

# BELGIAN NATION ACTUALLY DYING BY STARVATION

### Last Reports Received by the Belgian Relief Commission Picture a Nation Dying in Prison—German U-boat Attacks Our Relief Ships—Diminish Rations One-Half.

By L. HARPER LEECH.  
WASHINGTON, July 24.—Belgium is actually starving to death—starving stubbornly and gallantly, even defiantly, but dying.

Last reports received by the Belgian relief commission picture a nation dying in prison. The greatest crime in history—the murder of a nation by hunger—is now in progress.

#### Death by Torture.

The plight of the children of Israel under the blackest of the Pharaohs who ruled in the Nile valley was abounding prosperity compared to the slow torture of 7,000,000 of human beings.

Due to German submarine attacks on the relief ships, the ration now dispensed by the relief commission amounts to one-half the amount of food necessary to keep an idle man barely alive.

Over 2,000,000 Belgians receive practically no other food.  
Prices of native food are out of reach. Eggs are 50 cents apiece and other things in proportion. The average working man with a family is now earning less than \$1 per day. His purchasing power is trifling. As a result the midday meal of men in the mines, fields and factories consists of sliced cattle heads.

#### Death Rate Rapidly Mounts.

In one Belgian industrial plant the death rates among the workers for the first three months of 1917 was three and one-half times the average for the same three months of preceding years. The resistance to sickness has been cut to one-third normal. Ninety-five per cent of the workers showed loss of weight, and 35 per cent lost from 10 to 40 pounds each.

The men die from the simplest malady. A severe cold or grippé means certain death.

On April 1 there was a general strike in one Belgian province. The men made no demands and had no grievance against their employers. They simply quit because they were too weak to work.

In one Belgian province the attendants at the public soup kitchens increased from 60,000 to 400,000 from February 1, 1917, to March 31.

#### White Plague Spreading.

Tuberculosis is spreading rapidly. In one town of 20,000 the deaths for the first three months of 1917 were double the number in the same period of 1916.

Great Britain, her colonies and the allies are still contributing enough money to keep the people from starving, but the submarines have made it impossible to deliver the food.

Germany is the only nation in 400 years which has refused to be responsible for the feeding and lives of people in conquered territory. Instead, she began by plundering the Belgians of most of their grain and livestock and still keeps up a system of fines and extortion.

Intelligent Belgians place the responsibility squarely on Germany's submarines, but some of the starving people are beginning to think they have been deserted by the allies.

Germany endeavors to encourage this belief by propaganda.

Nevertheless, Belgium will defy her tyrants. Their "morale" is unimpaired. Since the German "deportations" began last October not one Belgian town has given up to the German slave drivers its list of men of working age. Thousands of the slaves herded into cattle cars by the German soldiers have laid down their lives or starved in prison camps rather than work for their enemy.

# INDIAN IRRIGATION RIGHTS TRANSFERABLE

NORTH YAKIMA, Wash., July 24.—Indian rights to free water given by act of congress for 40 acres of each allotment, passes to other owners with the transfer of the title to the land and, where allotments have been subdivided, the free water is to be divided between them in proportion to their irrigable area, according to a decision by the Indian department, on authorization which has been pending for two years. Many thousands of acres in the Yakima reservation are affected by the ruling, which will make possible a speedy determination of what land is entitled to free water and the making of arrangements for purchase of additional water needed.

# AMERICA'S MOST AMAZING MURDER MYSTERY

### Gagged by Strange Law, Iowa Citizens Leave State to Talk About Murder of Eight—County Faces Bloody Feud—Preacher Charged With Ax Crime is "Paper Defendant," Charges Detective Wilkerson, Central Figure in Dramatic Circle.

By CHESTER M. WRIGHT.  
VILLISCA, Iowa, July 24.—America's most amazing murder has split this town and county into two hostile camps, and brought the imminent danger of bloody feud.

Excitement is running so high today two women have died of shock, and Villisca citizens are traveling to Nebraska, 100 miles, in special cars, so they can discuss their side of the case in safety.

I have heard accusations hurled against state officials, and the legislature charged with conniving at the passage of a law designed to halt further investigation into the killing of eight persons—to shield a power in politics.

#### Series of Ax Murders.

All this turmoil grows from the most atrocious of the series of "ax murders" that have started this slaughter in the past few years—the slaughter of Joseph Moore, his wife, their four children and two children of a neighbor, Joseph Stillinger, in 1912.

A traveling minister, Rev. Lyn George J. Kelly, is in jail, formally charged with the ax crime.

But the central figure today is a free-lance detective, J. N. Wilkerson, who charges Kelly is an innocent "paper defendant" whose conviction is designed to shield the real criminal. Wilkerson, known to half the community as "Wilk," dashes thru town in a big touring car, and business stops while the townspeople crane their necks to watch him.

He is the cause of the "anti-Wilkerson law," rushed thru the last legislature in its closing hours. Under it he has been barred from public speaking on the "ax murder" case. Hence the excursions to Nebraska, where 3000 Iowans have heard him in Boyd's theatre, Omaha.

Wilkerson is shortly to defy the Iowa attorney-general by speaking in Des Moines, state capital, and plans a campaign for the repeal of the law.

#### Speaking Crusade.

Wilkerson, engaged first by friends of the dead man, then by the county and later working independently, began his public speaking crusade after failure to secure indictment on his evidence.

During his speeches Wilkerson openly used the name of P. F. Jones in connection with the case. Jones is bank president, implement dealer, former assemblyman and for two terms was state senator. He has been Methodist Sunday school superintendent 25 years.

Joe Moore, ax victim, formerly worked for Jones. Then he went into business for himself, whereupon Jones gave him a banquet.

Jones sued Wilkerson for \$50,000, alleging slander, but lost his suit. Recently Wilkerson and three others were arrested, charged with conspiracy to steal documents from the Jones safe. Wilkerson was freed on \$10,000 bonds while big Joe Peterson cried, "make it \$100,000, judge."

The present murder charge accuses Kelly of the murder of "Lena Stillinger and seven others." This wording has aroused Joe Stillinger to fighting pitch. Lena Stillinger was 11 when she met her death, the oldest of the six slain children.

#### Was It Ax Murder?

It is Wilkerson's contention that the murder here was done by the man who committed the Blue Island, Ill., ax murders and that he was paid for the murder by someone who wanted Joseph Moore slain.

"Blackie" Mansfield was at one time under arrest in Kansas City, but was released. Two years after the Villisca murder Mansfield's wife and child were slain with an ax at Blue Island.

Mrs. Mansfield had sworn out a warrant charging "Blackie" with abandonment. It was the similarity of circumstances surrounding the two murders, Wilkerson says, that started him on his present line of action.

Everyone connected with the strange case talks freely. "Come right in," was Jones greeting. He seems unconcerned, except for his wife's falling health. He ridicules Wilkerson—calls him a man with a "typo eye," who has duped his followers.

"Business was never so good," he said by way of emphasizing his popularity. "And our Sunday school attendance was never better. It averaged 275."

#### Five Years, Some Tragedy.

It is five years since the tragedy, but the whole country is in a fever of excitement. There are few "neu-

trals." "Half and half" is about how the "Jones side" describes sentiment. "Ninety per cent are with us," says Wilkerson follows.

Even the church people join in the feudal rivalry and antagonism.

A wide automobile road has been worn in front of the little white home where the murders took place. Once there was but a path, but tourists have come from many points to see the place.

"I'll stay to the finish," says Wilkerson, "even if they put me in prison."

"It will all come right in the end; it must," declared Jones.

"I'll spend my last dollar if I have to," says Joe Stillinger.

Meanwhile the people watch and wait, while the rich, expanding fields of growing corn wave their war bride greeting to familiar home folk and passing strangers with impartial grace.

# GERMAN FLYERS SEEK AMERICANS

AMERICAN TRAINING CAMP IN FRANCE, July 24.—German aerial squadrons, apparently have persistently sought to locate the American troops since their arrival here, but without the slightest success to date. Counter-squadrons have been so watchful that Germans have been unable to approach the encampment and have been beaten off each time they crossed the French line. One of these aerial battles took place yesterday evening and another this morning. Both were at points at a considerable distance apart and far removed from the American camp. They were witnessed by chaper by American officers who were touring the country in automobiles. About 15 airplanes were engaged in the first fight and probably a dozen in the latter.



J. N. WILKERSON.

Here are shown leading figures in Villisca's feud, leading out of amazing ax murder mystery, together with poster used by Detective Wilkerson in advertising migration to Omaha, Neb., for mass meeting forbidden in Iowa, and sketch showing how murders of eight persons were committed.

# EDITORS ASKED TO SPEED UP CONGRESS

NEW YORK, July 24.—Letters to the editors of 1400 American newspapers known to favor aggressive prosecution of the war were sent today by the national security league, asking them to appeal to their readers to write to senators and congressmen urging the speeding up of the war program.

"Red tape and personal jealousy are delaying the efficient conduct of the war," the letter says in part. "Two weeks delay lost the Gallipoli fight. Every hour wasted imperils our cause."

# RUSSIAN DELEGATES ARRIVE IN ENGLAND

LONDON, July 24.—The Russian delegates sent by the council of workmen's and soldiers' delegates to confer with the labor parties of entente countries have arrived in England. They will be the guests of the labor party for a few days and then will proceed to Paris.

# IRISH DECLINE TO ATTEND CONFERENCE CALLED BY GEORGE

LONDON, July 24.—Premier Lloyd George has written a letter to William O'Brien, leader of the independent nationalists, expressing regret at the unwillingness of O'Brien to nominate representatives of his party to the convention of the Irish party and asking him to recede from his stand. The convention, says the latter of Mr. Lloyd-George, has been called in a sincere effort to see if an agreement can not be reached between Irishmen and happier relations brought about between Ireland and Great Britain.

"With the object in view," the premier continues, "I know you are in full sympathy and I most earnestly hope you will respond to this appeal, an appeal which I understand has come from many others, to help toward securing the success of the convention."

Mr. O'Brien in the course of a lengthy reply, says the type of convention selected defeats the object in view with fatal certainty by leaving the great mass of Irish nationalists almost wholly unrepresented and by conferring the power of a majority upon a party of politicians who have notoriously lost the confidence of the Irish people—a party, moreover, whose de facto leaders have devoted all their energies for years to making conciliation with our northern fellow countrymen impossible."

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# TUNNEL GUARDS WITHDRAWN FROM SOUTHERN PACIFIC

Captain Grover Todd of Company 1 is in receipt of a telegram from Colonel Dentler, commanding army officer of the First district, western department, notifying him to inform the Southern Pacific that on or before August 1, the army troops which have been guarding the railroad property in Roseburg and Winchester, Oregon and vicinity will be withdrawn.

Company 1, Third Oregon Infantry, which has been in the federal service for several months, with headquarters in Medford, has been guarding the railroad property at these points, and Colonel Dentler's order means that with Roseburg and Winchester left out Captain Todd will have much less territory to guard, and will thus have more men to guard the remaining tunnels, bridges and other Southern Pacific property between Roseburg and the other side of the Siskiyou.

There has been much conjecture as to whether the war department will continue Company 1 in this guard patrol service much longer, or if the company is taken away to mobilize with its regiment in the near future at Palo Alto, California, other federal troops will be sent here to take Company 1's place. So far no information can be learned on this situation.

# GROSS RECEIPTS NORTHERN FORESTS OVER HALF MILLION

The gross receipts from the about 50 national forests of Oregon, Washington and Alaska, comprising the North Pacific district of the forest service, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1917, were \$644,937.57, according to a report just compiled in the office of the district forester, Geo. H. Cecil of Portland, who is in Medford today.

Refunds due to excess payments for timber or forage were made to the amount of \$8,761.39, leaving the actual receipts for the year \$636,176.18, which is nearly \$150,000 greater than the receipts for the year 1916.

Of this amount \$150,000 was derived from the sale of national forest timber in the district and \$168,000 from grazing permits. Special use permits brought in \$11,000. The remainder came from power sites, timber settlement and timber and grazing trespass.

The Whitman national forest in eastern Oregon leads the district in the amount of receipts from all sources with a return of \$119,533.20 and of this amount \$107,500 was derived from the sale of timber.

The Crater national forest stands second with a total return of \$95,597.69. Ninety-two thousand dollars of this came from the timber sale business.

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