

GERMAN DASH FOR WARSAW DRIVES ARMY OF CZAR BACK

Petrograd Admits Slight Retirement and Rushes 250,000 Men to Strengthen Lines. Defenders Retreating Before Hotly Pursuing Germans, Berlin Declares.

Austrians Move Rapidly East of Cracow, Forcing Invaders of Galicia Backward to River San—Fierce Battles Rage in Both Fields of Activity.

The Russian army has been obliged to withdraw everywhere in Poland, according to this afternoon's official report from Berlin. Reinforcements numbering 250,000 men have been rushed to the front by the Czar's General Staff to halt the new and terrific German movement.

Reformation of the German lines west of Warsaw has resulted in a new wedge, pointed at the Polish capital. The German forces are now within 25 miles of the city, according to admission of Petrograd officials, who state Russian retirement was necessitated by the unfavorable condition of the country.

The capture of several German trenches in desperate hand-to-hand fighting between the North Sea and the River Lys is reported in this afternoon's official communique of the Paris War Office. The Allies are strengthening the positions already won in the renewed drive from Neuport, and have gained further ground.

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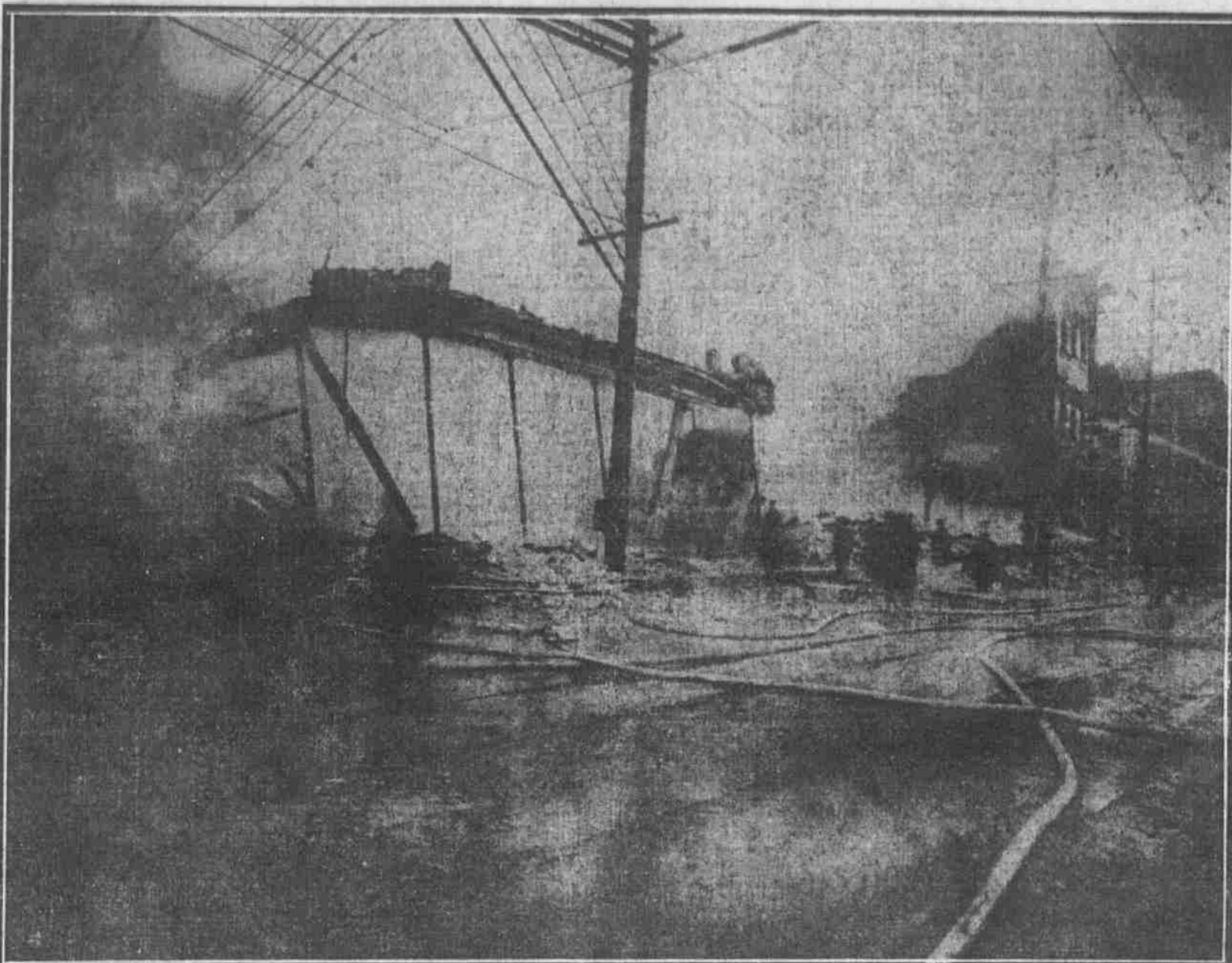
THE WEATHER FAIR It is rather interesting to observe how this old world, after all, plus along in the regular track. That it has its own methods of so doing is outside the case entirely. Take December, for instance. One sort of associates with it cold, crisp atmosphere, overcoats and earmuffs, skating and the like. Magazine covers, designed in mid-summer picture those very things. Then one morning one wakes up and finds it just so. In these times of change it is confusing, now and again, to have it brought home that there is nothing new under the sun.

FORECAST For Philadelphia and vicinity—Fair today and tonight and not much change in temperature. For details, see page 2.

Observations at Philadelphia, S. A. M. Barometer 30.00, Thermometer 50.00, Wind Northwest, 12 miles, Precipitation last 24 hours .00, Humidity 65 per cent, Minimum temperature 32.00, Maximum temperature 50.00.

Almanac of the Day Lamps to be Lighted 4:30 p. m. The Tides

SCENE IN HEART OF POTTSVILLE, SWEEPED BY \$2,000,000 FIRE TODAY



POTTSVILLE, Pa., Dec. 17.—An entire business block, in the heart of the city's commercial center, went up in flame and smoke early this morning. A dozen buildings were destroyed and many others were damaged, the total loss, it is estimated, being \$2,000,000. The loss is all the heavier because of the fact that most of the properties destroyed were business houses packed from ground to garret with Christmas goods. It was the most disastrous fire which this place has ever experienced.

OFFICIAL WAR REPORTS

GERMAN. Yesterday the French continued their attacks from Neuport without any success. Attacks attempted by them at Zillebeke and La Bassée were repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy. The intention of the French to throw a bridge over the Aisne at Soissons was prevented by our artillery. French earthworks east of Rheims have been destroyed by our artillery.

RUSSIAN. The Turks, having been considerably reinforced from Bagdad with new formations, took the offensive in the Euphrates Valley. This developed into serious action near Dutaoh, Ademsk and Sams. The fighting resulted in the defeat of the Turks, and they were compelled to retreat with heavy loss of killed, wounded and prisoners. They also lost many guns and much ammunition. The Ottoman forces are actually demoralized, certain contingents having lost half their effectiveness.

AUSTRIAN. The retreating enemy in Galicia and Southern Poland is being successfully pursued everywhere. At Liska, Kierno, Jaslow and Bialskate the Russians fiercely opposed us.

FRENCH. From the sea to the River Lys we have captured several trenches with the bayonet, strengthened our positions at Lombard and St. Georges and fortified the ground gained to the west of Cheluvet.

COME ONE, COME ALL: ICE SKATING; RED BALL West Philadelphia Miss First to Enjoy Winter Sport. Scores of skaters welcomed the opening of the skating season on Conover's Lake in Fairmount Park today.

HEATING SEASON OPENS ON CONOVERS LAKE There is skating on Conover's Lake today, and, unusually, at every other hour and late in the day, including League Island.

CITIZENS BETRAYED, ASSERT COMMUTERS IN POINTED LETTER

State Commission Called on to Make Public Explanation—B. and O. Asks for Rehearing of 100-trip Ticket Case.

Demand was made upon the Pennsylvania Public Service Commission today to make a public explanation of the charge that its ruling in the railroad passenger rate case was made in collusion with representatives of the three railroads entering Philadelphia, and also to give reasons, which would justify its course in giving the railroads advance information of the decision.

AMOUNT FOR HIGHWAYS CUT A slight reduction in the amount recommended for the Bureau of Highways is seen in the recommendations of the Finance Committee. Despite the apparent cut in the money to go to this department, the Finance Committee declares the Highway Bureau will have as large a fund for operating this year as was available in 1914.

BRITAIN ANXIOUS TO BE NEUTRAL AT CANAL, ENVOY SAYS Sir Cecil Spring-Rice Announces Government's Attitude to Daniels—Order One Vessel to Panama.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17.—Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, British Ambassador, called on Secretary of the Navy Daniels today and informed him that the British Government desired to observe strictly the neutrality regulations at the Canal Zone. The Ambassador said that if there have been any violations of neutrality by British ships that these vessels evidently were not acquainted with the regulations.

Behind the Whiskers On the editorial page of tomorrow's issue of the Evening Ledger will appear a remarkable article from the pen of E. W. Townsend author and statesman, who, in his usual happy manner, tells of the Real "Jim Ham" Lewis

DIVISION OF HOUSING IGNORED IN BUDGET SENT TO COUNCILS

Estimate of Finance Committee Passes by Plea for Tenement Evil Correction. Police Increase Refused.

Pleas for money for the new Division of Housing and Sanitation to eradicate the tenement house evil in Philadelphia, and the request of Director Porter, backed by the protests of residents of Germantown and Chestnut Hill for more police, were completely ignored today in the list of estimates for the budget to operate city and county departments for 1915 which were recommended by Councils' Finance Committee.

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BRITAIN DENIES SHIP LOSS LONDON, Dec. 17.—A report circulated here today that two British warships had been sunk in the North Sea was denied by the Admiralty.

GERMAN RAIDERS' MINES WRECK TWO ENGLISH VESSELS

Daring Kiel Squadron After Shelling Three English Cities Runs Gantlet of Three Fleets and Escapes, Leaving Trail of Explosives. 108 Killed in Bombardment and Much Property Destroyed—Admiralty Closes Section of Coast to Merchant Shipping—Berlin Rejoices at Bold Exploit.

LONDON, Dec. 17. The steamship Elterwater struck a mine and was sunk today off Flamborough Head. Six of the vessel's crew are missing. The Princess Olga also struck a mine and went down nearby. The passengers and crew of the latter vessel escaped by taking to lifeboats.

GERMANS IN FLIGHT, ELUDE THREE BRITISH SQUADRONS BERLIN, Dec. 17. Official information given to the press here today asserts that British warships were damaged and possibly sunk in the naval engagement that followed the German bombardment of English coast towns. All the German ships escaped uninjured, it is asserted.

BLISS EMPOWERED TO ORDER RETURN OF MEXICANS' FIRE General in Charge of Border Forces Instructed to Handle Situation in Own Way.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17.—President Wilson has assumed personal charge of the entire Mexican situation. He went over the entire question with Secretary of War Garrison today.

MUST APOLOGIZE OR FACE SUIT FOR VANDALISM The Rev. Doctor Richmond Offers Alternative to Member of His Church. A summons to appear before Magistrate Rowland this afternoon and present a written apology to the Rev. Dr. George Chalmers Richmond, pastor of the St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church, for his action in assaulting with the bulletin board of the church was served on William Hamilton, St. Richmond street, a deposed lay member of the congregation.

GERMAN RAIDERS' MINES WRECK TWO ENGLISH VESSELS

FIRE DESTROYS ENTIRE BLOCK IN POTTSVILLE

\$2,000,000 Loss in Blaze Which Roars Through Business Section—Dozen Buildings in Ruins. Firemen Hampered by Reduced Water Pressure—Great Stores of Christmas Goods Lost—Old Landmarks Swept Away.

POTTSVILLE, Pa., Dec. 17.—An entire business block, in the heart of the city's commercial center, went up in flame and smoke early this morning. A dozen buildings were destroyed and many others were damaged, the total loss, it is estimated, being \$2,000,000. The loss is all the heavier because of the fact that most of the properties destroyed were business houses packed from ground to garret with Christmas goods.

By the time full pressure had been restored the fire was beyond control and roared through the entire block fronting on Centre street, the city's main thoroughfare, sweeping through the doomed buildings, bounded by Mahantongo and Norwegian streets, and back to 23 street, which parallels Centre street.

OLD LANDMARKS DESTROYED. The Postoffice, one square back of Centre street, was in the path of the flames, but was saved. The Academy of Music, built before the Civil War, and Union Hall, Pottsville's first armory, were destroyed.

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LOST AND FOUND ALEX. LEWIS AND JOHN W. LEWIS, proprietors of the Evening Ledger, have lost a copy of the paper. Any person who finds it should return it to the office at No. 1215 Chestnut street.

Other Councils Proceedings Page Two