The situation on the British front is somewhat more obscure, owing to the rather vague character of the British official reports. The latest reports from London say that General Haig has pushed 10 miles east of the Somme at some points.

Measured from Peronne this would place the British within four or five miles from the vital spot of St. Quentin, and this estimate is supported by unofficial dispatches from the front. The German retirement is pivoting from their positions east of Arras and in this pivotal region General Haig reports steady progress, but no localities are mentioned which might give a clue to the relative importance of the advance.

Apparently the spasmodic fighting in the Champagne and Verdun sections has ceased, for the time being at least, but important news comes from another and far distant field of the world war. The Russians, driving forward from Persia, have crossed the Mesopotamian border at one point, while a second army is continuing its advance from Kermanshah in support of the British advance from Bagdad. This means that the retreating Turks are being menaced from three sides and, according to allied military observers, are threatened by far greater disaster than even the loss of Bagdad.

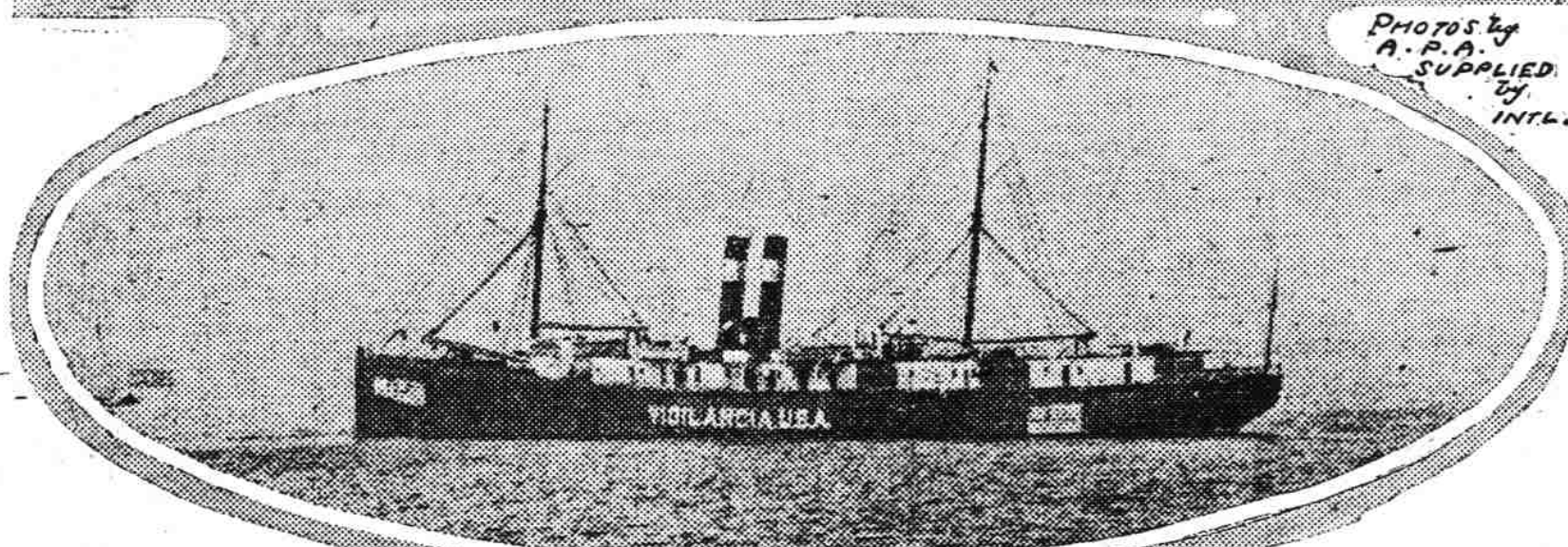
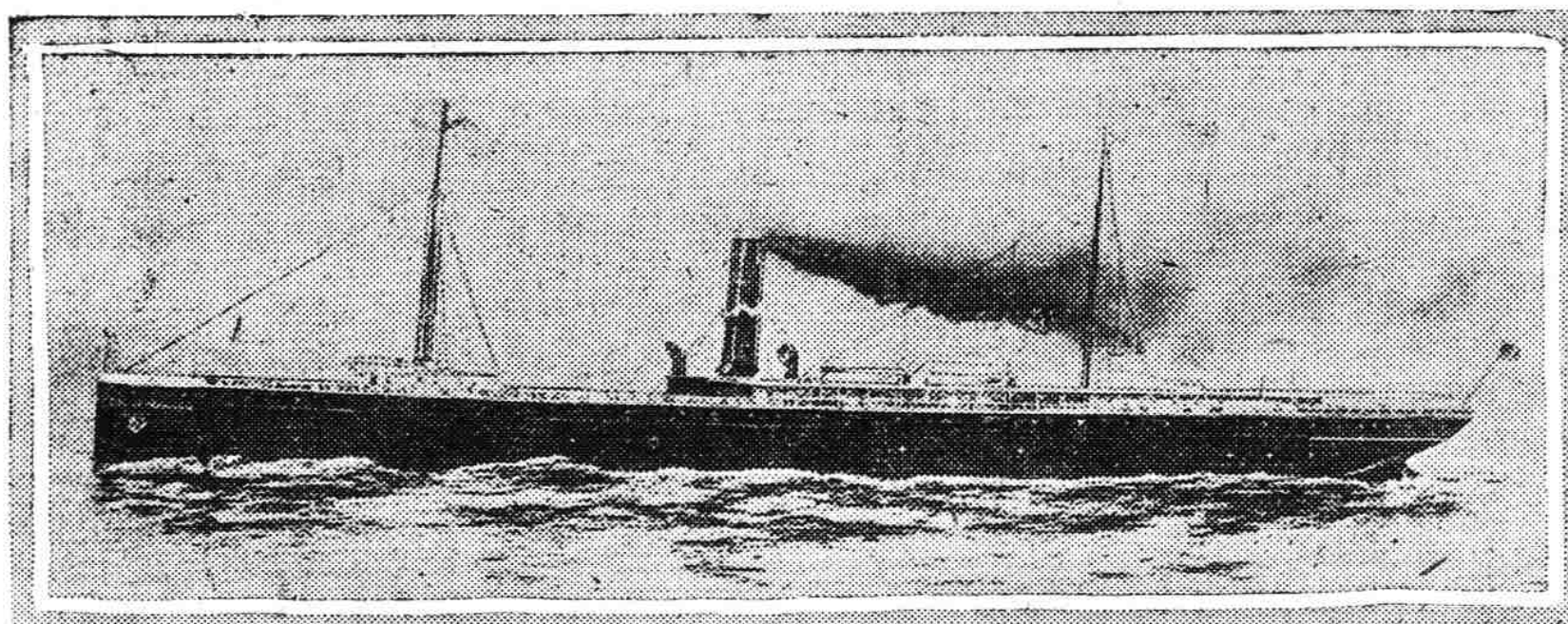
What may prove to be the opening of a German offensive on the Russian front is reported in today's Russian official statement.

The German attack was delivered towards the northern end of the front, in the region southeast of Vlna, almost directly east of Lida. The Russian position there was breached, but afterwards the Germans were driven out of a village they had occupied. A portion of the positions, however, remained in their hands.

The Berlin official statement reports this move as a raid in force, and does not mention the retention of any ground gained. The Russian position was penetrated as far as the second line, it is declared, and the raiders returned with 225 prisoners, 2 guns, 6 machine guns and other booty.

The German statement also reports a revival of activity on the Rumanian front, with the armies of Archduke Joseph and Field Marshal von Mac-

SINKING OF THESE SHIPS MAY BRING US TO WAR.



ABOVE: S.S. CITY OF MEMPHIS. BELOW: S.S. VIGILANCIA.

The steamships City of Memphis and Vigilancia, both American vessels with American crews and flying the American flag, sunk together with the American freighter Illinois, by German submarines. All were unarmed. No provision was made for the safety of the crews and present indications are that at least twenty-two American sailors lost their lives. The situation was characterized by Secretary Lansing as "too serious to discuss." Many public men see in these sinkings the "overt acts" which will bring the United States to war with Germany.