

The Morning Astorian.

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ENGLISH NERVES BADLY SHAKEN

Sense of Failure Has Taken Possession of the People.

WORSE NEWS IS EXPECTED

**Buller's Seven Days' Hard Fighting
Has Produced No Effect on
Boer Position.**

LONDON, Jan. 27. 4 a. m.—Seven days of fighting have left the main Boer position intact and General Buller 700 weaker, according to the official casualty lists, which seemingly do not include the Spionkop losses, as those last forwarded do not mention General Woodgate's wounded.

England is possessed by a sense of failure, though not a word in criticism of her generals and soldiers is uttered. Not much effort is made to place a happy construction upon General Buller's eighteen words telling of the retirement from Spionkop and there is an uneasy impression abroad that worse news is yet to come.

At one of the military clubs tonight the statement passed from one person to another that the war office had received an unpleasant dispatch from General Buller which was being held up for 12 hours.

Spencer Wilkinson, in the Morning Post, writes as follows of the Spionkop losses:

"This is a serious matter and the attempt will not here be made to minimize it, for no greater wrong can be done to our people at home than to mislead them about the significance of the events of the war. The right way is to tell the truth as far as we know it."

But facts from the neighborhood of the Tugela are scantier than ever. The censorship is now simply prohibitive and something is wrong with the cables.

"More troops" is only a suggestion here as to the way to break the Boer resistance. Mr. Wilkinson regrets that General Buller has not 20,000 more men, declaring that if they would not make victory certain, his enterprise without them is hopeless.

The transport Assaye arrived at Cape Town last Friday with 2,127 officers and men. The first portion of the Seventh division is about. Hence, with the 10,000 men of this division, and about 9,000 now at sea, it lies in the power of Lord Roberts to reinforce General Buller heavily.

Although England's nerves are severely tried, her nerve is absolutely unshaken, and probably nothing that can happen in South Africa will change in the slightest degree her intentions.

BULLER'S BAD DISPATCH.

LONDON, Jan. 26, 11:10 a. m.—The war office has just posted the following dispatch from General Buller, dated at Spearman's Camp, Thursday, January 25, noon:

"General Warren's garrison, I am sorry to say, I find this morning, had in the night abandoned Spionkop."

LAST CASUALTY REPORT.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—General Buller reports that the British casualties on January 24 were:

Killed—Six officers, 18 non-commissioned officers and men.

Wounded—Twelve officers and 142 non-commissioned officers and men.

Thirty-one are missing.

General Buller's dispatch is dated Spearman's camp, Jan. 26, 10:25 a. m., showing there has been no delay in communications passing between him and the war office. The killed include Colonel Buchanan Riddell, of the King's Royal rifles. He served in the Nigar war of 1881. It is not clear whether the casualties include those at Spionkop, or only those resulting from fighting prior to the Spionkop engagement.

MORE CAVALRY TO GO.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—Probably as an immediate effect of the receipt of news of the abandonment of Spionkop by the British force under General Warren, orders have been sent to Aldershot to have the Fourth cavalry division in readiness to embark for South Africa early in February.

THE PUBLIC RESIGNED.

Warren's Retirement Was Expected From the Circumstances of the Case.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—As far as the general public is concerned, now that the first flash of disappointment is over, it takes the news steadily. When the newspapers bearing big placards containing the words "Spionkop abandoned" appeared in the streets, people melted to buy papers, and could be

seen scanning the news with dazed expression. The signs of pleasure which were visible everywhere yesterday have now given place to a wave of depression, but there have been no outward demonstrations or scenes.

A few minutes before 11 o'clock this morning the dingy war office had a deserted appearance, only a few reporters and messenger boys being present. A few minutes later, however, almost simultaneously with the posting of Buller's dispatch, carriages and cabs came rolling up, people with anxious faces hastened to the notice board, and the lobbies soon became crowded.

"Forced back," "Shelled out, I suppose," "Great Heaven, he's had to go back." These and similar expressions were heard on all sides with downcast countenances. The long stream of callers made their way back to the street, while their places were occupied by newcomers. Afternoon papers only briefly comment on the situation, preferring to await fuller particulars.

CRITICS NOT DISAPPOINTED.

They Were Prepared to See Spionkop Abandoned by the British.

NEW YORK, Jan. 26.—Dispatches from London state that the military experts are not so jubilant over the capture of Spionkop as the crowds about the bulletin boards are. The Leader says:

"No particulars of Tuesday's nocturnal enterprise have been received. With due care it does not seem to have been very difficult. It may be that the Boers in holding so extended a position had, according to that elegant American expression, 'bitten off more than they could chew.'"

"What if the enemy had been caught in the act of evacuating Spionkop, leaving only a small rear guard to concentrate upon a second position with another position behind more suited to the strength of their forces that could be spared from the attack upon Ladysmith."

The Morning Post says: "The situation described yesterday was that Sir Redvers Buller had first to drive the Boers from Spionkop and the rest of the plateau upon which it stands, and then to drive them before him until he can cover the 12 or 15 miles that separate Spionkop from the circle of Boer guns that are pointed at Ladysmith."

"The news received yesterday did not, indeed, contain the announcement that he had finished the first half of his task."

There are two ways of looking at the taking of Spionkop. Some persons believe the Boers too shrewd to be caught napping, and think the abandonment of the kop is part of the Boer campaign and a strategic move. Others, who take into consideration the vast length of the Boer lines, 30 miles, say that the Boers did not expect Spionkop to be attacked, and, as they have no men to spare had a weak garrison on the hill and concentrated their force at points considered to be in danger.

Dr. Leyds is blamed for the entanglements of the British over the seizure of German vessels, and he is said to have caused false information as to the seized vessels cargoes to be given the British authorities. It is said further that Dr. Leyds circulated the stories that vast quantities of war supplies were being landed at Lourenco Marques, in the hope that Great Britain would seize Delagoa bay and bring Russia and France down upon her.

THE COLENSO BATTLE.

Boer Guns Remarkably Well Handled and Served.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—Correspondence of the Associated Press.—The correspondence of the Times, with Buller's army, writing from Chevely camp, December 21, after giving interesting details of the battle of Colenso, says:

"The Boer's position was excellently planned, their trenches and emplacements were well hidden. All day we were fired at by guns whose position we could never find and we were never sure exactly where the musketry fire came from. It was the conditions of modern warfare. We had to attack an invisible enemy whose position could not even be fixed by the smoke of his rifles. It was rifle fire that caused our losses."

"Their shell fire, though accurate enough, was not deadly, and during the advances men did not drop until they had come within effective range of the rifles. This was the case in spite of the fact that the greater number of the Boer's shells burst, and burst accurately too, sometimes right in the middle of our men."

PRaises THE BOERS.

Lord Methuen Says Their Courage and Military Art Are Indisputable.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—Lord Methuen forwards by mail his first official recognition of Boer valor and military art. He calls their tactics and their courage "indisputable." In defending frontal attacks, Lord Methuen says: "The nobility of the Boers is such that they can change front in 15 minutes so that flanking operations when striking home simply meets a new front."

WHY SPIONKOP WAS ABANDONED

No Reason Assigned in Dispatch Given Out From Buller.

MILITARY EXPERT OPINION

Generally Believed It Was "Too Hot to Hold" and Warren Could Not Plant Guns to Defend It.

LONDON, Jan. 26.—In an editorial the Westminster Gazette says this afternoon:

"The Associated Press said that Warren's success was provisional." The Westminster Gazette's remark was called out by George W. Snelley's cable to the Times this morning, saying: "The Associated Press takes care that we shall not overestimate Warren's success, suggesting that it is only provisional, and that there is the usual disposition of London to exaggerate the importance of the point scored."

The Westminster Gazette then proceeds to defend its own course, pointing out that it is not unpatriotic to decline to gloss over facts. As a matter of fact, Great Britain assumes that the point gained was more conclusive than it really was, hence the extreme revulsion of feeling caused by Buller's announcement of the abandonment of Spionkop. Considering that the Boers who held the position fled; that the British casualties in retreating it during subsequent attacks were heavy and that the strategic value of the point had still to be demonstrated, there was never any great reason for throwing up hats, and until further particulars arrive, it is impossible to estimate to what extent public disappointment is justified.

It is impossible at present to say whether the British suffered a reverse or the movement was dictated by strategic reasons. Obviously the position was useless unless guns could be planted on it, and, discovering this was impossible, Warren may have decided it was unsafe to hold the position any longer, or perhaps he is seeking a more profitable ascent elsewhere. Whatever may be the explanation of the abandonment of Spionkop by the British, it will doubtless have the same temporary moral effect as a reverse.

It appears to have been so entirely unexpected at the war office, that Buller's dispatch caused something in the nature of consternation. The lobbies were soon crowded and there was evidence on all sides that the news was keenly felt. The only official comment was apparently that "Warren's position was too hot to hold."

Nowhere, in spite of the general depression, is there the least sign of abatement in determination to carry the war to a successful issue. The cabinet met this afternoon under the presidency of Salisbury, and doubtless the ministers fully canvassed the new situation, though primarily summoned to discuss the terms of the queen's speech. Under other circumstances, the news from Ladysmith showing greatly improved sanitary conditions, plentifulness of provisions and a strengthening of fortifications until the place is regarded as impregnable, would have inspired the nation, but these good tidings to the British are overshadowed by anxiety as to the situation on the Upper Tugela and that the heavy losses suffered during the struggle Tuesday might have counted for nothing.

Military circles made no effort to conceal their chagrin, expressing the gravest fears as to the ultimate fate of Ladysmith. Such authorities as Major-General Carrington, who is under orders for South Africa, and Lord Gifford, who won a Victoria cross while scouting for Lord Wolseley during the Zulu war, would not be surprised to hear of the capture of White's forces within a week.

Gifford, who knows the country like a book, could not understand how in the world Warren ever got to the top of Spionkop without ascertaining what positions commanded it. The pooriness of maps, it was pointed out, could hardly be an excuse for this, as there must be with Warren several scouts, to say nothing of officers who at one time or another have served at Ladysmith and whose mere hunting expeditions would have given them a knowledge of the country.

While Warren is not blamed for retreating under what is supposed to have been a heavy shell fire, he is severely criticised for occupying a position to which he could not bring up his artillery.

THE TROOPS AT COLENSO.

Their Behavior Against Frightful Odds Was Grand.

LONDON, Jan. 27.—Correspondence of the Associated Press.—The following account of the battle of Colenso, written

by an infantry officer present, was received by today's mail:

"After that most terrible one-sided battle of Colenso last Friday, I fainted when I got to camp from sunstroke, and on Saturday morning I found I had dysentery. How anyone escaped on Friday is a marvel to me. We were nine hours and a half under fire and it was like a severe hail storm on a tin roof. I could not put my glasses up without hearing 'phit, phit, phit.' From the very first I saw it would be no go. Directly we got under fire, a corporal said to me, 'I wonder how many Boers there are hidden in that wood opposite the Tugela.'"

"I said: 'I expect it is full of them, as Buller has never shelled it at all.' I was right. Two companies of the Twenty-third went in and soon came out through us and exposed our camps to a double fire, and I do not see how we escaped at all. Then I saw about three companies of the Seventh fusiliers go in on the left of the taken guns and they soon came out of it."

"After that we were told to advance a bit, and eventually we were called off as escort to the lost guns, with the result that we retired (when ordered to and 'Tommy' did not like that word at all) and had six officers taken and over 100 men killed, wounded, missing or prisoners, out of a total of 13 officers and 372 men with which we started at 4 A. M."

"I never was in such a vertiginous fix and hope I shall never be again; and then, to add to it all, they peppered us with shot, shell and those beastly one-pound Maxim-Nordenfledt shells and Mausers until we had retired well out of range."

"Our poor 'Tommy' was simply grand. On the troops went, through it all. They never hesitated one moment, never flinched. On they went with destruction and death and agony all around them. I shall never forget the sight. A man was hit on the line. A shell fell between two men at six paces, on they went. A shell blew a poor captain of the Connaught rangers to bits. A subaltern of the Inniskillings close by looked back but could see absolutely no trace of his comrade left, and I see he is reported as missing, as they could not find him, and yet, on went the line."

"My own company was most light-hearted. One old soldier, who used to be quartermaster's storeman at Chatham, was in front of me while we once were ordered to turn fire to the left and wheel to right to double about half a mile to the right flank of the guns, and when a bullet whizzed very close to him, he began to play antics and skip about, laughing and joking the while. The bullets were as thick as bees and I had several mighty close to my head. Directly we halted and lay down showers of bullets came. It was truly a one-sided game, as we could see no one to aim at at all."

NEW HOTEL PROJECTED.

Crocker Estate Will Erect Modern Fire-proof Structure at Frisco.

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 26.—Plans are being prepared for the new modern hotel to be erected by the Fred Crocker estate on Van Ness avenue in this city. It is calculated that the hotel will cost at least \$1,500,000 and it will take about two years to complete. It will be a building of eleven stories and will be constructed of brick, iron, stone and steel. It will be as nearly fire-proof as modern architecture can make it.

WANT PAY FOR DAMAGE DONE

**Manila Cable Company Says
Dewey Cut Its Wires.**

THE CLAIM IS CONTESTED

**Congressman Ray Says the Company
Has Grown Rich on Tolls Paid
Since American Occupation.**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26.—The greater portion of the session of the house today was devoted to eulogies on the life and public services of the late Vice-President Hobart.

A bill to authorize the secretary of state to pay the Australasia and China Telegraph Company the amount incurred in repairing the Manila-Hong Kong cable cut by Admiral Dewey during the war with Spain, provoked considerable opposition. This was the first bill carrying an appropriation to indemnify the company for property destroyed during the Spanish war.

Mahon took the position that the country was not liable for any loss due to the interruption of the cable but only for the actual expense of repairing the cable.

Ray, of New York, said there were thousands of claims pending and he thought it would establish a dangerous precedent to pay one which the attorney general had reported against.

Hitt, chairman of the foreign affairs committee, thought the bill should be amended so as to state specifically that the claim was an act of grace.

Ray pointed out that since the American occupation of the Philippines, the cable company had done more business in a single year than it would have done in twenty had the war not occurred. "He thought there was no equity in the claim."

No action was taken on the bill.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

The Creation of the New Cabinet Office Now Under Consideration.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26.—The question of establishing a department of the government to be known as the department of commerce with a cabinet officer at its head has been discussed at considerable length by the senate committee on commerce. The discussion was based upon a very complete report on the subject prepared by Senator Nelson.

It is proposed to include in the new department a bureau of manufacture and to transfer from the treasury department the life saving, lighthouse, marine hospital and steamboat inspection service, the bureau of navigation, immigration statistics and coast and geologic surveys; to transfer from the interior department the commission of railway, the census office and the geologic survey and from the state department the bureau of foreign commerce. The department of labor and the fish commission are also placed under this supervision.

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