

# Bloody Fighting Is Reported in Progress in Champagne District

listing machinery provides no means of redress.

## WHAT WARRING NATIONS CLAIM IN THEIR OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

### French

PARIS, February 17.—The following official communication was issued by the War Office to-night:

"From the sea to the Oise our artillery has carried on an efficient shelling, which has dispersed a number of gatherings, blown up some caissons and destroyed some trains."

"To the north of Arras we have taken two lines of trenches and beaten back violent counterattacks. We have made some prisoners and inflicted on the enemy heavy losses. A number of British officers have been killed."

"In the neighborhood of Rheims, near Louve, where advances were made on February 16, several hundred metres have been maintained and consolidated."

"In the Champagne district we have followed up our gains north-west of Perthes, and have captured positions of the enemy on a front of 800 metres. All the German counterattacks north of Mesnil-les-Hauts and Beaucourt have been repulsed. We captured a large bomb thrower and several small ones and made 200 prisoners. This engagement continues."

"In the Argonne we have made progress in the forest of La Grurie, and maintained our gain notwithstanding two violent counterattacks and several hot actions at close quarters, which resulted in heavy losses to the enemy."

"A strong attack by the Germans was completely repulsed at Four-de-Paris."

"Between the Argonne and the Meuse we have made progress at divers points."

"In Alsace we have taken control of the forces which dominate the Sudel Farm, and we have retained all the ground conquered."

"Our aviators have bombarded the railway station of Freiburg, in Brisgau."

"The War Office to-day issued this statement."

### ONLY EIGHT OF 73 SHIPS SENT TO PRIZE COURTS

Sir Edward asserts that only eight of the 73 ships sailing from the United States for neutral European countries have been placed in prize courts, and that only forty-five have been temporarily detained to enable particular consignments of cargo to be discharged for the purpose of prize court proceedings.

The note does not go into detail as to American ships detained on the high seas or taken to British ports for search. The statistics of exports from the United States are analyzed, and the observation made that "if cotton had been excluded, the effect of the war has been not to decrease, but practically to arrest the decline of American exports, which was in progress earlier in the year. In fact, any decrease in American exports is attributed to the war is essentially cotton."

Pointing out that Great Britain has never declared cotton contraband or interfered with its shipment, the note says that imports of cotton to the United Kingdom fell as heavily as those to other countries.

"The general result," it continues, "is to show convincingly that the naval operations of Great Britain are not the cause of any diminution in the volume of American exports, and that if the commerce of the United States is in the unfavorable condition which Your Excellency describes, the cause ought in fairness to be sought elsewhere than in the activities of His Majesty's naval forces."

### VOLUME OF COMMERCE HAS BEEN MAINTAINED

The communication contends that, even though trade between the United States and the allies has diminished, the volume of commerce with neutral countries has been maintained, and the inference might be drawn that there is a substantial part of this trade which, intended for the enemy countries, going through neutral ports.

Taking up some of the "inconveniences to which this great war is exposing the commerce of all neutral countries," the note points out that undoubtedly "the serious shortage in goods available for ocean transport, and the consequent result of excessive freight charges, has much to do with the situation, but a demand is entered that Great Britain's activities have brought about this shortage, for it is added that only ten neutral vessels are awaiting adjudication in prize courts. Great Britain declares she, too, is suffering as acutely, if not more, than other nations, from a shortage of shipping and a rise in freight, and has taken every step consistent with her legitimate interests to increase the tonnage available for the transport of sea-borne commerce."

The hope is expressed that the United States will realize that the detention of neutral ships by the allies has not contributed nearly so much to the shortage of shipping as has the destruction of shipping vessels by submarine mines indiscriminately laid by the enemy on the high seas in the track of merchant vessels."

"Up till now," continues the note, "twenty-five neutral vessels have been reported as destroyed by mines on the high seas quite apart from all questions of the breach of treaties and the destruction of life, there is far more reason for protest on the score of bellicent interference with innocent neutral trade through the mines scattered by the enemy than through the British exercise of the right of seizing contraband."

### ENTITLED TO CAPTURE CONTRABAND GOODS

Discussing the general proposition that a belligerent is entitled to capture contraband goods on their way to the enemy, the British note traces the origin of the right of interdiction, and quotes at length the doctrine of continuous voyage as formulated during the Civil War by Chief Justice Seward. The question of ultimate destination also is argued in legal detail.

To justify the detention of suspected cargoes passing between neutral countries, and taking them into ports for examination, the cases of American practice during the Spanish-American War are cited, and the note says these precedents are inconsistent with the statement of the American government to the British ambassador in Washington, November 7, which insists that search has been made on the high seas "at the time of the visit," and that the conclusion of the search should rest upon the evidence found on the ship under investigation, and not upon cir-

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### German

BERLIN, February 17 (by wireless via London).—To-day's War Office statement is as follows:

"Western theatre: Obviously induced to do so by our great successes in the east, the British and French yesterday and during last night began especially stubborn attacks in many places."

"In their unsuccessful attempts to reappear in positions which they lost on the 14th of February, the British lost in prisoners four officers and 170 men."

"Northeast of Rheims the enemy's attacks were repulsed. Two officers and 170 Frenchmen were captured. Especially strong advances made against our lines in the Champagne district frequently led to fierce fighting at close quarters. With the exception of certain separate sections, where the enemy had penetrated and where the battle still continues, the troops of the enemy were repulsed everywhere. About 300 Frenchmen were taken prisoners."

"In the Argonne we continued our offensive, and captured further portions of the enemy's main positions, taking 350 prisoners, two mountain guns and four machine guns. In Priesterwald north of Toul, small successes also were recorded."

"On this occasion two machine-guns were captured. There is no news from the Alsace-Lorraine frontier."

"Eastern theatre: North of the Niemen River our troops have followed everywhere the defeated enemy in the direction of Tauragien. The district east of Augustow engagements occurred at many places during the pursuit of the enemy. A Russian column, advancing from Lomza, was defeated. Four hundred prisoners and six machine-guns fell into our hands. A division of the enemy coming from Kradewo, also was driven back towards Assowale."

"On the 16th we conquered front from Plock to Radom in Poland, north of the Vistula, bitter fighting apparently is developing."

"In Poland, to the south of the Vistula, there are now new developments."

### TERrible BATTLE DIN SEEMS TO SHAKE SKY

Thunder of Great Guns Incessant, and Men Work as if in Nightmare.

### NO ONE THINKS OF DEATH

Russian Commander Vividly Describes Frightful Experiences of Battle When Germans Attempt to Rush Bzura-Bawka Line.

[Special Cable to The Times-Dispatch.] PETROGRAD, February 17.—The supreme culmination of the German attempts to rush the Bzura-Bawka line was the desperate fighting, lasting several days, for the possession of Volvashidlovka. In a number of battles, which brought into action large masses of troops in a comparatively restricted area, the fighting surpassed all other battles since hostilities commenced.

While infantry fighting was going on at close quarters, the fire of 110 German batteries assumed unprecedented dimensions. The Germans concentrated successfully on predetermined squares of the area under bombardment. Their aim evidently was to bear simultaneously on one Russian battery.

Into this area the Germans flung fifty-six of their enormous "portmanteaux" within two hours. Captain Vinogradov, one of the Russian batteries, gives the following account of one of the hottest days of battle:

"By 12 o'clock real hell reigned. Separate shots were no longer heard. The terrible din seemed to shake the sky and to echo away on the distant horizon. Bursting over nearer and nearer, the 'portmanteaux' at last fenced us in with a close ring. My head began to swim. We were all seized with a strange, indefinable feeling. The commander had to issue his orders from ear to ear."

### BATTLE EXPERIENCE HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE

"The incessant thunder grew and grew, absorbing, as it were, one's whole existence and leaving no room for thought or mental concentration. At last it became a matter of indifference whether a 'portmanteau' burst at a distance or right beneath our gun. Of the possibility of death or wounds, no one thought in a sort of twilight such that all feeling was strangled."

"It was a frosty, sunny day, but we were enshrouded in gloom. The dense fog of the battle obscured the sun, and we fought in a sort of twilight. Spectral figures of the gun's crew could be seen only dimly, flitting to and fro, doing their work almost like pieces of mechanism."

"No one gave a thought to the cold. One after another, the soldiers flung off their warm coats and shirts and remained in their undershirts, bareheaded, and automatically working the guns."

"The batteries stood in an exceedingly exposed position. Between our front and reserve line, in close contact with the enemy, there could be seen the target at which we were firing. In a distillery in Volvashidlovka, the Germans had concentrated fifty machine-guns. These guns, by means of upper stories of the building, which looked like a real fortress."

### TERrible EXECUTION DONE BY MACHINE GUNS

"The machine-guns did terrible execution among our infantry. The task of exposing the enemy from the building was first, both in time and importance. Our first shots set the distillery on fire. The wind and whirl of our projectiles carried the flames from one building to another, and soon the whole place was smothered in smoke."

"Huge tongues of flames told us where the target lay. We flung shell after shell, and finally the big three-story building collapsed, burying in its ruins all the German machine-guns and many soldiers. The Germans had long and obstinately clung to the building, not foreseeing the annihilating force of their own artillery fire. Their confidence was so great that they did not take the precaution of removing the men and guns. One of our last shots completely destroyed a motor-mounted gun, which stood among the burning buildings."

### DEMANDS MADE BY JAPAN ATTRACT MUCH ATTENTION

BERLIN (via London), February 17.—Japan's demands on China are attracting much attention here. The Cologne Gazette says the most important step ever undertaken by Japan occurs at a time when all the great European powers are reading each other and the United States is playing a role which never was expected of her. The Gazette regrets the "blindness of Germany's enemies, who permit such a catastrophe to threaten the white race."

### "GLOOM IN EUROPE. SUNSHINE FOR JAPAN"

LONDON, February 17.—"Gloom in Europe is sunshine for Japan, so Japan is made happy," is the Manchester Guardian's comment on Japan's demands on China, which the Guardian declares "in some way are scarcely compatible with the declared object of the Anglo-Japanese alliance to insure the independence and integrity of China."

"The reason for drawing a distinction between foodstuffs intended for the civil population and those for the armed forces of enemy government disappears when the distinction between the civil population and the armed forces itself disappears."

"In any country in which there exists such tremendous organizations for war as exist in Germany, there is no clear division between those whose government is responsible for feeding and those whom it is not. Experience shows that the power to requisition will be used to the fullest extent in order to make sure that the wants of the military are supplied, and however much goods may be imported for civil use, it is by the military that they will be consumed. It is especially true that the German government have taken control of all the foodstuffs in the country."

"After giving statistics tending to show that supplies are reaching neutral ports from the United States 'to an unprecedented extent,' and reciting efforts on the part of His Majesty's government 'to deal as leniently as possible with neutral interests,' Sir Edward points out that His Majesty has recognized the transfer of neutral flags of enemy ships belonging to companies which were incorporated in the enemy country, but all of whose shareholders were neutral," even waiving objections which were subsidiary to and owned by American corporations, "the only condition being imposed that these vessels 'should take no part in trade with the enemy country.'"

### WANTS ENGLAND'S COURSE MADE FULLY KNOWN

"I have given these indications," concluded Sir Edward, "of the policy which we have followed because I cannot help feeling that if the facts were more fully known as to the efforts which we have made to avoid inflicting any avoidable injury on neutral interests many of the complaints which have been received by the administration from Washington, and which led to the protest which Your Excellency handed to me on the 28th of December, would never have been made."

"My hope is that when the facts which I have set out above are realized, and when it is seen that our naval operations have not diminished American trade with neutral countries, and that the lines on which we have acted are consistent with the fundamental principles of international law, it will be apparent to the government and people of the United States that His Majesty's government have hitherto endeavored to exercise their belligerent rights with every possible consideration for the interests of neutrals."

## GERMANS ARE SEEKING AN OPENING IN SCREEN

Turn South of East Prussian Frontier in Effort to Pierce Russian Line.

## DRAWN TO ENEMY'S POSITIONS

Changes Reveal Themselves as Merely Preliminaries of Great Battle Which May Prove Decisive in Eastern War Area.

[Special Cable to The Times-Dispatch.] PETROGRAD, February 17.—To the north of the Prussian frontier the Germans are apparently attempting to find an opening in the screen which now stretches across the entire length of territory from Plock across Lomza Province to Oswiec.

Their attempt higher up in the extreme east to get past both sides of the Russian line, moving in the region of Suwalki and Augustowo, was met by a counter-movement in time. The enemy's main scheme was evidently directed north to the Prussian frontier, and west of this region. The Russians have drawn the enemy in the east towards their own positions just as they did when they concentrated on the River Niemen. These changes reveal themselves as preliminary operations of a great battle. Both armies are disposing themselves through a forest country, which comprises marshes lying under deep snows, now beginning to thaw.

Vast numbers of Germans are gathering behind the line running east and northeast from Plock, which now serves as a hinge connecting General Machenz's army in Central Poland with the new campaign developing in the north. The German cavalry is moving in numerous columns from near Plock to above Chiechanow and Przasnysz, where the line turns due north to the Prussian frontier. From Przasnysz for thirty miles to Oswiec, there is a desolate interval without railways or prepared roads, and the Russians have had some sharp fighting in the middle of this area, north of Ostroleka, with German columns moving through Myszyniec, from the Prussian border.

The Germans are believed to consider their position in Central Poland, before Warsaw, as a stalemate. Their tactics in the extreme south are imposing on the Austrians the necessity of urging the German general staff to send them still more men. The Russian force recently in Southern Bukovina has moved north to Nadvorna, and now threatens the right flank of the German corps, which persists in desperate assaults on Wyzow Pass. The Austrians now assembled in great force around Nadvorna, have been disposed mainly as a warning to Roumania. But for Roumania, Turkey would now be completely cut off from supplies, for the allied fleets prevent anything reaching her. From Reda Akath the Black Sea route to Anatolia has been abandoned since the Russians sunk the small Turkish coast transports. The Germans and Austrians still send supply trains through Roumania to supply Turkey.

## ZEPPELIN DESTROYED AND CREW ARRESTED

Big German Airship Comes to Grief While Flying Over Fanoe Island.

## OMINOUS ACTIVITY IN AIR

Large Number of Craft Sighted, and They Are Believed to Be Making Ready to Make War on Commerce of England.

[Special Cable to The Times-Dispatch.] LONDON, February 17.—A dispatch from Copenhagen to the Exchange Telegraph Company to-night tells of the destruction of a big Zeppelin dirigible of the Parseval type on Fanoe Island, and the arrest of its crew of two officers and fourteen men by Danish troops.

The Zeppelin, which was sighted earlier in the day drifting over the sea in an unmanageable condition, finally succeeded in making a landing on the little Danish island. It had barely landed when it caught fire. An explosion followed, in which the craft was wrecked.

Marked and, perhaps, ominous activity on the part of a scattered fleet of Zeppelins has been reported during the past twenty-four hours from various points on the North Sea. Coming on the eve of Germany's declaration of a new war zone about England, the manoeuvres have caused considerable uneasiness here.

One of the reports from Northern Jutland states that a number of airships were sighted flying northward, that a single Zeppelin was seen passing low over the North Sea four miles west of the Danish coast and that still another was seen flashing messages by searchlight, evidently to some German warships.

A dispatch from Amsterdam says the Dutch steamer Helena, just arrived at Rotterdam, reports that a Zeppelin flew over her decks forty miles out from Fanoe's high ship. The craft evidently intended to drop a bomb on the vessel, the captain says, but, flying low, observed her nationality, and so let her alone.

Two other Zeppelins are reported to have been seen flashing signals to German warships off the coast of Jutland.

## PLEAD FOR CONTINUANCE

Railroads Do Not Want to Give Up Steamship Lines.

SAVANNAH, GA., February 17.—Interstate Commerce Commissioner H. H. Meyer to-day began hearing testimony on the petition of the Central of Georgia Railway and the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad to continue ownership of the Ocean Steamship Company and the Peninsula and Occidental Steamship Company, respectively. Under the provisions of the Panama Canal act, unless the Interstate Commerce Commission sanctions such ownership, the railroads must dispose of the steamship lines.

Evidence tending to show that the steamship lines could not be considered to compete with the railroads in any sense, and were merely for the purpose of extension and to give the roads an outlet by water, was offered by officials of the four companies. The witnesses included: Colonel A. R. Lawton, vice-president of the Central of Georgia; President W. A. Winburn, of the Central; B. R. Richardson, general traffic manager of the Ocean Steamship Company; W. H. Pleasant, vice-president and general manager of the Ocean

## 5,000,000 GERMANS MAY BE SENT FROM COUNTRY

Rumored That Drastic Step is Contemplated, in Order to Conserve Food Supply.

COPENHAGEN, February 17 (via London).—The report is in circulation here that, owing to the necessity to restrict food consumption, the German government intends ordering 5,000,000 Germans who possess independent incomes and are ineligible for military service to leave Germany for neutral countries and remain there until the war is over.

It is planned, according to the report, that 3,000,000 of these persons shall go to the Scandinavian countries: 1,000,000 to Holland, and 1,000,000 to Switzerland.

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Their attempt higher up in the extreme east to get past both sides of the Russian line, moving in the region of Suwalki and Augustowo, was met by a counter-movement in time. The enemy's main scheme was evidently directed north to the Prussian frontier, and west of this region. The Russians have drawn the enemy in the east towards their own positions just as they did when they concentrated on the River Niemen. These changes reveal themselves as preliminary operations of a great battle. Both armies are disposing themselves through a forest country, which comprises marshes lying under deep snows, now beginning to thaw.

Vast numbers of Germans are gathering behind the line running east and northeast from Plock, which now serves as a hinge connecting General Machenz's army in Central Poland with the new campaign developing in the north. The German cavalry is moving in numerous columns from near Plock to above Chiechanow and Przasnysz, where the line turns due north to the Prussian frontier. From Przasnysz for thirty miles to Oswiec, there is a desolate interval without railways or prepared roads, and the Russians have had some sharp fighting in the middle of this area, north of Ostroleka, with German columns moving through Myszyniec, from the Prussian border.

The Germans are believed to consider their position in Central Poland, before Warsaw, as a stalemate. Their tactics in the extreme south are imposing on the Austrians the necessity of urging the German general staff to send them still more men. The Russian force recently in Southern Bukovina has moved north to Nadvorna, and now threatens the right flank of the German corps, which persists in desperate assaults on Wyzow Pass. The Austrians now assembled in great force around Nadvorna, have been disposed mainly as a warning to Roumania. But for Roumania, Turkey would now be completely cut off from supplies, for the allied fleets prevent anything reaching her. From Reda Akath the Black Sea route to Anatolia has been abandoned since the Russians sunk the small Turkish coast transports. The Germans and Austrians still send supply trains through Roumania to supply Turkey.

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## BANKER IS MURDERED

Mystery Surrounds Slaying of A. D. Oliver in Leesburg, Va.

LEESBURG, VA., February 17.—A. D. Oliver, president of the Farmers' Bank and Loan Company of this city, was shot and killed here early to-night in front of his bank. Three men were said to have been seen running from the scene immediately after the shooting. Three shots had been heard, but no arrests had been made up to a late hour to-night. Mystery surrounds the shooting, friends of the dead man being unable to assign a cause.

Oliver was released from the Mississippi State Penitentiary several months ago, after having served four years on a charge of bigamy. He attended the court that he was not the man against whom the warrant had been issued. He was forty-five years old and unmarried.

An examination of Oliver's body showed that the wounds had been made with buckshot. The authorities believe his slayers escaped in an automobile.

Old checks for more than \$500,000 were found in the banker's clothing. One on the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, which was dated eleven years ago, called for \$250,000, while another on the Columbia County Bank in Benton, Pa., was for \$350,000. Both were made payable to Oliver.

## INDIANAPOLIS, IND., FEBRUARY 15

A State-wide direct primary law for Indiana was defeated in the State Senate to-day. Such a law was promulgated in the last Democratic State platform, and was endorsed by United States Senators Kern and Shively of Indiana. Twenty-two Democrats and one Republican opposed the bill, while fourteen Democrats, six Republicans and one Progressive supported it.

## State-Wide Primary Defeated.

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