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THE CALIFORNIA TORPEDOED.

Passenger Steamer Sunk by U-Boat Off Irish Coast. Like Liner Lusitania No Warning Was Given the Boat. One American Citizen on Board Was Saved. Two Women and Several Children Are Reported Missing. Within the Past 24 Hours U-Boats Have Accounted for Many Ships.

Washington, Feb. 7.—The steady stream of reports telling of the destruction of merchant ships by German submarines was brought to a climax tonight by a telegram from the state department from Consul Frost at Queenstown announcing that the British liner California had been torpedoed without warning, and that an American citizen was among the survivors.

Whether this will prove to be the overt act to drive the United States into war no one would attempt to say tonight. President Wilson, who must make the decision, had retired when the news came and officials did not wake him. Late in the afternoon he had been informed of a message from Consul Frost telling of the sinking of the California, but giving no details as to warning or the presence of Americans.

The President undoubtedly will wait for complete reports on the disaster before determining whether the time has come for him to go to Congress to ask authority to "use any means that may be necessary for the protection of our seamen and our people."

The consul's first dispatch said there was "one death and 30 hospital cases" among the more than 200 people on board the liner. The second added no information concerning casualties except that the survivors were landed at Queenstown tonight, among them being John A. Lee, of Montgomery, Ala., the only American known to have been aboard, and that some still were missing, including two women and several children. The fact that the American escaped lessened in a degree the excitement created by the news, but only in a degree.

More than a score of merchant craft have been sent to the bottom in the war zone within the past 24 hours, and 50 or more since the German proclamation of ruthless warfare on the seas went into effect last Thursday. It is realized that if no citizen of the United States was among the victims, it merely was a fortunate accident and that it can be only a matter of hours before Americans are caught in such wholesale destruction.

The California, which was bound from New York to Glasgow, is the first big passenger steamer to be destroyed since the Arabia was torpedoed in the Mediterranean months ago. Her sinking has about swept away the last lingering hope here that Germany after all, would permit passenger carriers to escape in an effort to avoid driving the United States to hostilities.—Press Dispatch in Greensboro News.

THE BUSINESS IN JANUARY.

Commercial Failures Make Best Exhibit for the Period in Years.

Like other statistical comparisons, the insolvency record reflects the general prosperity of the country, January failures being the smallest in number for the period since 1910 and the lightest in amount of any year back to 1909. Commercial defaults last month numbered 1,540, against 2,009 in 1916 and 2,848 in 1915, while the liabilities were \$18,283,120, as compared with \$25,863,286 and \$49,640,575, respectively, in the two immediately preceding years. In each of the three years prior to 1915 January insolvencies exceeded 1,800, the average being above 1,850, and in 1914 the indebtedness was over \$39,000,000, with the average for 1913 and 1912 fully \$21,000,000. Last month's returns, as usual, disclosed more reverses and larger financial losses than in December, yet the numerical increase was less than in any year since 1909, and this also was true of the sum of money involved. That such facts appear, with more people in business than ever before, is one of the best features of the times.—Dun's Review.

WEDNESDAY IN LEGISLATURE.

Two-Quarts-A-Year Bill Opposed by House Committee. Garnishment and Homestead Bill Gets Unfavorable Report from Senate Committee. Senate Passes Measure to Divide State Into Two Judicial Circuits and 20 Districts.

Raleigh, N. C., Feb. 7.—The House committee on liquor traffic gave a long hearing this afternoon to advocates of the Anti-Saloon League bill to reduce liquor deliveries to two quarts per year and make other sharp advances in the prohibition regulations of the State, the two quarts allowed being strictly for medical purposes. The outcome was that the committee voted 7 to 11 for an unfavorable report of the bill which must now go to the floor of the House under a minority favorable report.

There were nine members of the committee absent. For the hearing J. A. Brown, of Chadbourn, as chairman of the Anti-Saloon League legislative committee, was in charge and the discussion was opened by Dr. W. L. Potat, of Wake Forest College. Other speakers included Rev. M. T. Plyler, C. H. Ireland, T. J. Markham, Dr. L. B. McBrayer, W. S. Taylor, F. S. Blair, W. T. Shaw, Frank Lypfert, former Representative Bolick and J. D. Elliott.

The Senate committee on constitutional amendments gave an unfavorable report this evening for the North Carolina Merchants Association bill to amend the constitution to eliminate the homestead and to provide for garnishment of percentages of wages and other incomes for debt. The vote was 5 to 3. The House committee did not vote, there not having been a quorum when the voting time came. A. B. Justice, of Charlotte, and J. M. Broughton, Jr., Raleigh, were among the advocates of the bill who were heard.

The House had a strenuous debate on the bill from the Senate that would amend the Revisal to raise the age of moral responsibility from 10 to 14 years and increase the age of consent to 18 years. It has passed the Senate, but was defeated in the House 47 to 57.

The House sided with Cleveland County in the contest with Gaston over possession of Kings Mountain and passed by a roll call vote of 85 to 9 a bill to confirm Cleveland's possession of this territory through the election two years ago that Gaston contends was fraudulent.

Judicial District Bill.

The Senate passed the Warren bill dividing the State into two judicial circuits with 24 judges and 20 judicial districts and rotation that will leave two judges always available for holding emergency terms under the direction of the Governor. The bill was sent to the House, having passed without opposition as a most happy solution of the complicated and congested condition of courts and circuits.

Senator Oates introduced a bill to empower the Governor to appoint a board of visitors to visit and inspect State institutions.

Crop Lien Bill Progresses.

The committee having under consideration the bill to amend the crop lien system of the State for the relief of the tenant class, as agreed upon by the State Farmers Union and Governor Bickett gave a lengthy hearing this afternoon and practically agreed on the main features of the measure, but referred the bill to a sub-committee to adjust the feature designed to overscribe the cash price and the percent of additional profit a dealer is to be permitted to add for furnishing time supplies. Indications are that the bill in satisfactory adjustment will be reported favorably within a day or two.

When the Senate was convened at 11 o'clock, Senators Griffin and Burgwin were named as members of the joint committee to investigate the charges against the management of the State farm.

The board of Gaston County commissioners met in Gaston Monday and appropriated on behalf of the county one-third of the amount necessary to secure the services of an all-time health officer. The City of Gaston will pay one-third and the board of education the remaining third. The health officer will receive \$2,500 a year, giving his whole time and exclusive services to the duties of his office.

AT THE CAPITAL OF BANNER.

Family of New Baptist Minister to Arrive Soon. Deputy Flowers Makes Two Successful Raids on Blockaders. Two Men Arrested for Check-Flashing. A Member of The School Faculty Married to a Smithfield Business Man. Numerous Others Items of Interest.

Benson, Feb. 8.—Mr. P. B. Johnson was a visitor to Smithfield on business Thursday.

Messrs. Alex. Hodge and A. L. Barefoot were visitors to Lillington Thursday.

Mr. Timothy Hudson, of Durham, spent a few hours in town Wednesday with relatives.

Mr. Ed. Johnson, of Elevation, spent the day here Wednesday on business.

Mr. Joseph Coats, of Four Oaks, spent the day here Tuesday.

Miss Bryant and Mr. John Parrish went to Florida this week where they will spend some time.

Mrs. Allen Smith, of Smithfield, was a visitor here Tuesday for a few hours.

Messrs. R. T. Surles and Alonzo Parrish were visitors to Raleigh Tuesday.

Mr. C. T. Johnson spent the day Monday in Raleigh with Mrs. Johnson who is in a hospital there.

Miss Ruth Johnson, of Cardenas, has been elected to fill the vacancy in the Graded School Faculty caused by the resignation of Miss Mary Bishop.

Rev. Mr. Rollins, the new pastor of the Baptist church, will arrive with his family about March the first. They will live at the Parsonage on Church Street.

There were services at the Methodist church Sunday by the pastor. Mr. Holder, of Wendell, spent the day here Sunday with his sister, Mrs. W. D. Boon.

Lonnie Maper and Lonnie B. Ennis were arrested here Sunday for check-flashing and placed in jail for lack of bond to await the next term of the Superior Court of this county. From all reports they are both in need of some assistance from the strong arm of the law to stop their wild careers, both having been in trouble and guilty of violations of the law at different times before.

Mr. R. L. Flowers made a special visit out on Mingo last night and brought back with him a 60-gallon copper still. He also caught at the still Seth McLamb. McLamb was arrested and taken before the U. S. Commissioner at Dunn and bound over to the Federal Court.

From all reports it seems that Benson is afflicted with some very undesirable citizens. Some days ago the people of Dunn got busy and chased out from her borders some women of the under-world. These women have moved into the suburbs of our town, so it is reported, and are giving a great deal of annoyance to the citizens who live near the place they live. If the owner of the house refuses to move these undesirables from his premises, then the moral citizens of our town should notify them to vacate at once, and if this don't move them we think they should be forced to leave in broad day light without ceremony.

Mr. Robert Flowers returned from Salemburg, Sampson County, where he had been employed by the citizens of the town to do some work chasing the blockaders and whiskey makers. He caught one 25-gallon still and three men, Larkin Young, formerly of Harnett, and Needham V. Pope and T. C. Pope, boys 14 and 16 years of age, destroyed 75 gallons of beer and several fermenters. This still was being operated in the Salemburg Model Community of Sampson County and in three hundred yards of the house of the township Constable. The prisoners were taken to Fayetteville and given a hearing before U. S. Commissioner and bound over to the Wilmington Federal Court.

Miss Mary Bishop, of the Graded School faculty, and Mr. Allen Smith, of Smithfield, were married here last Thursday night. Rev. A. T. Lassiter performing the ceremony. Miss Bishop had been in our midst for some time and had made a large number of friends who regret to see her leave. Mr. Smith is a young business man of Smithfield. The couple will make their home in Smithfield. The people of Benson wish them much happiness through life.

THE NEWS OVER SELMA WAY.

Report of Cold Weather for Several Years. Coldest Weather Here in 25 Years Was in January, 1893 When the Thermometer Went to Five Below and Again in February 1899 When Six Below Zero Was Registered.

Selma, Feb. 8.—The Selma correspondent of The Herald will be glad to get any items of interest of any citizen of Selma.

Miss Mattie Ellington, of Richmond, Va., is here on a visit to Mrs. W. H. Call.

Rev. Mr. Proctor, pastor of the Methodist church here, preached two excellent sermons here last Sunday, and also made a talk in the auditorium of the school on "Adolescence" in the afternoon. The music on that occasion was fine. At that service Miss Mattie Ellington sang in a quartette, composed of Miss Mattie Ellington, Mrs. N. E. Edgerton, Rev. Mr. Proctor and Mr. John Jeffreys. They sang several selections.

In my notes of last week regarding the Shrine Minstrels in Raleigh and the possibility of getting them, either here or in Smithfield, several lines were left out, which destroyed the sense of the article.

The Selma Graded School and the Civic League will entertain the teachers of Johnston, Saturday. Let all come and receive a regular Selma welcome.

Mr. W. D. Driver, Mrs. Geo. Noel, Misses Annie Hood and Perdue motored to Raleigh Thursday to see George Driver, who is in the hospital.

Captain John F. Brown was right badly hurt last Friday by his foot slipping off the tender step, throwing him across the track rail. He is able to be up now, but not able to be out.

Dr. W. B. Johnson, our excellent dentist, spent Sunday at his father's, in Smithfield township.

Miss Minnie Peedin has accepted a position with Hudson Belk Co., in Raleigh, and will be pleased to have her friends call on her when in Raleigh.

Mrs. Geo. Noel and son, George, Jr., arrived Wednesday to spend some time with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Hood.

Miss Perdue, milliner for Miss Annie Hood, arrived Tuesday morning.

As a great many are saying "this is the coldest weather ever in this country," I will give you the dates of some of the coldest days since 1893. It will be seen from this that the coldest weather known in Johnston since 1893 was in January, 1823 when from January 6th the thermometer only went above freezing on the 8th, 9th, 12th, 14th, 22nd, 23rd, and then only a few degrees, till the 23rd. On January 20th it was 5 below zero and on the 21st 4 below. On January 20th there was a heavy fog which froze, and that was the prettiest sight I ever saw. The fog on the trees, twigs and grass was frozen to near 3/4 of an inch, and when the sun came out and shone on the frozen fog it was a sight never seen here before, and one never to be forgotten. There was also some cold weather in February, 1895, when for six days the thermometer did not go above 32 degrees (or the freezing point). Also in February, 1899, when on the 10th the thermometer went down to 11 degrees, then at 12 o'clock on the 11th snow began to fall and kept on falling till 4:30 p. m. on the 13th. There was a snow fall of 17 inches, and on the 14th the thermometer stood at 6 degrees below zero; and on the 15th at 4 degrees below zero. It would be well for those interested to cut this out and keep for future reference as it is correct and taken from the United States records kept by Dr. Noble, who kept the records until he turned the instruments over to Mr. E. S. Sanders, of Smithfield, in 1911.

WEATHER TABLE.

The first row of figures given below indicate the minimum or lowest temperatures and the last row indicates the maximum or highest temperatures for the given dates.

	1893.	Min.	Max.
January 6th.....	15	28	
January 7th.....	15	30	
January 8th.....	20	37	
January 9th.....	15	35	
January 10th.....	22	30	
January 11th.....	6	29	
January 12th.....	30	40	
January 13th.....	16	26	
January 14th.....	9	34	
January 15th.....	21	30	

January 16th.....	6	23
January 17th.....	5	24
January 18th.....	8	27
January 19th.....	21	30
January 20th, 5 below zero		28
January 21st, 4 below zero		34
January 22nd.....	6	40
January 23rd.....	11	48
1894.		
December 29th.....	10	27
December 30th.....	12	30
1895.		
February 8th.....	5	18
February 9th.....	12	31
February 10th.....	19	32
February 11th.....	19	29
February 12th.....	23	28
February 13th.....	12	29
February 14th.....	3	36
February 15th.....	19	34
1896.		
February 21st.....	10	32
1897.		
January 28th.....	13	24
January 29th.....	12	32
1899.		
January 29th.....	8	44
February 10th.....	11	25
February 11th.....	15	22
February 12th.....	10	18
February 13th.....	9	14
February 14th, 6 below zero		30
February 15th, 4 below zero		40
1900.		
January 2nd.....	11	31
February 1st.....	12	25
February 2nd.....	12	35
1901.		
February 24th.....	10	39
1905.		
February 14th.....	13	32
February 15th.....	18	35
February 16th.....	12	34

REGIMENT BACK FROM BORDER.

Members of the First Glad to Get Back Home. The Two Asheville Companies Banquetted at the Langren Hotel. The First Lost Two Men While Away.

Asheville, Feb. 7.—With flags flying from all public buildings and dozens of business houses, mothers, wives and friends gathered in large numbers to greet them, Asheville foot soldiers, companies F and K, of the first North Carolina regiment, unloaded here today, after the long and tedious journey from the border. A rousing mass meeting at the city auditorium, which was presided over by Mayor Rankin and addressed by Commissioner Ramsey, and a banquet at the Langren hotel tonight, helped to complete the reception given by the citizens of this city to her soldiers.

The first regiment band went with Colonel Gardner to Shelby, regimental headquarters, where it will be mustered out. The band will make this city headquarters, but will be under command of Capt. A. W. Freeman, of Canton, adjutant of the regiment. The local companies will be mustered out at once, Captain Benton of the United States coast artillery being here for that purpose. There will be mustering officers for each company of the regiment.

The first has been more than lucky in that but two men of its 12 companies have lost their lives since the regiment was mobilized last June. Jack Wycoff of E company, Statesville, was drowned at Camp Glenn and Pat Thornburg of A company, Hickory, although a resident of Newton, was killed yesterday at Knoxville when he was knocked from the top of a car on which he was standing by a low bridge. But one man of the local companies was ill when they left Texas or arrived here and he was left in the hospital at El Paso.

The first arrived here early this morning, traveling in two special trains, composed of 18 tourist sleepers and eight freight cars. Unloading the local companies, two sleepers and freight car were sent to Waynesville, the shelby contingent, consisting of Colonel Gardner and his staff and the band proceeded in a special to Shelby. Statesville, Hickory, High Point, Two sleepers each were sent to Winston-Salem and Mt. Airy.—Greensboro News.

Patrick L. Thornburgh, aged 24, member of company A, first North Carolina infantry, died Tuesday afternoon as the result of an accident that happened as the special train carrying his regiment home from Texas was leaving Knoxville. Thornburgh had climbed on top of a car and was waving a farewell when his head struck viaduct supports and he was knocked to the ground. He died later in a hospital. Thornburgh's home was at Newton, N. C.

HOUSE PASSES DEFENSE PLANS

Congress Makes Big Increases in Appropriation Measures. \$15,000,000 More For Navy. Bill Authorizing \$150,000,000 Bond Issue To Speed Up Warship Construction Introduced.

Washington, Feb. 6.—Big increases were added to national defense appropriations measures in Congress today, and plans were made to put through quickly other far-reaching provisions requested by the Administration to prepare the country for whatever may follow the break with Germany.

The House, hurrying the annual naval bill toward completion, wrote into it additional appropriations totaling \$15,000,000, of which more than \$5,000,000 is for ammunition for merchant auxiliaries of the fleet, and nearly \$2,000,000 for anti-aircraft guns to defend naval stations.

In the Senate an executive session to consider nominations occupied virtually the entire day, but a bill was put through increasing the penalties for making threats against the President of the United States, and the Republicans agreed at an informal conference to support a plan for authorization of 100 submarines, at a cost of \$4,000,000, in addition to those provided for in the regular building program.

While the House was debating the naval bill, the Military Committee brought in the annual army appropriation measure, carrying a total of \$247,000,000 and including a provision requested by Secretary Baker yesterday, under which the full membership of the army general staff may be brought to Washington in emergencies to work on war problems. Among the largest items for new equipment are authorizations of \$8,000,000 for aviation, \$11,000,000 for equipment and stores of the reserve corps, and \$5,000,000 for automatic machine guns for the army and National Guard. Debate on the bill will begin late this week.

Another of the bills would authorize a \$150,000,000 bond issue to provide funds for insuring quick delivery of naval vessels now under construction and a third would appropriate \$1,000,000 for Government purchase of basic airplane and seaplane patents.

Republicans and Democrats, declaring partisan consideration should be forgotten in the face of the international crisis, joined in approving without question the increase appropriations recommended by Secretary Daniels in the bill under debate today.

MANY SHIPS FIRST DAY'S TOLL.

Seven British, Five Norwegian, One Russian, One Swedish and One Spanish Ship Were in the List. One Was a Large Passenger Steamer and It Is Feared Lives Were Lost.

Fifteen ships of 47,580 tons aggregate were the toll of the first day of full-fledged U-boat warfare, says a London dispatch dated February 6th. The period of grace given by Germany to neutral shipping in the "barred zones" expired early this morning and the day's havoc raised by the U-boats is believed to be indicative of the proportions to be maintained hereafter in Germany's campaign to starve out England.

The vessels sunk today included seven British, five Norwegian, one Russian, one Swedish and one Spanish ship.

There is nothing in the reports to show definitely that there was loss of life. Grave fears are entertained, however, for the bulk of the passengers on the Commonwealth and Dominion liner Port Adelaide of 8,181 tons. Only 96 of her passengers and crew are thus far reported to have been picked up at sea. The vessel's captain was captured by the U-boat commander.

The aggregate tonnage sent to the bottom today alone is 5,693 tons in excess of the total tonnage destroyed in the first five days of the new warfare from February 1 to 5, inclusive, during which period only 41,887 tons were sunk. If today's rate should be maintained, the U-boat blockade would mean the destruction of a million and a half tons a month, or half a million in excess of the figure estimated in Berlin despatches.