SKIRMISH IN THE NORTH SEA WAR TERRIFIC

Tales Told by German Wounded Show They Were Fearfully Mauled.

STILL SAY 7 SUNK

Hun Sailors Sick of War—Were Caught Unawares by British.

London cable: The Chronicle's correspondent sends the following from Ymuiden, Holland, dated Tuesday:

I have heard the fullest possible account of the naval engagement which took place on this bitter winter morning not many miles from the Dutch coast at a point between the Hague and Ymuiden. That the fight was sharp, sudden and very furious while it lasted there can be little doubt for the one German torpedo boat which reached Ymuiden with the help of Dutch tugs shows ample evidence that, as a naval expert remarked to me, "she had just about as much as she could carry into port" (where she will be interned).

Before giving the story of the battle as related to me I will just give you a description of the German boat as it lies up the quay at Ymuiden. She is the V 69, or rather what remains of her. One of her funnels lies almost horrizontal with the deck, twisted and bent. Her bridge is shattered, and metal, canvas, wood and iron hang about it and about her mast in an inextricable tangle. Her steering gear is smashed, her decks smeared with blood, her three guns still stand on their swivels, but all the machinery adjacent to them is a mass of twisted iron. She lies almost under water astern, only being kept afloat with all possible devices. Her six torpedo tubes are much knocked about, and it indicates the sudden and severe nature of the British ships' attack that only one torpedo had been fired. Five other tubes were loaded ready, but there was no chance of discharging them in the storm of shot which must have poured into her.

As I write, I learn another lame German duck is slowly making for Ymuiden. From all available reports at Ymuiden, and from the few words dropped by the wounded or crew before silence was sternly and officially impressed upon them, I am able to send you a fairly full and accurate account of what took place. It appears that the harbor of Zeebrugge was becoming frozen over, so the German flotilla of torpedo boats was in danger of becoming fixed in the ice, and would therefore have been in great danger of destruction from the fire of British monitors or other vessels. The German command, therefore, decided to send the entire flotilla out of port at midnight, with orders to steal through the darkness as near and as safe to the Dutch coast as possible, and make for a German harbor. The number of ships in the German flotilla is given as fourteen, though some say only twelve. All went well until at a point somewhere between The Hague and Ymuiden.

Here their luck vanished, for without warning they suddenly found themselves under a terrific fire from a large number of British warships which loomed up out of the darkness. How many British ships were in the immediate neighborhood it is impossible to say. Some of the wounded say they saw twelve, some sixty and some one hundred. It would appear that the Germans must have been ignorant of the strength of the British force, for it was not until nine this morning that the last of the German ships was seen steaming full speed in a northerly direction from a point a little to the north of Ymuiden. This vessel, which may be the only survivor of the German flotilla, apparently was undamaged.

No word reached the mainland until about 9.30 this morning when a small Dutch sailing boat named the Eems came into port. The men on board the Eems, where I was able to go, told me that while fishing at a point a little to the north of Ymuiden she was hailed by a German torpedo boat in a very badly damaged condition. This was the V-69, now at Ymuiden. The German boat asked the Eems' captain to take off ten seriously wounded German sailors. All were terribly injured, one having his arm and shoulder shot away, another having the lower part of his body smashed.

The part taken or rather suffered by the V-69 in the battle was told in fragmentary sentences by the wounded, who, by the way, frequently voiced their disgust of the war and sickness of the whole business. They say they were taken by surprise, knowing nothing of the nearness of the British fleet, until a shot struck the bridge, shattering it to pieces and killing the commander and two other officers who were standing near him. The captain had both legs cut of, and he died in a few minutes. Both officers were killed immediately. A second shot struck close to the quick-firing gun, killing the entire gun crew of five men. The third shot disabled the steering gear, and the fourth raked the vessel amidships, tearing up the ironwork and throwing the after-funnel almost down on the deck. After being thus completely disabled she turned her head towards Holland and fell in with the Eems, when it was obvious she could not make a German port or German waters. She was seen at dawn lying almost helpless about five miles out to sea off Ymuiden. Dutch tugs and torpedo vessels went out at full speed to render help and bring her in. In all she had ten dead and sixteen wounded, but some of the wounded are not expected to live more than a few hours.

As the Zeebrugge flotilla consisted of twelve vessels there cannot be many others left, for the wounded say that seven of their boats were certainly sunk. Thus only five others are not accounted for. Of these five one is in Ymuiden, another is said, as I write, to be coming into Ymuiden, and a third was already seen this morning steaming at full speed northward. The fate of the other two is yet unknown. It would also appear that among the men landed from the V-69 were some who were probably picked up from the water when the other boats sank. This idea is borne out by the fact that on the caps of the German sailors on board some were shown to belong to the High Seas Fleet, some of the Home Waters Fleet, some from the South Division and some from the Twelfth Division. The wounded also say that the German flotilla was quickly surrounded by a superior force, so there is little hope that many of the boats were able to escape destruction. The Dutch authorites on hearing the news of the battle quickly gathered nurses, doctors and appliances and went to Ymuiden, where the wounded were given every possible succor from the devoted band of Red Cross workers.

SUB. BLOCKADE UPON BRITAIN

More Details of Germany's Rumored Plan.

30 Big, Speedy U-Boats Now Ready.

New York report: Germany will declare a deep-sea barrier around the British Isles on Feb. 1.

This news comes alike from British and Baltic sources. American travelers returning fresh from Germany on the Bergensfjord from Bergen and from British ports brought the same news. The barrier will be patrolled by thirty latest type submarines, all of which have been launched during the past two months, and have a 6,000-mile cruising radius.

A note will be sent by the central powers to all neutral nations warning them of the danger zone, similar to the note sent on Feb. 18, 1915, to which President Wilson replied that the central powers would be held to strict accountability for all American lives placed in jeopardy.

This newest "danger zone" is the North Channel, which separates Ireland the entrance to the English Channel between England and Ireland, and Scotland; St. George's Channel. All allied vessels, whether carrying contraband or not will be stopped, their crews ordered to take to the ship's boats and the vessel immediately sunk.

The submarines which will patrol this newest zone have a speed of 18 knots on the surface and 12 knots submerged, it was said by Americans, who asserted that they had the highest German authority for their statements. Each submarine will operate in a ten-mile radius, and will be held responsible for any allied merchant vessel which slips past into an allied port.

These submarines are equipped with six torpedoes, six rapid-fire guns mounted fore and aft, bomb-laying chambers, a large supply of bombs, mines and grenades. They will carry sufficient provisions to last five weeks without revictualling.

In the case of neutral vessels passing through the war zone their cargoes will be examined as previously, and if they are carrying contraband, they, too, will be sunk, their crews first having taken to the lifeboats.

It is understood that Germany is preparing a new list of contraband articles, which will go into effect as soon as the new note is sent to neutrals. It is believed that large quantities of foodstuffs as well as other necessaries of life will appear on this new contraband list.

The reason for this new contraband list is that Germany is determined to stop as large a number of neutral vessels at present engaged in carrying food to the Allies as possible. Germany will endeavor to keep as close a blockade of ships entering British ports as Great Britain with her fleet is at present exercising over German ports, the only difference being that the word "blockade" will not figure in the note to neutrals. If the word "blockade" were used, it would be incumbent upon Germany to bring her fleet into action to make the blockade effective, whereas in utilizing the term "barrier" and permitting neutral ships to pass her navy can remain intact within German waters.

Another reason for declaring this "barrier" is that German submarines can sink any Allied merchantman without search, claiming that the vessel was to all intents and purposes an armed cruiser, as Allied vessels are now mounting six-inch guns on steel concealed turrets.

Allied merchantmen similar to the British steamer Aberlour, which sailed for Southampton via Halifax, with a steel gun turret to have a six-inch gun mounted for offensive as well as defensive warfare, will be considered as an armed cruiser and will be sunk on sight, it is believed. The question of arming merchant vessels for attack is thus made a greater question at issue. It is also thought that neutral seamen similar to those captured on the Yarrow, will now be prohibited from shipping on any Allied merchantmen, as their presence would seriously endanger the neutrality of the United States, if such a vessel were sunk without warning.

From the same source it was learned that Germany has completed two giant submarines, much larger than the Deutschland type, which will sail for America on January 24th. They will carry cargoes, valued at $1,500,000 and will probably make New London their destination.

The new undersea freighters are called the Koenigsberg and the Hamburg. They have been thoroughly tested in an exhaustive series of trial trips, the passengers declared, and they have proved to be much faster than the Deutschland. If their first trip is successful it is expected that they will be used regularly for undersea traffic between Europe and America.

DUAL EMPIRE PACT.

Austro-Hungarian Difficulties Nearly Settled.

Berlin cable via London, says:—The long-discussed composition of the differences between Austria and Hungary has been so nearly agreed upon that an agreement will be signed early in February, according to a Vienna despatch to the Tageblatt. The despatch says that as soon as this settlement is made, negotiations for a commercial treaty between Austria-Hungary and Germany will be immediately undertaken.

The agreement with Hungary, which will be effective for twenty years, provides that Hungary will continue to pay its present percentage of the expenses of the empire, but that later cattle duties will be raised appreciably. Regulations regarding the importation of live swine are also to be altered, so that such importation will be possible. The agreement also contains clauses for the regulation of railroad rates, and admits Hungarian stocks to the Vienna Bourse.

The practical completion of this composition makes the position of Premier Clam Martinic much stronger, and he is expected to be able to take up the outstanding Bohemian questions within the next eight or ten weeks.

These include redistricting and introduction of the German language in official business. With the conclusion of this matter Parliament will be convened, to receive the Emperor's pledge to extend its own term. The Galician problem has been definitely postponed until the end of the war.

FRANCE SHIVERS.

Coldest Weather in Years Causes Many Deaths.

Paris cable: France is in the grip of the severest cold weather for many years. The thermometer in Paris registered 17 degrees Fahrenheit to-day, and even in southern cities, like Marseilles and Bordeaux, there were several degrees of frost. The number of deaths from cold and the sufferings of the Parisians have been aggravated by the coal shortage.

Edouard Herriot, Minister of National Subsistence, has taken energetic charge of the situation, co-operating with the city authorities. M. Herriot has decided to sell a large part of the reserve stock of fuel to the public, and has lent military auto-wagons to carry coal to the small dealers who have no conveyances. The cold has brought packs of wolves into the department of Cote d'Or, in eastern France, and bears are ravaging the fields in the Loire valley.

BATOCKI SAYS GRAIN TO LAST

German Food Dictator Talks On the Outlook.

Potato Shortage the Chief Difficulty.

Berlin cable, via London, says:—The advisory committee of the war food bureau has concluded a two day session devoted to a general review of the food situation. A detailed statement in regard to conditions throughout the empire was made by Adolph Batocki, president of the Food Regulation Board.

Herr Batocki said that the chief difficulty lay in the shortage of the potato crop, enhanced by transportation troubles. He said that, although the grain crops had been better than in 1915, the total nutritive value of the grain and potatoes together was less, and economical feeding was necessary to carry the population to the end of the crop year. Considerable supplies were available in Roumania, according to Herr Batocki, but shipments could not be made in the quantities needed, and hence the actual supplies were short, and rigid organization of distribution was necessary.

Herr Batocki complains that the situation was aggravated by the richer people buying underhand at fancy prices what they wanted, and thus thwarting the work of the food office. He explained that the distilling of brandy from grain and potatoes had been prohibited from the beginning of the present crop year, and that allotments of barley to the brewers were hardly more than enough to produce beer for the army and laborers employed on heavy work.

The committee was told that the milk shortage was due to the inadequate supply of feed for cattle, owing to the prohibition against using potatoes and turnips, and also that the consumption of milk in the country districts was greater because of the lack of American lard. The food office is preparing plans to fix uniform milk prices, but the supply can scarcely be increased during the winter months, as there is not sufficient hay and straw for milk-producing animals. Herr Batocki assured the committee that, through economies now enforced, the grain supply will certainly reach until the new crop. The War Office is trying to supply farmers with the needed laborers, material and work animals.

Caustic soda in solution, boiling hot, is good to clean a drain and may save a plumber's bill.

WORLD PRESS ALL DOWN ON WILSON TALK

His Dream Requires a New Mankind—"Freedom of Seas" Rankles.

MUST BE A VICTORY

Peace Without, Hopeless—A Roast by a Portuguese Paper.

London cable says: The Morning Post, commenting again on President Wilson's "dream," says the President proposes nothing less than a complete transformation of the character of mankind. Remarking that the President was careful not to define what he meant by "freedom of the seas," the Morning Post says:

"If he means that he desires so to alter the law of nations as to confer upon neutrals and belligerents on the sea privileges they do not and cannot use on land and at the same time impose limitations on naval strength, we tell the President in plain terms that Great Britain and her allies will have none of it. This country has earned the right to speak on this matter, for what but the Royal Navy has charted and kept secure the oceans of the world for generations. The British Empire lives by the sea, and will continue to use the sea in accordance with the law of the sea and none other."

FRANCE FROWNS ON IT.

Paris, Jan. 24.—The newspapers continue to comment on President Wilson's speech, but there is no change in their views, which all resemble each other, regardless of the political color of the organs. The Figaro says:

"For the past two centuries the Germany of the Hohenzollerns has infested the world like a pirate on the ocean. The independence of the world and the liberty of the seas can only be conquered by arms. Peace without victory would be a victory of the powers of evil, of those who embark in a war not only against men but against the principles of morality and justice that are not less dear to us than to President Wilson."

Stephen Pichon, writing in the Petit Journal, says:

"President Wilson's views are worthy of all our sympthy in so far as they are elevated, humane and just to us. They are equivalent to a condemnation of the enemy against whom we are defending them with indomitable energy. But in order that they prevail it is necessary that we be victorious, and that the crimes which have caused us so many deaths and so much destruction shall be punished in an exemplary fashion."

The comment of the principal provincial organs closely corresponds to that of the Paris newspapers. The Petit Gironde, of Bordeaux, says:

"Unfortunately the new method advocated by President Wilson is a beautiful dream of peace and happiness for humanity which it is impossible to realize. Even if we should subscribe to the President's suggestions, it would be an illusion on our part to believe that we could bring our enemies to accept them otherwise than by force."

RUSSIA SEES TWO FLAWS.

Petrograd cable via London, 24.—Two points in President Wilson's speech met with serious criticism here; his reference to peace without victory and freedom of the seas.

Col. Shumsky, the widely-quoted Russian military critic, protests vigorously against the idea of limited armaments. He declares that all previous efforts to secure this "Utopian dream" ended in complete fiasco, and that the only method of preventing future wars is a strategically strong frontier and an armed force.

The Bourse Gazette speculates upon the fresh steps contemplated by the President, and concludes that it is possible that a note will follow, addressed to all belligerents and neutral governments with a view to a world conference. This, however, says the Gazette, will not call forth a response from the Allies.

The Vechernee Vremja finds an inconsistency in President Wilson's remarks about the freedom of large and small nation and those about preserving the integrity of existing empires. The paper says:

"What does he think about Posen and Poland—what about the southern Slavs under the yoke of Austria-Hungary—what about Alsace-Lorraine? Is peace possible if these nations remain under the yoke of Prussia, Austria and Turkey?"

A ROAST FROM LISBON.

Lisbon cable via Paris, says: The Seculo, commenting on President Wilson's speech, says that the President has the "genius of opportunity."

"He is inexhaustible," says the Seculo, "as an inventor of untimely pacifists' systems inapplicable to present conditions. One can only praise the idealistic courage with which he continues to proclaim these ideals which are not even original. The comity of nations and perpetual peace are two commonplaces which should not be revived when the foundation of the only practical peace lies in the permanent destruction of the germ of war incorporated in the Prussian system."

MUST BE VICTORY.

Geneva cabel via Paris: Georges Wagniere, editor of the Journal de Geneve, commenting on President Wilson's speech, says:

"First of all, says President Wilson, the war must be ended. Certainly, everyone will agree with him. The President, however, does not tell how this is to be accomplished, and it is there that his long memoire shs. It is all very well to map out conditions as to future peace, but what is wanted now is to knew how the belligerents could be brought to lay down their arms. Peace must be an organized peace, but how is this to be attained? By peace without victory, answers President Wilson, and the imprudent and unfortunate words imperil the success of his initiative."

BERLIN STILL SILENT.

Berlin cable, via London, says: The newspapers are slow in expressing an opinion on President Wilson's speech, the text of which was received by them shortly before going to press. The afternoon papers refrain from any comment, even the headlines being non-committal, and the stock market, which usually is the most responsive barometer of popular sentiment, seemed to be unaffected. Nevertheless, the speech occupies a large part of the restricted columns of the press, and is regarded as the news feature of the day.

TEUTON BRAG.

Parliament Heads Bluster in the Usual Strain.

London cable: The Presidents of the Parliaments of the Central Powers have issued a manifesto declaring that the nations they represent are resolved on any sacrifice necessary for victory, according to a Berlin despatch manifesto was issued for publication by Dr. Johannes Kaempf, Speaker of the Reichstag, at an official reception given to the Parliamentary Presidents who are now in conference in Berlin.

The despatch quotes the manifesto as saying that all sacrifices demanded from the allied (Teutonic) peoples in the future will be readily made "in just defense against an enemy who has unblushingly unveiled his predatory and destructive designs."

The President of the Prussian Upper House, in a speech at the opening of the session, expressed the hope that the present year, "despite its disappointing beginning," might bring peace, according to a Berlin despatch to Reuter's by way of Amsterdam. After commenting on the rejection of Germany's peace proposal by the Entente, the President said:

"The fateful hour of the German Empire is approaching. For the second time war has been declared on us, and to-day we, a more serious and matured people, accustomed to victory, are standing behind the Emperor. Our iron will shall turn to deeds, and the sharp steel of a clean sword in our hand shall hew the way to a more prosperous future."

SHORT ITEMS OF THE NEWS OF THE DAY

1,430 German Papers and Periodicals Have Suspended Publication.

German Chancellor Confers With Gerard On Wilson's Latest Talk.

The Edinboro' Scotsman celebrated its centenary. In the first number of the paper a message from New York announced the election of President Monroe.

The King and Queen will reopen Parliament on February 7, but without the customary state ceremony. A procession of a naval and military character will be substituted.

The U. S. Rules Committee, in executive session, decided to adjourn its New York hearing on the "leak" investigation for an indefinite period.

Mr. Casper Mill's was the victim of an accident which will in all probability result in the loss of an eye. He was engaged in sawing a board at his mills, when a piece of a knot struck his eye.

A Spanish steamer claims to have been stopped in Uruguayan waters by a German submarine, but allowed to proceed. The report should be accepted with reserve, says Buenos Ayres.

Major E. N. Lewis, of Goderich, and member of Parliament for West Huron, has been appointed a Brigadier with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, to supervise the recruiting and organization of four batteries of artillery.

The Watson farm situated eighty miles from San Francisco on the Eureka (N.P.) line has been sold to the Scottish Wholesalers Co-Operative Society for $2,00,000, all cash. The farm comprises 10,000 acres, 8,000 of which are under cultivation.

The clergy of the diocese attending the executive meeting of the diocese of Ontario presented Bishop Bidwell on the occasion of his leaving England to receive the degree of D.D. at the hands of Oxford University, with a purse of gold.

Among the awards announced by the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission is a silver medal and annual pension to Mrs. James A. Fraser, of Paris, Ont., whose husband perished while attempting to save three girls from drowning at Paris on August 26, 1916.

A court of enquiry, specially ordered by Ottawa, convened at London to investigate the circumstances surrounding the very heavy casualties suffered by the 118th Waterloo Battalion in the last medical examination prior to departure for overseas.

The German raider's "prison ship," the Japanese steamer Hudson Maru, left Pernambuco. She steamed out of the harbor, and hugged the shore line closely on her northern course, presumably headed for New York, and with every anxiety to avoid another capture by the German sea rover.

HUNS FORCING CONSUMPTIVES INTO BATTLE

Proof That Men Long in Sanitaria Being Taken to Battle Line.

LOSSES, 2,000,000

Berlin Paper Admits This, Claims Germany Has 8,000,000 Yet.

(By Arthur S. Draper.)

London cable: The Kaiser, of short is Germany of men, is now taking consumptives out of hospitals and sending them to the trenches to fight. That Germany has been suffering from an insufficiency of man-power for some time has been no secret to Great Britain and her allies. That the Kaiser was driven to the extreme of sending men to the trenches who ought to be in hospitals was also common knowledge, as many prisoners taken by Great Britain and her allies have told their captors that they were invalids when forced into the service. But that the Kaiser was actually taking men out of hospitals where they had been confined for months and compelling them to fight for the fatherland will amaze many.

But it is the fact. Several prisoners taken since last November were in such condition that they had to be sent to hospitals. They were not suffering from wounds. They were just plain consumptives, and to their nurses here and in France they declared that they were consumptive when drafted into the service, and as such were known to the examiners.

Recently several letters from Germans to German prisoners of war have been intercepted by the authorities, bearing out these stories. Appended is one signed "Frieda," dated December 31, 1916. She writes from Hachenburg, Westerwald, to Albert Weiler, a German officer, a prisoner of war in Halifax, Canada. It reads:

"Yesterday Hern Then was called up for examination and put down as fit for duty. He never thought of this possibility, as he has lung disease and has now been for months in a sanitorium.

"They must all take their turn now—both the young and the old—as long as they have whole limbs and all their senses, for the need of human material is great, and unfortunately there is still no end to this terrible war in sight."

Other intercepted letters tell of the terrible food conditions in Germany, Austria and Turkey. In the last-named country M. Babri, of Constantinople, writing to a relative in Montana, declared that the prices of many foodstuffs in Turkey had advanced nine hundred per cent. He begged that he might not serve.

Prices of foodstuffs in Austria are almost prohibitive, pork costing seven kronen per kilo, or $1.47 for two pounds three ounces; veals cost six to eight kronen per kilo; one egg, thirty-six heller; lard costs seventeen kronen ($3,57) for a kilo (two pounds three ounces), while flour is so scarce that it is all in the hands of the Government, which doles out one kilo every fourteen days to each adult.

Another writer said no flour was to be had in Turkey, and that crushed maize was being used as a substitute. The poor, he said, were literally dying of starvation.

It is the belief of military experts here that these economic conditions foretell a collapse before many months are at an end. Austria, it is believed, will be the first to fall a prey to the failure to provide food for her soldiers and her civilian population, and that fall is not regarded far off.

TOTAL GERMAN LOSSES 2,000,000.

Berlin cable says: Estimating the total German losses in the war at about 2,000,000, The National Zeitung of Berlin says that there are available forces to carry on the war for several years more. The newspaper gives available figures of casualties, and continues:

"The first impression obtained from these lists is that the number of dead is relatively small, in view of the fact that so many powerful offensive campaigns have been undertaken, as well as the defensive actions of unheard-of difficulties, such as that of [illegible]. This shows that the German [illegible] of their forces than can be believed.

"Notwithstanding the losses of an enormous [illegible] nation's loss [illegible] it is not so great that Germany will not be able to carry on the war for several years more. If the total losses are calculated at about 2,000,000 the German reserves would still number 7,000,000 out of the 9,000,000 with which the war was begun. On the other hand, large numbers of young men have reached the age of military service during the war. According to a conservative calculation, Germany has in this way an addition of 1,500,000 to her forces."

The National Zeitung says that if the soldiers who have passed the age limit for military service have been retained with the colors the net loss as a result of the war thus far would be perhaps 650,000, or at the most 1,000,000, and continues:

"Germany still has at least 8,000,000 men to use on the front or for the navy, and therefore we do not overstate the case in pointing out that Germany, by comparison with the former date (date not given), has a much larger number of men on the front. For a long time to come it cannot be expected that by any possibility the compulsory training service will break down, provided the differences of a limitation do not become so great that the soldiers on the front also have to suffer from them."