

ITALY IS EXERTING ITS MOST EFFORT

Ambassador Page Says No Nation Is Doing More in Proportion to Strength.

VITAL INTEREST AT STAKE

Losses and Sufferings Met With Fortitude; Diplomat Surprised That Any Other Impression Should Gain Currency.

NEW YORK, July 2.—Thomas Nelson Page, American Ambassador to Italy, sailed on the steamship St. Paul yesterday to return to his post.

"In reply to your question, which indicates what I have so often remarked, the want of general information in America as to the part which Italy has taken in the struggle on the side of the allies, I would say that nothing has surprised me more than the idea to which you refer that Italy has taken a less active part than the other members of this alliance in the serious operations of the war."

"It is not for me to discuss either the policies or the parts that different members of the alliance on either side have played in this terrible contest, but certainly I can correct an impression, as erroneous as that which I find quite general in this country as to the point you mention, for the facts are no secret among those who have had opportunities for knowing them."

Efforts Proportionate to Strength. "I may not give my own opinion on politics, but I am certain that the Italian statesmen felt that the vital interest of Italy demanded that she should at whatever cost of blood and treasure, take her stand with the allies, and that on this depended not only her present but her future. It is also the conviction of all who have had the opportunity for observation that no country has put forth greater efforts in proportion to her strength than Italy, or has met the losses and borne the sufferings which the war has caused with greater fortitude."

"A glance at the map and even a little knowledge of the history of the relations between Italy and her chief opponent will show the extraordinary difficulties which Italy has to surmount to make even the least advance in the mountain region in which Austria fixed the boundaries between them when she turned Venice over to France after the battle of the Piave. The difficult region to penetrate exists along its front."

Nation Doing Its Utmost. "Of one thing you may be certain. Italy, like every other country in the war, feels her vital interest—she might say her very life—to be at stake, and is putting forth every effort that she is capable of in the fight. No country has shown more endurance and fortitude than Italy, and there is no question if one considers the history of her efforts, more than which there is no more glorious page in the history of the world."

"It is not only the men, but the women of Italy, also, who are doing their utmost. There is not a woman in Italy, so far as I know, of high or low degree, who is not doing her part for Italy. I do not know of a woman in a palace in Rome which is not now used in some way in this work of mercy, and as the King of Italy is at the head of his armies, the Queen, the Queen Mother, leads in every good work of relief and mercy, and with her, engaged in the same work, is the Queen Mother."

"Naturally, the American ladies have been glad to render what aid they could in assisting the Italian people, and we have an excellent organization in Rome known as the American Relief Clearing House for Italy, a branch of the International Red Cross, which receives and distributes any and all supplies which may be sent."

GERMAN LINE IS IN PERIL

(Continued From First Page.) Reconstructed. The French had crossed, first, the Somme Canal, then the Somme River, and held a line approximately to Albert. It was then, with lines prepared, that the British offensive began. The French meanwhile were bombarding the German lines with equal intensity, but, as the shelling had been steady for nine months, it was not so noticeable and did not attract attention. The French were thus able to prepare their part in the offensive in secret.

Defenders Are Swept Back. At the prescribed hour of 7:30 yesterday the troops surged out of the trenches and over ground torn by shells into the first line of German trenches, or, rather, into the shallow furrow that was left of the trenches. The Germans were unable to stand against the elan of the French, who pushed rapidly forward until they penetrated three miles into the German lines.

In their advance the French are taking the deep curves of the Somme River and the low-lying marshy ground along the river. The French have met with the marshes of Frise, which they overcame by pushing around on both sides and taking the position in the rear.

The advance so far achieved puts the whole German line south to Soissons in danger, as the French are now well behind that part of the German line, and a little more advance will leave

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OFFICIAL WAR REPORTS

British. LONDON, July 2.—British general headquarters tonight reports as follows: "Heavy fighting has taken place today in the area between the Ancre and the Home, especially about Pricourt and La Boisselle. "Pricourt was captured by our troops about 2 P. M., and remains in our hands, and some progress has been made east of the village. "In the neighborhood of La Boisselle the enemy is offering stubborn resistance, but our troops are making satisfactory progress. A considerable quantity of war material has fallen into our hands, but details are not available."

Italian. ROME, July 2.—The text of today's official statement by the Italian War Office is: "Between the Adige and the Brenta we are continuing our offensive vigorously. In the Vallarsa our infantry has begun an attack on the lines strongly held by the enemy between Zugna and Popolano. "Our artillery is shelling Fort Pozzazichio. "On the Passubio the enemy is offering stubborn resistance from his fortified positions between Monte Spil and Cosmagnon. "Along the Poena-Astico lines we are completing the conquest of Monte Major and have occupied the southern side of Monte Zlugo. "Along the mountains north of Pedescaia we attacked and drove out the enemy, who left behind his arms and ammunition. "On the Asiago Plateau we had skirmishes with detachments of the enemy on the northern side of the Asiago Valley. "In the sector between Selz and Montefalco we brilliantly carried some more trenches and took 196 prisoners, as erroneous as that which I find quite general in this country as to the point you mention, for the facts are no secret among those who have had opportunities for knowing them."

NEW YORK, July 2.—The battle of the Somme, now in full progress, marks the opening of the Franco-British offensive, long expected as a critical, if not the decisive, stage of the war. Early reports today show that the main attack was launched in the morning along a 25-mile front. The French already have taken more than 5000 prisoners, while the allied lines have developed within the last 24 hours nine villages and 50 square miles of French territory held until now by the Germans.

The theater of operations for the British forces runs between Commeourt, north of the River Ancre, to a point south of the river. The French attacked on both sides of the Somme and southward toward Roye.

Battlefield Is Level Plateau. This entente allied armies present a front of 25 miles, with the British on the left for 15 miles and the French on the right for 10 miles. The region of this supreme contest is one favorable for military operations. It virtually is all within the Department of the Somme, which is a level plateau of chalky formation. The fighting lines extend between a great number of small villages which are usually devoted to textile industries, while the outlying agricultural sections are level fields, chiefly devoted to the raising of such crops as wheat and sugar production of France.

The intense bombardment of the last four days was the signal for an advance over these level fields, beginning at 7:30 o'clock yesterday morning. The entente allies' artillery then lengthened the front by the capture of the communication between the first German line and the German reserve in the rear.

Allies' Plans Misinterpreted. This made it impossible for the Germans to utilize their perfect organization for the shifting of troops and for the bringing up of reinforcements. It is thought by French military observers that the Germans miscalculated the intentions of the entente allies and expected the attacks farther to the north.

The villages which the French captured in the first sweep include Dompierre, Bequincourt, Bussey and Fay, and these and the towns taken by the British—Montauban and Mametz—were all found to have been strongly fortified by the Germans. The entente allies, profiting from their experience in the war, quickly threw up strong earthworks around the villages so as to enable them to protect them against counter attacks. It was not before night, however, that the Germans were able to deliver any counter attack. This was centered against the French position on the outskirts of Hardecourt, and it was repulsed with heavy losses, ending in a precipitate rout. Throughout last night the French continued their drive, capturing the village of Curly, part of which they already occupied, and progressing south of the Somme between Hardecourt and Arsevillers.

Ground Strategically Important. In addition to the military successes the terrain over which the entente allies' troops has an exceptional strategic importance. Four of the towns captured by the French are only seven miles west of Peronne, the chief railway from the German center at Cologne to the German front in the region of Noyon and Soissons. The German headquarters is at St. Quentin, 25 miles southeast of Peronne. Already the French forces threaten Peronne, with the evident purpose of cutting the trunk railway there, which is an indispensable artery for German military reinforcements.

The speed of the advance of the entente allied troops is taken as showing that the perfection of artillery preparations exceeded anything yet known in the destruction of field works.

BERLIN ADMITS RETIREMENT Divisions Declared Withdrawn to Prepare Positions. BERLIN, via London, July 2.—In the great Anglo-French offensive began yesterday along a front of 25 miles to the north and south of the River Somme, the German official statement issued today says the entente allied troops were successful in penetrating the German first line trenches at several points.

The German division defending these trenches, it is added, had to be withdrawn to their prepared positions. From Commeourt to La Boisselle, the communication says, the British and French sustained heavy losses, but obtained no advantage worth mentioning.

GERMANS EAGER AT VERDUN Furious Attacks Inspired by Prescience Elsewhere on Line. PARIS, July 2.—The eagerness of the Germans to finish their task at Verdun is shown by the furious attacks delivered and the immediate counter attacks during the past 48 hours. These attacks culminated in the recapture of the Thiaumont work, north of Verdun. It was here that the Germans only a momentary gain for the Germans, as the French soon retook the fortified work, which has changed hands several times and is now in French hands.

French participation in the English offensive elsewhere on the long front was announced officially last night. French gains in the first combats were highly gratifying. The effect of this offensive move on the situation at Verdun is being awaited eagerly.

The desire of the Germans for a decisive result at Verdun is attributed to the pressure on the entire front from Trea to the Argonne, which is constantly growing stronger.

50 SQUARE MILES TAKEN BY ALLIES

Region of War's Supreme Contest Is Favorable for Military Movements.

NINE VILLAGES CAPTURED

Speed of Advance Shows Perfection of Artillery Preparations Exceeding Anything Yet Done Against Field Works.

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NEW GROUND TAKEN

Russians Storm Austrian Positions in Galicia.

VIENNA ISSUES DENIALS

Petrograd's Estimates of Prisoners Declared Gross Exaggerations.

NEW YORK, June 25.—A Washington dispatch to the World says it is learned that the Administration contemplates a blockade of every Mexican port on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts within the next few days.

PARISH TO HAVE PICNIC. St. Clare's parish will have a Fourth of July picnic and celebration on the church grounds at Capitol Hill. There will be a baseball game at 11 o'clock and there will be a general athletic programme and music and dancing.

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WAGE DEMAND REFUSED

MISSOURI PACIFIC WILL NOT ARBITRATE WITH EMPLOYEES.

Ten Per Cent Addition to Pay Asked by 12,000 Men on Maintenance of Way Department.

ST. LOUIS, July 2.—The Missouri Pacific Railway yesterday refused to grant any of the demands submitted by the brotherhood of maintenance of way employees, or to arbitrate the matter.

Secretary of Labor Wilson was asked by union officials to send two Commissioners to St. Louis to mediate.

J. A. Petree, of Winston-Salem, N. C., representative of the maintenance of way men asked a 10 per cent wage increase for practically all the 12,000 employees of the maintenance of way department.

J. F. Murphy, general manager of the railroad, said that the brotherhood represented but 10 per cent of the maintenance of way employees. He said that four other unions of maintenance of way employees had demanded new contracts.

The Missouri Pacific employees who belong to the brotherhood do not work for the Missouri Pacific proper, but for the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern, which is a part of the Missouri Pacific system.