Relief For Halifax Victims.
One of the trucks sent from Boston for relief work at Halifax.

PRESIDENT TAKES OVER UNITED STATES RAILWAY LINES ON DECEMBER 28

Drastic Step Announced by President Wilson to Make Nation's Transportation Facilities Serve War Needs.

A despatch from Washington says: President Wilson formally announced his decision to take possession and assume control at noon on Friday, December 28, of each and every system of transportation in the United States. Possession of the transportation systems of the country will be taken through Secretary of War Baker, but after the railroads and other transportation facilities have come into the actual possession of the Government, they will be operated under the direction of William G. McAdoo, the present Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. McAdoo was appointed by the President to serve as Director-General of Railroads.

Through the action taken the President hopes to be able to cut the "Gordian knot" of the tangle of confusion into which the transportation facilities of the nation have been brought as a result of the efforts made since the nation entered the war, to handle the movement of troops, munitions and war commodities, without at the same time sacrificing the actual transportation needs of the nation and its commerce.

STEFANSSON AND PARTY ARE SAFE

Canadian Explorer and Company Arrive at Fort Yukon, Alaska.

A despatch from Ottawa says: Vilhjalmar Stefannson, the Canadian explorer, and his party, are safe. A message received by Mr. G. J. Desbarats, Deputy Minister of Naval Affairs, announces that Mr. Stefannson and party have arrived safely at Fort Yukon, Alaska, from the far North. This means that the explorer, about whose safety there has been considerable doubt for several months past, is coming back to civilization after his long sojourn in the Arctic regions.

It is presumed that the party will now make their way to Nome and wait for the first steamer that will bring them back to Canada. It is possible, however, that Stefannson may decide to go overland to Dawson.

It is understood here that Mr. Stefannson, who was in charge of the northern division of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, spent last winter on Melville Island. It was thought that he would come out either via Lancaster Sound and Labrador, or the Behring Sea. Apparently, he has not chosen either of these routes, but chose to come over the ice to Herschel Island, and from there to Alaska, probably by way of Fort MacPherson. His party consists of about 24 men. The Canadian Arctic Expedition set out in 1913.

RAILWAY WAR BOARD SAVES 100,000 TONS OF COAL

A despatch from Montreal says:—The Canadian Railway War Board calculates that in the measures it is taking for the elimination of passenger trains it will be able to save 100,000 tons of coal. Without incommoding the public there will be elimination wherever possible. The Railway War Board has gone carefully into the matter of passenger service, with the thought of conservation in mind—conservation of fuel and of man-power. The crews liberated from passenger trains that are cut off may be used on freight trains.

CANADA'S FISHERIES HAVE RECORD VALUE.

A despatch from Ottawa says: Owing to the greatly increased demand for fish, and the higher prices prevailing, the total market value of Canadian fisheries for the last fiscal year constituted a record. It amounted to $39,208,378 according to the annual report of the Fisheries branch issued on Thursday. This was $3,347,670 greater than the value for the previous year. To the total value the sea fisheries contributed $34,386,013 and the inland fisheries $4,822,365.

MATERIAL DECREASE SHOWN IN BRITISH SHIPPING LOSSES.

A despatch from London says: The losses to British shipping show a material decrease for the past week.

According to the Admiralty report, 11 British merchantmen of 1,600 tons or over were sunk during this period by mine or submarine, as well as one merchantman under that tonnage and one fishing vessel.

Twelve merchantmen were unsuccessfully attacked by submarines during the same period. Seventeen vessels were sunk the previous week.

WEMYSS NEW SEA LORD

Sir John Jellicoe Replaced—Is Made a Peer in Recognition of Distinguished Services.

A despatch from London says: Vice-Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss has been appointed First Sea Lord, in succession to Admiral Sir John R. Jellicoe, according to an official announcement.

Admiral Jellicoe has been elevated to the peerage in recognition of his very distinguished services. The hope is expressed that his experience may be utilized later in another post.

The translation of Sir John R. Jellicoe to the honorable eclipse of a seat in the House of Lords and the promotion of the Second Sea Lord to his place, briefly announced in an official communication, will convey but one interpretation to the mind of the general public in view of the strong criticisms for a long time passed upon the Admiralty, which culminated in deep disappointment and dissatisfaction at the impunity with which German raiders recently again sank a British convoy.

TOMATOES INSTEAD OF CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

A despatch from Liverpool says: A year ago the city of Liverpool decided to suspend the cultivation of chrysanthemums in the greenhouses attached to public parks, and grow something useful instead. Several acres of glass were accordingly assigned to be used for tomatoes. The result of the year's work is announced in a report just published, which states that 10,000 pounds of tomatoes were thus grown, all of which were sent in weekly shipments to about thirty military hospitals in the Liverpool district.

MANY GERMANS KILLED WHEN TOWN WAS BOMBED.

A despatch from Amsterdam says: The town of Rousselaere (Roulers), in Belgium, was almost laid waste recently by the terrific explosion of an ammunition train caused by bombs dropped by a British airman, according to the frontier correspondent of the Telegraaf. The aeroplane itself was brought down by the aerial pressure. Many Germans and a few Belgians, the latter engaged in forced labor, were killed.

ENEMY AGAIN FAILS TO BREAK VERDUN FRONT

A despatch from London says:—Once again the Germans have endeavored to break the French front of the Verdun sector, but again have failed. Two assaults delivered north of the Caurieres Wood resulted in the defeat of the enemy and the infliction of heavy casualties. The Germans at one point succeeded in penetrating a French front line trench, but were immediately ejected.

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS AGAINST CONSCRIPTION.

A despatch from Melbourne, Australia, says: Latest figures in the referendum are 870,000 for conscription, 1,050,000 against, including the first returns from the Australian forces, which it is officially announced are 17,000 for and 23,000 against conscription.

STIFF BLOCKADE CUTS OFF HUN

Europe's Neutrals No Longer Feed Germany.

A despatch from London says: Germany is now believed to be effectually blockaded. According to estimates made here, she now is completely cut off from receiving imports from other than her allies, owing to the fact that the prevailing shortage of foodstuffs in neutral countries near by has made it necessary for them to withhold from her any imports needed by their own people.

Virtually nothing is now permitted to go into Holland or the Scandinavian countries from England, the United States or any other of the Entente countries. These now almost control the whole world's exports of foodstuffs, feeding stuffs and raw materials of every kind.

This stiffening up of the blockade is attributed here to the policy adopted by the United States in July of withholding its exports from neutral countries near Germany except on terms under which they must cease the export even of their own produce to Germany.

Imports of oils and fats into Holland and Scandinavian countries have decreased from an average of 75,000 tons a month before the war to a monthly average of 22,500 tons at present, according to figures made public here. Imports of cereal and fodder, formerly 342,000 tons a month, have decreased to 25,000 a month. Cotton imports have declined one-half since 1916, and imports of hides and leather are now a mere fraction of what they formerly were. Copper imports have declined almost to one-fifth their former proportions.

AIR REPRISAL MISSED KAISER

Mannheim Raid Occurred About An Hour After Emperor Had Left City.

A despatch from Geneva says: The German emperor, returning with his staff from the Verdun front, had a narrow escape during the reprisal raid of a British air squadron on Mannheim Christmas Eve, according to a despatch from Basel. Only about an hour earlier the emperor's special train left the station, which was partly destroyed by several bombs.

A section of the tracks was torn up, cutting communication north. In fact, the emperor's train was the last to leave Mannheim, and no trains arrived at Basel from that city. Two bombs fell on the palace and one on the suspension bridge across the Neckar River, both structures being badly damaged. An ammunition factory in a northern suburb was blown up. Few persons were killed here, however, as the employes were having a holiday. Numbers of persons were killed or injured within the town, and several were blown into the Rhine.

1,000,000,000 YEN TO SUPPORT WAR

Japan's Contribution Thus Far —No Troops For West.

A despatch from Tokio says: Japan's total financial support to the Entente Allies aggregates more than 1,000,000,000 yen, said Minister of Finance Shoda recently in an address to 500 leading financiers or business men of Western Japan. For Japan, he declared, this contribution was immense.

As to the talk of dispatching Japanese troops to the European front, he added, this was useless discussion, and the Allies were aware that it was an impossibility. Japan, he said, was prepared to exert her utmost efforts to aid the Allies in other respects, but her operation could not go to the extent of sending troops to Europe. To listen credulously to peace rumors and so to disturb business, he added, was premature and foolish.

ADVANCE IN RAILWAY RATES

Granted By Board of Railway Commissioners.

A despatch from Ottawa says: An important judgment handed down by the Board of Railway Commissioners provides for a 15 per cent. increase in passenger rates in all parts of Canada, with the exception of British Columbia, where the maximum rate is now 3 cents per mile. The judgment also permits, subject to the limitations of the Crow's Nest agreement and certain specific limitations, an increase in freight rates of approximately 10 per cent. in the West and 15 per cent. in the East. The Crow's Nest agreement was made by the Canadian Pacific Railway with the Government, and by its provisions rates on a large number of commodities are reduced.

Cold lima beans mashed, seasoned and a few minced olives added make a good sandwich.

Markets of the World

Breadstuffs

Toronto, Jan. 1—Manitoba wheat—No. 1 Northern, $2.23½; No. 2, do., $2.20½; No. 3, do., $2.17½; No. 4 wheat, $2.10½, in store Fort William, including 2½c tax.

Manitoba oats—No. 2 C. W., 83½c; No. 3 C.W., 78⅝c; No. 1 extra feed, 77⅝c; No. 1 feed, 76⅝c, in store Fort William.

American corn—No. 3 yellow, nominal.

Ontario oats—No. 2, white, 77 to 78c, nominal; No. 3, do., 76 to 77c, nominal, according to freights outside.

Ontario wheat—New, No. 2 Winter, $2.22; basis, in store, Montreal.

Peas—No. 2, $3.70 to $3.80, according to freights outside.

Barley—Malting, $1.30 to $1.31, according to freights outside.

Buckwheat—$1.55 to $1.60, according to freights outside.

Rye—No. 2, $1.78, according to freights outside.

Manitoba flour—First patents, in jute bags, $11.50; 2nd, do., $11; strong bakers', do., $10.60, Toronto.

Ontario flour—Winter, according to sample, $9.95, in bags, Montreal; $9.75, Toronto; $9.70 bulk, seaboard, prompt shipment.

Millfeed—Car lots—Delivered Montreal freights, bags included—Bran, per ton, $35; shorts, do., $40; middlings, do. $45 to $46; good feed flour, per bag, $3.25.

Hay—No. 1, new, per ton, $15.50 to $16.50; mixed, do., $13 to $15, track Toronto.

Straw—Car lots, per ton, $9 to $9.50.

Country Produce—Wholesale

Butter—Creamery, solids, per lb., 42½ to 43c; prints, per lb., 42 to 43½c; dairy, per lb., 36 to 38c.

Eggs—Fresh gathered eggs, 50 to 52c.

Poultry—Geese, dressed, lb., 21 to 22c.

Potatoes — Wholesalers are paying growers and country shippers $1.75 for first-class stock, f.o.b., outside points.

Wholesalers are selling to the retail trade at the following prices:

Cheese—New, large, 23 to 23½c; twins, 23½ to 23¾c; early cheese, 25½ to 26c; large twin, 26 to 26½c.

Butter—Fresh dairy, choice, 40 to 41c; creamery prints, 45 to 46c; solids, 44 to 45c.

Margarine—32c. lb.

Eggs—New laid, in cartons, 60 to 65c; No. 1 storage, 43 to 44c; select storage, 47 to 48c.

Dressed poultry—Spring chickens, 26 to 28c; milk-fed chickens, lb., 80c; fowl, 22 to 25c; turkeys, 34 to 37c; ducks, Spring, 25 to 27c; geese, 26 to 28c.

Live poultry—Turkeys, 28c; Spring chickens, lb., 20c; hens, 16 to 18c; ducks, Spring, 20 to 22c; geese, 18c.

Honey—Comb—Extra fine, 16 oz., $3.50; 12 oz., $3; No. 2, $2.40 to $2.50. Strained—Tins, 2½'s and 5's, 19 to 19½c per lb; 10's, 18½ to 19c; 60's, 18 to 18½c.

Beans—Canadian, hand-picked, bush., $8 to $8.50; imported hand-picked, $6.50 to $7; Limas, 17 to 17½c.

Provisions—Wholesale

Smoked meats—Hams, medium, 30 to 31c; do., heavy, 26 to 27c; cooked, 43 to 44c; rolls, 27 to 28c, breakfast bacon, 38 to 42c; backs, plain, 40 to 41c; boneless, 43 to 44c.

Cured meats—Long clear bacon, 27½ to 28c lb; clear bellies, 26½ to 27c.

Lard—Pure lard, tierces, 28½ to 29c; tubs, 28¾ to 29½c; pails, 29 to 29½c; compound, tierces, 24½ to 25c; tubs, 24¾ to 25½c; pails, 25 to 25½c.

Montreal Markets

Montreal, Jan. 1—Oats—Canadian western, No. 3, 90½c; extra No. 1 feed, 90½c; No. 2 local white, 87c; No. 3 do., 86c. Flour—Man. Spring wheat patents, firsts, $11.60; seconds, $11.10; strong bakers', $10.90; straight rollers, bags, $5.20 to $5.37½. Rolled oats, bags, 90 lbs., $5.30. Bran, $35. Shorts, $40. Middlings, $48 to $50. Mouillie, $56 to $58. Hay, No. 2, per ton, car lots, $15.50. Cheese, finest westerns, 21¾c; do., easterns, 21½c. Butter, choicest creamery, 44½ to 45c; seconds, 43½ to 44c. Eggs, fresh, 54 to 55c; selected, 46c; No. 1 stock, 42c; No. 2 stock, 38 to 39c. Potatoes, per bag, car lots, $1.90 to $2.10.

Winnipeg Grain

Winnipeg, Jan. 1—Cash prices:—Oats—No. 2 C.W., 83½c; No. 3, do., 79⅝c; extra No. 1 feed, 79⅝c; No. 1 feed, 76⅝c; No. 2, do., 73⅝c. Barley—No. 3 C.W., $1.37½; No. 4, do., $1.32½; rejected and feed, $1.17. Flax—No. 1 N.-W.C., $3.10¾; No. 2 C.W., $3.07¾; No. 3, do., $2.90¾.

United States Markets

Minneapolis, Jan. 1—Corn—No. 3 yellow, $1.60 to $1.65. Oats—No. 3 white, 78¼ to 79¼c. Flour, in carload lots—Fancy patents, $9.75 a barrel; contained in 98-pound cotton sacks, first clears, no longer quoted; second clears, $6.00, jute. Bran—$32 to $39.

Duluth, Minn., Jan. 1—Linseed, on track, $3.43; arrive, $3.42; arrive in December, $3.43; December, $3.43 bid; May, $3.36¾ bid; July, $3.32 bid.

Live Stock Markets

Toronto, Jan. 1—Extra choice heavy steers, $11.25 to $12; do., good heavy, $10.75 to $11; butchers' cattle, choice, $10.60 to $10.85; do., good, $9.60 to $10.25; do., medium, $9 to $9.25; do., common, $8.25 to $8.50; butchers' bulls, choice, $9 to $10; do., good bulls, $8 to $8.25; do., medium bulls, $7.10 to $7.35; do., rough bulls, $5.25 to $6.25; butchers' cows, choice, $9.50 to $10; do., good, $8.50 to $9; do., medium, $7.75 to $8; stockers, $7.25 to $8.75; feeders, $9.25 to $10; canners and cutters, $5.15 to $5.50; milkers, good to choice, $95 to $140; do., com. and med., $75 to $90; Springers, $90 to $130; light ewes, $12 to $14; sheep, heavy, $6 to $7.75; yearlings, $12.25 to $13.25; lambs, $17.25 to $18.25; calves, good to choice, $14 to $16.50; hogs, fed and watered, $18.50; do., weighed off cars, $18.75; do., f.o.b., $17.50.

Montreal, Jan. 1—Best steers, $9 to $12 per hundred pounds; butchers' bulls, $6.50 to $9; butchers' cows, $6.50 to $9; canners' cattle, $5 to $5.75; sheep $12 to $13; lambs, $17.50; calves, grass fed, $6 to $8; milk fed, $12 to $14; select hogs, off cars, $18.75; good selects, $18 to $18.50.

200 BLINDED BY EXPLOSION

Majority of Victims of This Class in Halifax Are Young Women and Children.

A despatch from Halifax, N.S., says: The first estimate that 500 men, women and children had become totally or partially blind as a result of the recent disastrous explosion at Halifax, is proving correct.

At least 200 of these will be totally blind, and the majority of them are young women and children. Sir Frederick Fraser, chairman of the Halifax Blind Relief Committee, estimated that a fund of at least $500,000 will be required to provide accommodation and suitable training for those who have so suddenly become blind. A vigorous campaign for this fund is now on, and Sir Frederick Fraser says he hopes that the people of Canada and the United States will actively cooperate in securing the amount required.

The need is great, and the money must be secured before the work for these blinded people can be properly organized.

A "Move" on the West Front.

BIG AERIAL BATTLE NEAR VENICE RESULTS IN ALLIED VICTORY

British and Italian Airmen Break Up One of the Heaviest Raids Attempted by Enemy on Italian Front.

A despatch from Italian Army Headquarters in Northern Italy says: One of the heaviest raids the enemy has attempted on this front came to grief on Wednesday, when nearly half of a fleet of 25 aeroplanes was destroyed, with an extensive list of killed or wounded.

The big fleet swept over the camp west of Treviso at 8 o'clock on Wednesday morning, flying low and discharging machine-guns. Considerable damage was done. Notwithstanding the surprise, the Italians and British machines were soon in the air, and engaged the enemy at close quarters.

The fighting was most spectacular, eight of the enemy planes being brought down, six of them falling within the Italian lines. The other machines beat a hasty retreat.

The raiders, however, returned at 11 o'clock, and three more were disposed of, two falling in this attack inside the Italian lines. An observer who has just returned says that the scene of the conflict is covered with wreckage of the enemy aircraft.

One of the machines brought down was a dreadnought carrying three persons; the others carried two. All of these men were killed, wounded or captured.

From Erin's Green Isle

NEWS BY MAIL FROM IRELAND'S SHORES.

Happenings in the Emerald Isle of Interest to Irishmen.

Sergt.-Major John Wilkinson, D.C.M., of the Irish Guards, has been awarded the Croix de Guerre for conspicious gallantry.

New branches of both the Ulster and Northern Banks are being opened in various parts of the North of Ireland.

Vegetables valued at £50,000 have been raised on the six thousand plots cultivated by Belfast working men.

J. T. Campbell, M.A., Dublin, presided at the first debate of the season of the Dublin Law Students' Society.

A successful concert was given at Whitechurch, near New Ross, in aid of the local branch of the Red Cross Funds.

Sir Ernest Clarke has informed Lady Clonbrook that the motor ambulance presented to the Connaught Rangers is doing good service at the Boulogne base.

Capt. Tom C. C. Lee, son of Richard Lee, Island Bridge House, Dublin, has been awarded the Military Cross.

It is stated that the Government intend using Irish munition factories after the war for ordinary industries.

Captain M. O'Leary, V.C., is the champion sniper on the Salonica front, where his average is three a day.

It has been learned that Lieut. Wright, of Fahan, reported missing since August, is a prisoner in Germany.

The Newton Rural Food Committee have allowed a rat-catcher to use three pounds of sugar per week to mix with his rat poison.

The Dublin Port and Docks Board have granted the application of P. Kennedy for three acres of land for the erection of a corn mill at Alexandra Wharf.

John McCormack gave a concert in New York, and the proceeds, which amounted to $11,000, were sent to the 69th Irish Regiment.

The sum of £90,000 has been subscribed to the Ulster Volunteer Force Patriotic Fund for the support of broken down soldiers and their families.

Congratulations were sent to Miss Mabel Dease by the St. John Ambulance Association of Borrisoklane on her investment by the King with the new Order of the Empire.

While attending church in Dublin, Pte. J. Donaley, who has been deaf and dumb for nine months from shell shock, suddenly recovered speech and hearing.

The farmers of Ratangan and Clearystown have agreed to give the laborers who assist at threshings threepence per hour extra wages in lieu of drink.

The artists playing at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, gave a most enjoyable entertainment at the Irish Counties Hospital for the wounded soldier patients.

RUSSIAN WAR PLANTS BEING CLOSED DOWN.

A despatch from London says: The Putiloff Works, employing 30,000 men, and the Petrograd Metallurgical Works, employing 8,000, have begun to pay off their men, according to a Reuter's despatch from Petrograd.

AWFUL HORROR AND MISERY

"RALPH CONNOR'S" PICTURE OF HALIFAX

Ruined City Compared to the Devastation of France and Belgium by Major C. W. Gordon.

Returning from Nova Scotia, where he has been speaking, Major C. W. Gordon arrived at Toronto recently. Fresh from the scene of the disaster of Halifax, "Ralph Connor" compared the scene with those he had witnessed in France.

"When I came into the Halifax station," he said, "I was struck with the strange and horrible familiarity of the scene. It was like so many stations I had seen in France and Belgium; the shattered buildings temporarily patched up, and the train service being carried on amid the ruins and debris. The whole hillside gives a good picture of the ruins at the front. The difference between Halifax and the cities in France and Belgium is that the former contained many wooden houses. At the front the ruined walls would be left standing and the streets traceable, but here the fire had consumed the houses and the streets were obliterated. The only difference from life at the front was that Halifax had one shock and no more. The men at the front get one shock and then wait for the next. From that nerve-wrecking experience Halifax was mercifully spared.

Unparalleled Misery

"The first three days were days of unparalleled misery. First came the shock and the slaughter. Almost immediately upon the wreck of the houses, fire sprang up from every home, and quickly hundreds of fires were blazing on the hillside at the same time. Then followed the storm, the snow, the gale and the rain. The equal of this was not seen in forty years. This fell upon the city where so many people, homeless and without clothing, were searching the ruins for their relatives and friends. The situation of horror was without parallel in Canada.

Rescue Work Started

"Halifax took hold of the rescue work in a strong way. The people showed a fortitude and stamina which proved them to be of the same class as our men at the front. All class distinction was obliterated. They only heard the call for pity.

"The loss of life would have been much heavier had it not been for the prompt and efficient help from Boston, first by the military unit and then by the Red Cross workers and others. They came in when Halifax was stunned and dazed, and gave help without which the loss of life would have been much heavier and the list of missing greatly increased.

"The Red Cross, under Mr. Moore, LL.D., was a splendid piece of organized and well directed [illegible] Mr. Moore had the advantage of having been through four other disasters in American cities. At in the afternoon of Thursday the Governor of Massachusetts had asked him to go, and that evening he had the corps organized with full supplies ready to pull out at 10 o'clock. They were held up by the storm, and had to fight their way through to the outskirts of Halifax, where they speedily commenced work."