

BOERS REPORT A BIG BATTLE

They Claim 600 British Killed and 900 Captured.

The War Office Has Nothing About It, But While the Story Is Not Believed, There Is Nervous Anxiety in London.

London, April 11. — (5 a.m.) — But that the War Office has issued no news from Lord Roberts during the last three days, there would be little disposition to place any credence in the Boer reports of a British disaster. The unexpected rallying of the Free State commandos, however, leave the public in a nervous condition.

The Boer Report. — Despatches from Pretoria, as late as Monday, did not mention any further Boer victory. On the contrary, they said all the commandos were quiet, and as Lord Roberts has hitherto never failed promptly to report misadventures, as well as successes, or allow the newspaper correspondents to report them until confirmation is received, there is some justification for regarding the Meerkatfontein rumour as only an exaggerated account of the Roodersberg affair. At the same time the greatest anxiety is felt.

600 BRITISH KILLED.

Boer Report Says This Disaster Happened at Meerkatfontein.

London, April 11. — A despatch to the Daily Mail from Brandfort, dated Sunday, by way of Lorenzo Marquez, says: "Yesterday, Gen. Dewet engaged the British for the third time within a week at Meerkatfontein, killing and wounding 600. He captured 900, with 12 wagons, losing 5 Boers killed and 9 wounded."

London, April 11. — The Daily News has the following from Pretoria dated Monday, by way of Delagoa Bay: "It is officially announced that a battle has been fought south of Brandfort, in which 600 British troops were killed and wounded and 800 taken prisoners."

900 British Captured. — London, April 11. — The Daily Mail publishes the following dated Tuesday, April 10, from Lorenzo Marquez: "The Netherlands Railway Company professes to have received a telegram reporting a Boer victory near Koonstadt, the Boers capturing 900 British."

Commenting on this The Daily Mail remarks: "There is a Meerkatfontein about eight and a half miles southeast of Koonstadt, but if the report be true, this can hardly be the place."

Boers Say 100 Killed. — Pretoria, April 9. — (Via Lorenzo Marquez.) — The British casualties in the fight in Dewets-Dorp were 100 killed and wounded and 459 captured.

The Transvaal Volksraad has been summoned to meet in ordinary session on May 1. Heavy cannonading is reported at Fourteen Streams. The British are using a naval gun.

Lord Methuen is moving in the direction of Hoopstad.

Naval Guns Working at Natal. — London, April 11. — The Durban correspondent of The Daily Telegraph, telegraphing Tuesday, April 10, says: "Our naval guns have commenced bombarding the Boer positions between Sunday's River and Biggarsberg."

Heber's Water Supply Good. — London, April 11. — The Bloemfontein correspondent of The Morning Post says: "The water supply continues satisfactory. Entrenching is proceeding vigorously on the hills commanding Bloemfontein. Civilian labor is to be utilized. Sickness among the troops is somewhat diminishing."

Leaving Buller to Join Roberts. — London, April 11. — The Durban correspondent of The Standard, telegraphing Tuesday, says: "Large numbers of troops are coming down for shipment to Cape Colony. Two regiments have already sailed. Gen. Hart is also going to the Cape, probably in command of these troops."

Chicago's Aid for Boers. — Lorenzo Marquez, April 10. — The French steamer Caravelle, Capt. Labrousse, from Havre, Feb. 25, has arrived here with 100 passengers, including the Chicago ambulance corps. A majority of the passengers will proceed by train to the Transvaal.

British's Order for 30,000 Horses. — New York, April 11. — The Journal says: "A contract to buy 30,000 to 35,000 horses for the British Government was completed in this city yesterday (Tuesday)."

HEAVY FIGHTING AT WEPENER.

Continued From Monday Until Tuesday Three Commandos.

Aliwal North, Monday, April 9. — An engagement took place today at Wepener. The Boers' Vickers-Maxims did considerable execution at first, but the British guns soon got the range and made great havoc.

Evening. — The fighting at Wepener was severe, and lasted all day long. The Boers received a check. The casualties were rather heavy on both sides.

Another commando is advancing towards Wepener from Dewetsdorp. The Rouxville commando has gone to Wepener.

Aliwal North, April 10. — Heavy fighting was continued at Wepener this morning. The result is unknown. Three Boer commandos are attacking the town.

BULLER NOW AT WORK.

It Is Said He Has Command of One of the Draakensberg Passes.

London, April 10. — In connection with the resumption of hostilities in Natal an interesting rumour is cur-

BOERS TRY TO TAKE MAFEKING

Opened Fire on the Town on March 27 With Seven Guns.

They Were Repulsed When They Came Within Rifle Range—Col. Plumer Was Near Mafeking—Fought a Ten Miles Retreat All the Way From Within Six Miles of the Besieged Town—Plumer Himself Wounded—His Casualties.

Mafeking, Tuesday, March 27. — News was received yesterday of the advance of the Southern relief column.

The Boers this morning opened fire at sunrise with seven guns including one 100-pounder. This has been the most vigorous bombardment of the season. The Boer siege gun alone has already fired over sixty rounds.

Under cover of the fire the Boers advanced to the northern face of the works but retired precipitately on coming within rifle range. They also advanced to the southwestern posts but were repulsed. There was one casualty.

To Reduce the Town. — The Boers under Commandant Jan Cronje are evidently falling back before the advance of the southern relief column and are concentrating with two commandos who are retreating before Col. Plumer in order to make a final effort to reduce the town. All the fort and outlying positions are manned, the troops are standing in arms and everybody is under cover.

All are convinced that this is the Boers' last attack.

Baden-Powell Hoped. — Bulawayo, March 31. — Col. Baden-Powell writes from Mafeking, under date of March 27, confirming the report that the Boers had been pushed back so far that the town was comparatively out of range of musketry. He concludes with saying: "All promises well for eventually cutting off this force of the enemy if we can hold Snyman here."

PLUMER IN A HOT CORNER. — British Version of the Engagement Within Sight of Mafeking—Boers Were Two to One.

Gaberones, Sunday, April 1. — Yesterday Colonel Plumer with 270 mounted and a few dismounted infantry and one Maxim gun arrived at Ramathlabama, where he left the dismounted men, and proceeded along the railroad to within sight of Mafeking. The advance guard under Col. White encountered a large body of Boers and almost simultaneously the left and right flanks were attacked and sharp fighting followed.

The Boers were in crescent formation and outnumbered the British two to one. They advanced with skill and stubbornness and persistently endeavored to encircle the British. After holding his ground for an hour Col. Plumer retired, with the Boers slowly following him up.

It Was a Stiff Fight. — The fighting was continued throughout the ten mile retreat to Ramathlabama, where the British Maxim gun was brought into play. After a stiff fight Col. Plumer reached his camp.

British Casualties. — The British casualties were: Killed, 3 officers and 7 men wounded, 3 officers and 24 men; missing 11.

The Boer loss was serious. On the conclusion of the fight Gen. Snyman informed Col. Baden-Powell that he had some British wounded, and both Baden-Powell and Plumer sent ambulances. The Boers were also busy Sunday collecting their dead and wounded. Most of the British wounded were only slightly hurt.

Col. Plumer Wounded. — Col. Plumer was wounded but was able to carry out his duties. While the ambulance was still at Ramathlabama April 2nd, Gen. Snyman, with 800 men and three guns, arrived there, and finding no British troops in the vicinity returned to Mafeking.

It is reported here that the advance guard of Lord Methuen's relief force has left Teyrhug for Mafeking.

Other Wounded. — Col. Plumer's wound was in his right arm. His horse was shot. Col. Bodie and Capt. Bolt were wounded. Col. Plumer's orderly is missing.

Sergt-Major Maning of the 5th Dragoon Guards, who took up the duties of orderly, did excellent work. Capt. Fred Crowe was shot dead while covering the retreat of the troops.

Capt. MacLaren was severely wounded, and Lieut. Milligan, the famous Yorkshire cricketer fatally, while holding an assigned position. Medical Orderly Waneford worked pluckily on the field, which afforded little cover.

British Had Little Cover. — Saturday's fight in the environs of Mafeking was conducted on Col. Plumer's side under great difficulties, being in the proximity of the Boer laagers, whence reinforcements could be promptly sent to the burghers, and there was little cover available for the British when the fight began, the plain being but sparsely wooded and the railroad embankment, the chief protection, being only two feet high. The men behaved gallantly, however, and the officers were exceptionally conspicuous in the affair.

Nearly All Rifle Fire. — With the exception of a few rounds fired by the British Maxim gun at Ramathlabama, the fire on both sides was entirely by rifle. Half of the British officers were more or less seriously wounded.

Retired in Good Order. — Bulawayo, Tuesday, April 3. — Col. Plumer engaged the Boers between Ramathlabama and Mafeking, March 31. The Boers appeared in considerable force six miles from Mafeking, and to prevent being outflanked on

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DOMINION PARLIAMENT.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

Mr. Bell of Addington, was informed by Dr. Borden, that the major portion of the militia will be ordered out for drill in camp this year in June as usual, and the rest in September.

Minister of Militia was unable to designate the particular corps which will drill in each month, as the military programme for the annual camps had not yet been made up.

Mr. Marcotte enquired whether an appropriation of \$3,000 was ever granted or promised for the purpose of making a survey with a view to lowering the level of Lake Temiscamingue.

Sir Louis Davies replied that the Government could find no record of any such grant or promise. A report on this subject was received from Rev. Father Paradis, in 1887, but it was destroyed in the fire in the west block in 1897.

Mr. Foster was informed by Mr. Blair that sixteen cars were purchased by the Railway Department from the Wagner Car Company in 1899. Several of the wheels on these cars were afterwards found to be defective, and these were replaced by the Wagner Company.

Mr. Davies was told by Sir Wilfrid Laurier that the Government of Manitoba, pays to the Government of Manitoba \$1 per day for the maintenance of lunatics from the North-West Territories in the Manitoba asylum. Sir Wilfrid was unable to state what is the actual cost of the maintenance of such lunatics.

CHINESE LABOUR. — The Chinese problem was brought up by Mr. Molnes in the shape of an amendment to a bill granting a railway charter on the Island of Vancouver. He wanted to prevent the employment of Chinese labour on the construction or operation of the road, but found only 21 members of the House who agreed with him. Most of these who voted against him did so because they thought his method of treating the question was unwise, and not because they disagreed with his general idea of restricting Chinese immigration.

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Dr. Borden replied that it was now in the printers' hands, and would contain such parts of the general officer's report as the Minister of Militia thought necessary.

PROHIBITION DISCUSSION. — The discussion of Mr. Eliot's resolution concerning prohibition by provinces was set down for Monday, April 23rd.

CALLING PARLIAMENT. — A short discussion took place on Mr. Casey's motion affirming the desirability of calling Parliament on a fixed day annually or on a day between certain fixed and narrow limits. In December or January of each year would be in the public interest, and would best consult the convenience of those who have business to bring before that body and of the members thereof.

Sir Louis Davies said there was a growing desire to have the sessions of Parliament called early, and that was the policy of the Government also. It would be impossible, however, to have all the departmental reports down in January.

The motion was withdrawn.

IMPORTATION OF FRUIT TREES. — An order in Council has been passed suspending the action of the regulation against the introduction into Canada of trees suspected of being infected by the San Jose scale until May 1 next.

Imports of fruit trees are permitted to enter at St. John, N.B., St. John's, Que., Niagara Falls, Windsor and Winnipeg only, where they will be thoroughly fumigated with hydrocyanic acid gas by a competent government official in accordance with the most approved methods. All shipments made in accordance with the above will be entirely at the risk of the shippers or consignees, the Government assuming no risk whatever.

The packages must be addressed so as to enter Canada at one of the above named ports of entry, and the route by which they will be shipped must be clearly stated upon each package. As it is well-known that well matured and thoroughly dormant nursery stock may be safely treated, but that there is danger of serious injury to trees if fumigated in the autumn before the buds are thoroughly dormant or in the spring after the buds have begun to unfold, all stock which when received is immature or too far advanced for safe treatment will be refused entry and held at the risk of the shipper.

LIVE STOCK ASSOCIATIONS. — The Government bill to provide for incorporation of Live Stock Record Associations will permit any five or more persons who desire to join together for the purpose of keeping a record of pure-bred live stock of any distinct breed to be incorporated on application to the Minister of Agriculture. Not more than one association for each distinct breed of horses, cattle, sheep and swine is to be incorporated under the Act. The association may adopt constitution and by-laws, and may elect annual and life members, whose liability shall be limited by the amount of the membership fees. An annual report is to be sent to the Minister of Agriculture. If any association ceases for twelve months to do business its corporate powers may be revoked. Any persons who sign a false pedigree for registration may be fined summarily in a court of law.

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PULPWOOD BILL PASSED.

The Spanish river pulpwood concession was ratified by the Legislature.

Mr. Whitney moved that the agreement be not ratified. The Premier's amendment was to the effect that until the Government knows more of our pulp resources it is amply safeguarded by the agreement with the company, and advocates the promotion of manufactures.

The Attorney-General moved an amendment to his bill for preserving the franchise of those on service in South Africa so as to include war correspondents. He also moved an amendment to his bill to authorize municipal grants for the benefit of Canadians in South Africa, to enable municipalities to issue debentures for the purpose.

Both amendments were carried.

POLICE TRUSTEES. — Mr. Holmes moved the second reading of his bill to permit unincorporated villages to elect police trustees. It was also provided that such trustees shall collect the dog tax moneys for the protection of sheep, if such a system obtains in the township where the village is situated. Hon. Mr. Stratton thought the measure a good one, and it passed its second reading.

BOUNTY ON WOLVES. — The Premier's resolution to increase the bounty on wolves from \$10 to \$15 per head was carried.

FIRE ESCAPE FADDISTS. — Mr. Carpenter's bill to permit license inspectors to allow the canvas fire escape in hotels in lieu of the present appliances was considered. Mr. Dryden thought the iron staircases should remain, and it would be very unwise to leave the matter in the hands of inspectors. The Premier thought the bill should go to committee, and it was.

CONSUMPTIVE SANATORIA. — Hon. Mr. Stratton moved the second reading of the bill to provide provincial aid for the establishment of sanatoria for consumptives. The bill, he said, was in accord with the Government's policy, of aiding suffering humanity to the fullest possible extent. It provided that the Council of any county might take the initiative, or a group of municipalities or counties could unite for the purpose of erecting sanatoria. The management and control of the institutions were to be in the hands of trustees elected by the municipalities. The Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council could grant one-fifth of the sum expended on the site, building, and equipment, but the sum for such a purpose could not exceed \$4,000. The municipalities would be obliged to pay \$1.50 per week for each patient whose admission was approved, and a similar sum might be paid by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council out of any moneys set apart by the Legislature for the purpose.

HOME FROM THE WAR. — Port-mouth's Welcome to the Gallant Men of the Power.

A despatch from London, April 11. — The British first-class cruiser Powerful, whose brigades did such splendid service in the defence of Ladysmith, arrived at Portsmouth this afternoon, and was received with immense enthusiasm by thousands of people. The whole town appeared to be in the neighbourhood of the water-side, which was lavishly decorated with bunting, while the fortification and other points of vantage were thronged with cheering crowds waving flags.

The warships in the harbour were ablaze with bunting, and their crews manned ship