

MASS 2,700,000 MEN ALONG PIAVE TO CRUSH ITALIANS

MAYOR AND OFFICIALS GOING TO WASHINGTON TODAY; WILL DEMAND COAL; 20,000 SUFFER

Shipment of 10,000 Tons Needed to Prevent Absolute Famine—Crowds Again Storm Offices of Fuel Board in Vain—No Hard Coal Has Been Received by Water in This City in Six Days—Fuel Administrator Garfield and Carl F. Siemon Will Attempt to Make Government Believe Situation Which Threatens Health of City.

Bridgeport today faces the most serious coal shortage in its history. The situation has reached the stage where Lieutenant-Governor and Mayor Clifford B. Wilson, State Fuel Administrator Thomas W. Russell and possibly City Fuel Administrator Carl F. Siemon, will go to Washington tomorrow and on Monday will demand immediate relief from National Fuel Administrator H. A. Garfield.

Administrator Russell has previously made personal demands in behalf of the Bridgeport and Stratford situations, but without avail. Persons familiar with the situation estimate that there are 20,000 families in the city absolutely without coal. Approximately 15,000 families are short of coal. Immediate shipments of at least 10,000 tons of hard coal are needed to avert absolute famine and averted suffering. Coal yards of half the dealers are practically empty, while the stocks of others are being distributed conservatively, but will not last next week out.

The shortage virtually affects every person of the city's 125,000 population. According to information from the postal authorities, there are between 45,000 and 60,000 families in the city. There are approximately 800 mills and manufacturing in the city, all of which have been forced to relinquish the use of anthracite coal and are using bituminous coal exclusively.

Stirred by the dramatic appeals of women and men suffering, Chairman Siemon of the Bridgeport Fuel Board, went to Hartford this morning for a stipend and it is believed the proposed visit of the ladies and the mayor to Garfield is the outcome. The depleted ranks of waiting applicants at the fuel committee's office this morning indicates that the majority of coal seekers have relinquished faith in getting aid through that source. Seventeen persons were at the office door before daybreak and when the door was opened at 9 o'clock the waiting line had increased to the number found in waiting since the office was established.

Siemon, who yesterday promised an official statement for the public today, left for Hartford without leaving a word of information for reporters. Siemon is the official mouthpiece for the committee and dealers. He has for a few tons of the coal mostly in demand—No. 2 nut coal—the bins of all dealers are empty. Egg coal, which is too large for kitchen stove use, is to be had in small quantities. Persons applying for coal are glad to get it, however, and willing to take it in quantities as small as a bushel bag.

The daily allotment of 100 halftons was distributed before 10 o'clock this morning and a disappointed crowd of many persons was turned away.

Records of Harbormaster William A. Lamond show that so hard coal has been received by water in the last six days, including today.

AMERICAN ARRESTED IN RUSSIA

Petrograd, Dec. 15.—Charles S. Smith of St. Louis, a member of the staff of John F. Stevens, head of the American railroad commission to Russia, is reported to have been arrested.

Mr. Smith is reported to have been arrested in Tchita, Siberia, in company with M. Oustrougoff, former assistant minister of railroads, who is held by the Bolsheviks as a member of the provisional government.

Ambassador Francis has telegraphed to the American consuls in Harbin and Vladivostok to intervene. At the Smolny institute, the Bolshevik headquarters, it was said that if the American had been arrested it was a mistake and he would be immediately released.

St. Louis, Dec. 15.—The St. Louis man whose arrest is reported in a Petrograd dispatch is believed here to be Charles H. Smith, formerly a valuation engineer for the Missouri Pacific railroad. He went to Russia with the American railroad commission.

NEGOTIATIONS OF ARMISTICE ARE CONTINUED

London, Dec. 15.—A Petrograd dispatch dated Friday announced the resumption of Russo-German armistice negotiations and says they are now concerned with the transport of troops from the front, the question of the seas and conditions of fraternization. Russia maintains her attitude in respect to transportation of German troops to other fronts, contending that the Germans should not send men from the east to France and Belgium. The Petrograd newspapers announce Germany has withdrawn her demand for disarmament of the entire Russian army.

Bolshevik units at Kiev have been disarmed by the Kurinians and sent to their homes. In one instance the Bolshevik troops in Kiev resisted disarmament and numerous casualties resulted. The Bolshevik committee of the 13th army corps has asked for the recall of Major Pichon, head of the French military mission, for protesting against agitation in the army against the Entente allies.

CONGRESSMAN IS HURT VISITING MONTE GRAPPA

Italian Headquarters in Northern Italy, Friday, Dec. 14.—(By the Associated Press)—An army automobile in which Congressman George H. Tinkham of Boston was riding today on a visit to Monte Grappa, on the northern mountain front, skidded over the mountain side and dropped 20 feet. It made a double turn and was crushed to pieces, but the congressman and the other occupants escaped with bruises, the chauffeur being seriously but not dangerously injured. The car was wrecked so completely that it was abandoned.

HUN OFFICER GETS NEW LAUNDRY, THEN SURRENDERS TO FOE

American Army in France, Dec. 15.—A story of how German officers are surrendering is told by an American officer just returned from the British front. One night recently a German officer crawled across No Man's Land to the British wire, raised his hands and cried: "Comrade," British soldiers covered him with rifles, whereupon the German said: "Excuse me if I lower my hands. I've got a package here." The surprised Britishers granted the request and the German dropped into the trench. In his hands he had a package of laundry. He had decided to surrender a week before, but had waited until his laundry came back.

EQUIPMENT OF MEN IN CAMPS IS ADEQUATE

Washington, Dec. 15.—Quartermaster General Sharpe in a statement today gives figures on army contracts to show that adequate supplies of clothing for all men in the service now are available and that proper deliveries and uninterrupted transportation will assure supplies for the future. Deliveries have been delayed from six to 48 per cent. because of delays in material and transportation. Gen. Sharpe's statement shows that there already have been delivered to the troops practically 4,000,000 blankets, more than 2,000,000 overcoats, more than 12,000,000 undershirts, 4,000,000 pairs of drawers, nearly 3,000,000 pairs of breeches, more than 2,000,000 coats, more than 5,000,000 woolen shirts, more than 8,000,000 pairs of shoes, and more than 3,000,000 hats. In the aggregate about half the supplies ordered have been delivered.

100,000 IDLE IN CLEVELAND; COAL SHORTAGE

Cleveland, Dec. 15.—One hundred thousand men were out of work and hundreds of Cleveland's large manufacturing plants were shut down today because of the shortage of coal. The companies affected, many of them turning out rush orders of war materials, including shells, shrapnel, motor cars, aeroplane parts, fuses, uniforms, engines and other war necessities, required by the government, depend on the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Co. for electric power. Late yesterday the coal shortage reached such an acute stage that the illuminating company shut off electric current to all big industrial manufacturing plants. The idle plants will resume operation on Monday morning provided coal now rushing to the illuminating company is not delayed.

I WON'T WORK MEMBERS COME BEFORE LANDIS

Chicago, Dec. 15.—Extra detachments of police and secret service men guarded the court room today when 106 members of the Industrial Workers of the World were arraigned before Federal Judge Landis on a charge of conspiracy against the government. The defendants including Elizabeth Gurley Flynn of New York and William D. Haywood, secretary treasurer of the organization, with headquarters in this city, were indicted by a federal grand jury in September. Sixty others indicted still are at liberty.

THE WEATHER. For Bridgeport and vicinity: Fair and continued cold tonight and Sunday.

Draft Bds. Have Sent Out Blanks

2,500 Questionnaires Are Placed in Mails This Morning—With Closing of Recruiting One Hundred Storm Local Offices to Enlist.

Simultaneously with exemption boards in every city and town of the United States, the six local District Draft Boards commenced their task of classifying Bridgeport's man power for army service today, by sending out the first 40 per cent. of their questionnaires, numbering about 2,500.

Early hours of this morning also witnessed a rush to army recruiting offices, those men who are of draft age endeavoring to take advantage of the last moment afforded them to volunteer for specific branches of service. Knowing that they were required to be at Fort Slocum by noon, today, more than one hundred applicants waited in line at the local recruiting station when the doors were opened to receive enlistments this morning.

It is estimated that during the last ten days, about 3,000 men have been accepted in Connecticut for the army service, and that of these a substantial proportion consists of Bridgeport men. Both army and navy recruiting stations here were crowded at all hours yesterday, about a thousand men calling at the latter place in the mistaken belief that persons liable to draft would not be accepted for the navy after today. They were corrected and told that they might enlist at any time.

The mailing of questionnaires will be completed as speedily as possible, all of the district boards being hard at work in the task ahead of them. It is expected that within sixty days every man of draft age will have been classified in one of the five groups, according to their economic worth and consequent liability for service.

Local Girls Leave for Malden to Aid Making of Buttons for Red Cross

Responding to a hurry call for volunteers, eighteen Bridgeport young women took train this morning for Malden, Mass., to work night and day in the service of the American Red Cross. They are not going to nurse wounded soldiers nor to dodge bombs from raiding German aeroplanes, but they are going to make buttons for the great Red Cross membership drive which starts on Monday.

Buttons are needed for this campaign, and as they are required for immediate use, cannot be supplied by the manufacturers. This fact became known not long ago, to Walter B. Lashar, who represented Connecticut at the National Red Cross meeting held on November 6th to plan for the membership campaign. To overcome the difficulty presented by the shortage Mr. Lashar had machines made at the plant of the American Chain Co. for the manufacture of these buttons.

He then obtained eight button presses and had them sent to the concern in Malden, Mass., which had contracted to make the buttons. After considerable trouble, caused by blizzard, the presses reached their destination and then it was made known to Mr. Lashar that the firm had lost its best women employees, and could not do the work. This last obstacle Mr. Lashar removed last night by issuing the call for eighteen girls to volunteer for the important task at hand. A ready response followed, and the girls named below started for Malden this morning.

Local Jail Officer Is in Trouble

Indicted by Federal Authorities—It is Alleged He Conspired With "Trusty" to Forge Postal Money Order For \$10.

Dennis E. O'Neil, bookkeeper in the Fairfield County Jail, in this city, is under indictment today, and awaiting trial scheduled for Friday, Dec. 21, before the United States District Court in Hartford, on a charge alleging conspiracy in connection with a money order forgery case.

William Bant, of Stratford, formerly a prisoner in the jail, is accused as principal in the matter and is under bond for appearance in the federal court. He is alleged to have forged the names of John Barylski, another prisoner, and Jacob Weinstein to a \$10 money order which the former received in September, 1916, from a friend in Greenwich.

The authorities claim that Bant, forging signatures, acted under the instructions of O'Neil, who had access to mail going into the jail. Both men deny their guilt, O'Neil claiming that when Barylski received the money order he complained of being unable to sign his name, and therefore Bant had to be permitted to sign for him and make the order payable to Weinstein, a visitor at the jail, who paid the face value of the paper. Bant was a "trustee" and was serving time for moonshining.

O'Neil has been bookkeeper at the county jail for many years, and is widely known throughout the city. He has always borne a blameless reputation and his friends believe that he will be able to vindicate himself in his present difficulty. Sheriff Pease said, "I will back O'Neil to the limit when his honesty is questioned."

AUSTRO-GERMAN OFFENSIVE OPENS EAST OF BRENTA RIVER---TRYING TO FORCE THEIR WAY TO OPEN PLAIN---RAIN OF SHELLS FALL ON THE ITALIAN'S LINES

Italian Headquarters in Northern Italy, Dec. 15.—(By the Associated Press) Heavy fighting is in progress today on the mountain front in the north, east of the Brenta river. The enemy is attempting to advance his positions as he has those west of the river, which would give him two lines of approach to the Brenta valley and the open plain.

The enemy has brought a large number of his heaviest guns to the Piave and northern fronts and the bombardment has taken on increased range and violence. Some of the shells have reached Nancino, eight miles back of the Piave and a few miles from the city of Treviso. Four hundred of these monster projectiles were concentrated on one point.

The strength of the Austro-German invaders in Italy is placed today at 60 divisions. On the front line are 52, of which 45 are Austrian and seven are German. Eight others, four German and four Austrian, are said by information from competent sources to be held back of the lines in reserve.

WAR THREE —in etinetaof Gen. Diaz, the Italian commander-in-chief, sums up the results of the struggle of the last three days in the north by saying that the enemy secured an insignificant stretch of ground at the cost of an immense sacrifice of blood.

Although he has obtained a lodgment on Monte Spinuccia and Monte Fontanel, heretofore held by the Italians, this does not represent any appreciable advance toward the plains, which is his main object, but merely a fluctuation of the Italian line, of which Monte Grappa is the dominating barrier.

Even below Grappa formidable offensive works have been constructed in the event that the enemy should reach the plain, but each day of his futile pressure on the north and east and of successful resistance by the Italians and their allies strengthens the belief that the enemy will not realize this eventually.

The chief Austro-German effort is centering about Monte Beretta. There the enemy succeeded in advancing only a short distance in the course of repeated attacks in which he suffered large losses.

ENGINEERS ARE INJURED BY BURSTING SHELL

With the American Army in France, Friday, Dec. 14.—(By the Associated Press)—A bursting shell has wounded 60 American railroad engineers working behind the British front, according to reports received today. The projectile struck in a pile of picks, shovels and other tools.

Six representatives of the United States food administration arrived today in the American army zone for a four day visit with the troops. They were entertained at luncheon by Gen. Pershing, inspected headquarters and then left for a billet town. The party will be taken all over the zone, will eat, sleep and talk with the soldiers and acquire first hand information which will be used in a series of lectures in the United States to assist in the food conservation campaign.

MOVES TO SET VERDICT ASIDE

Charles W. Near has been awarded a verdict to recover \$200 from John R. Woodhull by a jury in the Common Pleas court where his suit to recover \$600 for failure of Woodhull to deliver a purchase of meat was tried. Near claimed that the failure to deliver his purchases caused him much loss, he was unable to supply his customers, and was forced out of business. He claimed \$600. When the verdict was announced Attorney General and Gould for Woodhull moved that the verdict be set aside as contrary to the evidence in the case. Judge Booth will pass upon the motion Tuesday morning.

NORWAY LOSES 5,000 SAILORS ALLIED COUNCIL London, Dec. 15.—The inter-allied council which is to take up questions of war purchases and finances met in London today. Oscar T. Crosby, assistant secretary of the United States treasury, was elected president.

LOST BARGES PROVE MENACE TO NAVIGATION

South Norwalk, Dec. 15.—The six coal barges, loaded with Bridgeport fuel, that were lost off Green's Reef light during the storm on Thursday night, are proving to be a menace to navigation as they are unbuoyed and unlighted at night, so that their location is a mystery to pilots. They are sunk almost directly in the channel, so that the steamer Armitage Brearly of the Eastern Transportation Co., a local freight liner, stove a good sized hole in her bow while going at full speed, trying to make the local harbor last night.

The Red Star tug Norwalk, with a barge of coal in tow, almost lost that barge with the six others when it crashed into the sunken barges when putting in here last night. Six were saved from the barges through the heroism of Capt. Archie Guthrie and his crew.

FIRES TWICE AT MAN AND WOMAN

Hundreds of persons on their way to and from work along Homestead avenue, near Washington, were placed in danger of being seriously wounded, at noon today, when Louis Dorio, of 547 Hallock street, went on a rampage with a gun and fired two shots at a man and woman who have not been identified. The couple fled from the range of his bullets and so far as known, were not struck. Dorio was arrested by Patrolman Brennan within a few minutes after the shooting. He refused to afford headquarters to tell why he fired, although it is understood that the trouble arose from some woman question.