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FRENCH AND BRITONS GAIN.

Press Hard Against German Line and Take Positions From Hindenburg's Men. Teutonic Forces Push Slavs Back. Compel Russians to Retire in Baronvichi Region. Austrians Attack in Strength and Capture Portions of Trench Line From Italians.

(Thursday's War News.)

The British and French troops have made additional important gains against the Germans on the line running from Arras to Soissons. On the British front at several points Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig's men have pushed forward appreciably nearer the St. Quentin-Cambrai road, occupying the villages of Longavesnes, Liermont and Equancourt, and in addition have recaptured from the Germans a position north of Beaumetzles-Cambrai which the Germans took from them in an attack Monday night.

The gains of the French were made in the region to the south of La Fere, where they drove the Germans completely out of the lower forest of Coucy and also captured the villages of Petit Garis, Verueil and Coucy-la-Ville, bringing the French line in this region to the western outskirts of the forest of St. Gobain and the upper forest of Coucy. In the Soissons sector further progress was made north of Neuville-sur-Margival and northeast of Leully.

The German war office admits the capture by the British of the town of Roisel, about 11 miles west of St. Quentin, and the falling back of the German forces before the French at several points in the forest region south of La Fere, in order to avoid being outflanked.

Violent artillery fighting in the region of Verdun and at various points in Belgium, notably near Dixmude, Steenstrate and Het Sas, has been in progress.

On the Russian front the Russians have been forced to fall back before the Germans south of Baronovichi, according to a statement of the Petrograd war office. In this fighting Berlin claims more than 300 Russians were made prisoners, and four machine guns and seven mine throwers were captured. Russian attacks near Lutsk in Volhynia and in Galicia were repulsed by the Teutonic allies, says Berlin.

Apparently a renewal of fighting in Roumania is indicated by the German official communication which says the Russians have been prevented from carrying out an attack south of the Trotus valley.

In the Austro-Italian theatre, along the Japan front, the Austrians made an attack in force between Dosso Fauti and Frigido and captured a section of Italian trenches on Hill 126. At all other places, however, the attack met with repulsed, according to Rome.

About 400 yards of Teutonic allied trenches have been captured by the French near the Cervagna crest in Servian Macedonia, together with some 100 prisoners. A Bulgarian attack in the Cerna river bend in this region was repulsed.

Two more British torpedo boats destroyed have been sunk—one by striking a mine and the other in a collision.

Announcement is made by the British admiralty that the British hospital ship Asturias, which was reported previously by Berlin to have been sunk, was torpedoed without warning. Thirty-one persons were killed in the attack and 12 persons are still missing from the vessel. The Asturias had no wounded on board at the time, but carried some 300 persons.

Unofficial advices from Amsterdam, quoting a Berlin dispatch, say it is rumored in Berlin that Germany has offered a separate peace to Russia.

POU SAYS DEMOCRATS WILL ORGANIZE HOUSE

Washington, March 28.—Representative E. W. Pou, of Smithfield, returned to Washington today. He predicted that the Democrats would organize the House "unless hindered by Providence." Mr. Pou would like to be chairman of the Committee on Rules. He is ranking member, Mr. Henry, of Texas, being no longer in Congress. Garrett, of Tennessee, is next to Pou, and is said to be anxious for the place also.—Charlotte Observer.

Person County has voted a \$300,000 bond issue for roads. Now to get out of the mud holes.

BIG HOARD OF GOLD FOR WAR.

United States Can Easily Loan \$5,000,000,000 To Allies, Says Banking Officials.

The United States—the treasure house of the world—is able to loan the Allies the staggering sum of \$5,000,000,000 without noticeably affecting the financial situation of this country.

An official of one of the largest American banking institutions told the United States Press to-day this country is in a position to loan five times the amount of our national debt to the Allies in case of war between the United States and Germany.

In the gold piled up in this country is the power, if loosed, to end the war in the opinion of the banker.

"To put the immediately available amount into round figures, I believe we could spare \$5,000,000,000 without noticing it seriously. That amount would be only 2½ per cent of our resources.

"And I believe that sum as a loan to the Allies would be sufficient to end the war under the present conditions. Consider that it is one-fourth of the entire war debt of England at this time. With that in mind it can be readily seen that it would throw the balance in favor of the Allies and bring peace.

"In banking circles a loan of that size in view of the present state of affairs is looked upon as 'peace insurance.' Before many years it will save us five times that amount.

"At this time the wealth of the United States is estimated at \$200,000,000,000," said the banker.

"Without hesitation, I would say that we are able to loan the Allies any amount necessary to bring about the end of the war. We could do it without making any impression upon the financial situation in this country and at the same time carry on our own war measures.

"With gold flowing into this country unceasingly for the past two years we have become the bankers of the world. It is fairly impossible to comprehend the power of the gold piled up in this country. In it lies the power to put an end to this war quickly."

With talk of huge loans in the air the banking houses are already mobilizing their resources in preparation to unloose the power of money in case the seed arises.

In banking circles it is said an almost unlimited credit to the Allies for ships, munitions and foodstuffs would be the form of such a loan. The money would remain physically in this country.—New York Evening Sun.

BIBLE CLASS FEDERATION.

Second Annual Convention to Be Held in Rocky Mount Next Week.

Rocky Mount, March 28.—The second annual convention of the Federation of Wesley Bible Classes will be held in this city on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of April.

This Federation is under the auspices of the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which embraces all the territory in the State, east of Greensboro, and is intended to promote the organization of adult Bible classes for the study of the Bible. It is doing a great work among the Methodists of the States and should incidentally tend to stimulate renewed interest among other denominations.

An excellent program has been arranged, and addresses will be made by some of the most prominent speakers, both lay and clerical, in the Conference. Music will also be a prominent feature of the sessions.

The railroads have given special rates, and ample accommodations will be provided for all who attend.

Each Bible Class is expected to send full delegations, and a large crowd is expected.

Delegates are requested to notify Mr. J. H. Westbrook, Rocky Mount, N. C., of their intention to attend, who will also be glad to furnish any information desired, upon application.

Delegates will be met at the train and assigned homes by the reception committee.

The farmer who raises more of foodstuffs this year than he needs for his own use, will not feel the pinch of war like the farmer who doesn't raise plenty.

CLARK AND STRAIGHT TICKET.

Odds Now Favor Democrats Organizing House With Champ Clark Speaker. Democratic Caucus to Be Held Today to Appoint Democratic Member of Ways and Means Committee.

Washington, March 29.—Many Congressmen arrived here today to confer with colleagues and others on the contest over the House organization. The odds are on Speaker Clark and a straight Democratic ticket tonight. Representative Martin, Progressive-Protectionist, of Louisiana, announced that he would not enter either the caucus of the Democrats or the Republicans. That is very encouraging to the Democrats for Minority Leader Mann has been claiming that he is a Republican. It has been understood for weeks that Mr. Martin would vote for Speaker Clark. He was elected by independent Democratic votes.

It is considered a safe bet that in addition to the 213 regular Democrats, Speaker Clark and other Democratic candidates for House offices will receive the support of Representatives London, Socialist, of New York; Randall, Prohibitionist, of California; Martin, Progressive-Protectionist, of Louisiana, and Kelly, Independent, of Pennsylvania. There is some doubt as to how Representatives Fuller, Independent-Republican, of Massachusetts; Schall, Progressive, of Minnesota, and Rankin, Congresswoman, of Montana, will vote.

Representative James A. Gallivan, Democrat, of Boston, in a fit of anger because of the passage of the Prohibition bill for the District of Columbia, declared at the close of last Congress that he would bolt the Democrats in the Sixty-Fifth Congress. It is understood by his friends that he will vote for Speaker Clark and other House officers but may oppose some committee assignments that look too much like prohibition.

The Democrats will hold their caucus at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning in the House of Representatives. Speaker Clark and Majority Leader Kitchin today conferred at length on the plans. Mr. Clark will be nominated for Speaker. The caucus will re-appoint the Democratic members of the Ways and Means Committee and fill in four vacancies thereon. The caucus also will decide upon the four House officials to be elected, viz: Clerk, doorkeeper, postmaster and sergeant-at-arms.

The Republican committee of 27 will meet tomorrow night to make plans for the Republican caucus, a Saturday. Republicans are trying to conciliate their differences over the Speakership. The decision of minority Leader Mann to use his efforts to secure a Republican organization did much to bring about order in the ranks.

Representative Lenroot today said he would stand by the nominee for Speaker of the Republican caucus.

"My efforts have been confined solely to having the Republicans attempt to organize the House" he said. "I expect to abide by the Republican caucus."

Mr. Mann said today there would be a show-down as between Republicans and Democrats.—H. E. C. Bryant, in News and Observer.

VIRGIN ISLANDS IS NEW NAME.

United States Will Take Possession Formally Saturday. Check for \$25,000,000.

The Virgin Islands will for the present be the designation of the newly acquired Danish West Indies which will become American territory formally, tomorrow, says a Washington dispatch. The name selected is the original name bestowed upon the former property of the Danish kingdom at the time of their discovery by Spanish navigators nearly 400 years ago.

Rear Admiral James H. Oliver, U. S. N., will be the first American governor of the new island possessions. He will sail for his post the day the islands are taken over. At the same time Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo will deliver to the Danish minister, Constantine Brun, a treasury warrant for \$25,000,000 which is said to be the largest check ever drawn by Uncle Sam.

Russia has thrown off the Romanoff yoke and the world is hoping that Germany will follow suit by getting out from under the Hohenzollern yoke.

AT THE CAPITAL OF BANNER.

Benson School To Close April 20th. Annual Sermon by Rev. T. M. Grant, of Hillsboro. Annual Address by Dr. W. C. Riddick, President of A. & M. College. A Full Budget of Personal News Items.

Benson, March 29.—Mr. Victor Cole, of Four Oaks, was a visitor to our city Wednesday for a few hours.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Hodges, of Loris, S. C., are here spending a few days with Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Hodges.

Mr. H. A. Parker, of the Citizens Bank and Trust Company, was a visitor to Smithfield Wednesday.

Dr. Wicker, of Elon College, was a visitor to our city this week to see his daughter, Miss Annie Laurie Wicker, who is a member of the Benson High School Faculty.

Mr. B. F. Langdon, of Coats, was here for a while Wednesday on business matters.

Mr. Jesse Adams and Mr. P. P. Allen, of Four Oaks, were here yesterday for a short while.

Mr. E. S. White, of the Third Regiment Band, was in the city Tuesday and Wednesday shaking hands with old friends, after returning from the Mexican border.

Messrs. H. W. Barnes, J. R. Barbour and Charlie Britt were visitors to Fuquay Springs yesterday on business.

Mr. J. W. Stout, of Sanford, was in the city last night. The firm of J. W. Stout & Company has been awarded the contract for the building of the Methodist church here and will begin work within the next few days.

Mr. Preston Woodall, who has been suffering with rheumatism for the past week, went up to Raleigh Tuesday and Wednesday and is taking treatment there.

Mr. C. C. Benton, of the firm of Benton & Benton, architects, of Wilson, was in the city last night on business.

Messrs. H. D. Ellington and Bud Parrish, of Smithfield, were here yesterday for a few hours on business.

Rev. J. T. Stanford returned yesterday from a ten days' visit to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York City. Mrs. Stanford, who went with him, is spending a few days with relatives at Rich Square before returning.

Mr. A. M. Langdon, of Elevation township, was a visitor to Benson Tuesday for a few hours.

Mr. I. B. Raynor was a visitor to Fayetteville Wednesday for a few hours.

Mrs. R. U. Barbour, of Elevation township, was in the city on business Tuesday.

Mrs. R. T. Surles returned Monday from a few days visit to relatives near Goldsboro.

Mr. J. T. Langston, of Bentonsville, was here Monday on business matters.

Mr. F. Hunter Creech, of Smithfield, was here for a few hours Monday on business.

Mr. L. L. Levinson, of Coats, was a visitor to our city Monday and Tuesday.

Mr. C. B. Barbour, of Elevation, was here Monday on business matters. He says the farmers of his community are badly behind with their work.

Mr. Adgie Godwin, of Harnett County, was here Tuesday on business. Mr. Godwin is one of the most up-to-date farmers of Harnett County.

Messrs. N. T. Ryals, Ezra Parker, Jas. Raynor, R. T. Surles, J. M. Morgan and Capt. Rachea were in Smithfield Tuesday attending the Recorder's Court.

Mr. Alfred Parker left Saturday night for Petersburg, Va., where he has accepted a position with a drug company.

Mr. Heber Creech, of Smithfield, was here Sunday to see his mother who has been quite sick for some time.

Messrs. D. M. Stringfield, of Fayetteville, and J. A. Wellons, of Smithfield, were visitors to our city Monday night.

Mr. S. L. Jordan, of Swan Quarter, was a visitor to Benson Saturday.

A baby was born to Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Thompson last Saturday morning.

The Benson School will close on the 20th of April this year. The annual sermon will be preached on Sunday morning the 22nd of April at eleven o'clock, by Rev. T. M. Grant, pastor of the Methodist Church at Hillsboro, N. C. The annual address will be delivered on the morning of April the 23rd at 10 o'clock at the school audi-

BANKS' ASSETS SET NEW MARK.

Total \$16,000,000,000; Gain of \$730,000,000 Since December.

(Washington Post.)

American national banks have set a new high record for resources, again revealing the United States as incomparably the richest nation in the world.

Comptroller Williams announced last night that on March 5, the date of the last bank call, the assets of the national banks aggregated more than \$16,000,000,000, exceeding by more than \$5,000,000 the combined resources of the Bank of England, the Bank of France, the Bank of Italy, the Bank of Spain, the Bank of Norway, the Bank of Sweden, the Swiss National Bank, the National Bank of Denmark, the Bank of Japan and the Reichsbank of Germany.

"Reports of national banks in the central reserve cities and reserve cities throughout the country as of March 5, just compiled," said the comptroller's statement, "show that on that date the resources of these banks were \$210,000,000 larger than ever before in their history, the previous high-water mark having been reached November 17, 1916. The increase as compared with December 27, 1916, was \$480,000,000.

"The reports have thus far been compiled for only about one-fifth of the country banks, or banks outside the reserve cities. If the assets of the other country banks have increased at the same rate as those thus far compiled, the total increase in country bank resources will be approximately \$250,000,000 as compared with December 27. On this basis the increase in the resources of all national banks in central reserve and reserve cities and country banks from December 27 to March 5, will approximate \$730,000,000, making the total assets of all national banks March 5, considerably in excess of \$16,000,000,000.

RESERVE BANKS MAKE LOAN.

Government Borrows \$50,000,000 For Ninety Days. Interest Rate Is Two Per Cent. Loan to Tide Over Until Taxes Come in June.

The 12 reserve banks have oversubscribed on 24 hours' notice a 90-day loan to the Government of \$50,000,000 at the rate of two per cent a year, says a Washington dispatch of the 28th. The money was borrowed on 90-day Treasury certificates of indebtedness to help tide over the Government till June, when the great stream of income and international revenue taxes will flow into the Treasury. And \$50,000,000, it was announced, may be borrowed in the same manner before the close of the fiscal year.

Temporary financing of the Government in this manner was made necessary by the depleted condition of the balance in the general fund of the Treasury, reduced to approximately \$58,000,000 and fixing a further reduction of \$25,000,000 Saturday when the Government will issue a warrant for that amount in payment of the Danish West Indies.

The issue of certificates of indebtedness to run not longer than one year, and to bear interest at a rate not exceeding three per cent has been authorized by Congress up to \$300,000,000, and this issue is the first to be made under this authorization. In addition, Secretary McAdoo has authority to issue \$474,000,000 in bonds for various purposes, including the Panama Canal bonds to reimburse the Treasury for the amount paid out of ordinary receipts for the construction of the canal.

The quick subscription by Federal reserve banks alone, without reference to any of the member banks of the Federal reserve system with their billions of dollars of resources, at a rate of interest one per cent lower than the rate authorized, is viewed by officials as a striking demonstration of the excellent condition of financial preparedness for any events that the future may hold.

Dr. W. C. Riddick, President of the A. & M. College of Raleigh.

Rev. J. M. Duncan, of Mount Olive, is in the city today with friends.

Mr. J. L. Hall and Rev. G. W. Rollins were visitors to Raleigh Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Barbour, of Four Oaks, were here yesterday with relatives.

GERMANS TRYING TO SHIRK.

Hollweg In Address to German Reichstag Says Responsibility of War Rests on America. Says Germany Is Not to Blame for Strained Relations. U-Boat Campaign Forced by English Blockade.

Berlin, via Sayville wireless, March 29.—If war comes between the United States and Germany the blame will not be Germany's.

This was the burden of a statement made in the reichstag today by the imperial chancellor Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, in the course of a lengthy speech on the international situation, dealing chiefly with Germany's relations with the United States and with Russia.

There was nothing conciliatory in his remarks regarding America, nothing which in any way could be interpreted as the remotest "feeler" for modification, arbitration or mediation.

A notable feature of his statement was that he spoke invariably of the "American government" or the "government of the United States."

He asserted that Germany never did nor does now desire war with America, and that she never had nor has now the "slightest intention to attack the United States."

He reiterated that unrestricted U-boat warfare was forced upon Germany by the British blockade. He pointed out, using the English words, that President Wilson and Secretary of State Lansing, themselves, had called the British blockade "illegal and indefensible." Germany, he said, waited eight months for the United States to make England observe the laws of humanity and international agreements.

"Then," he continued, "we took unrestricted submarine warfare into our own hands. Then we had to do so for our own defense."

With regard to Russia, the chancellor told the reichstag that Germany does not propose to lend her assistance to any movement that might exist to bring czarism back to power.

Nicholas Romanoff, he said, had brought upon himself his own downfall. He might have averted it, said Dr. Von Bethmann-Hollweg, had he heeded the advices of Emperor William to devote himself to the internal reforms so eagerly clamored for by the Russian people. Instead of taking this advice, the chancellor said the former czar insisted upon his program of external expansion. The speaker added that this Russian greed for land was what caused the European war.—Durham Herald.

Young Women Join Naval Reserve.

Norfolk, Va., March 28.—Given the rank of yeoman, ten young women were today accepted by the United States recruiting station here as members of the naval reserve to be called to the service when needed. They will be assigned to clerical duties, it was explained, in order to relieve men for active service with the fleet. They are expert stenographers, typists and accountants. For three months' service they are to receive a bonus of two months' pay for three months in the year.

POWHATAN SCHOOL TO CLOSE.

Junior Order Will Present Bible and Flag. Good Speeches and Good Plays to Be Features.

The Powhatan public school will close Thursday, April 5th, with appropriate exercises. One of the features of the closing exercises will be the presentation of a Bible and a Flag by the Powhatan Council No. 484 Junior Order United American Mechanics. There will be some good speaking and music by a band. A feature of the day will be a community basket picnic.

Some good plays will be presented by the school: "The Turn of the Tide," "Out in the Streets," and "Mother Goose."

The people of the community are invited to attend with well filled baskets and help to make the day one to be long remembered. Everybody invited.

After a skirmish below Chihuahua City, Villa has withdrawn in a concentrating movement toward Satevo, 50 miles south, according to a statement by General Francisco Murguia at Chihuahua City Wednesday. Prisoners taken by the Carranza forces were in a starving condition.