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The Daily Mail

THE WEATHER.
Maritime — Fresh northwesterly winds. Fine and a little colder.

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MYSTERIOUS EXPLOSION AT WOOLWICH ARSENAL; FRENCH TROOPS OCCUPYING CRESTS OF THE VOSGES IN ALSACE

TO BE OR NOT TO BE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

The Borden Cabinet Divided Over the Question of an Early Appeal to the Country---Hon. Bob Rogers Wants an Election Before the Royal Commission in Manitoba Gets Busy---Sir Wilfrid Confers With Lieutenants

Ottawa, April 20--The government seems to be still shivering on the brink of the election plunge, with Hon. Robert Rogers trying to push it over, and other members of the cabinet, hearing the protests from Conservatives, who put patriotism ahead of politics trying to draw back.

As far as can be learned in well-informed circles here, there is a decided split in the cabinet on the question of holding an election this year, and no final decision has yet been reached by Premier Borden. When parliament prorogued a June election was in the air. Now the talk is more of a September election with the possibility of even a further postponement. The business and financial friends behind the government are, for the most part, urging that it would be neither politic or patriotic to plunge the country into the turmoil of an election under present conditions. The pressure for an election comes for the most part from the elements in the party who put politics before country, and who think that to wait until next year would be fatal to the party.

Hon. Robert Rogers returned to Ottawa today from Winnipeg, where he has been endeavoring to fix up party fences, both in provincial and federal matters. He declined to commit himself upon the election question, but said the west was up in arms against the Liberal majority in the senate, which by rejecting the government's naval contribution policy "did more to weaken the dreadnought power of Great Britain than the Germans have been able to do in

the nine months of the war." Mr. Rogers undoubtedly wants an election as soon as it can be pulled off, if not in June then in September.

Hon. Frank Cochrane and Hon. Dr. Reid, the other two chief political organizers of Premier Borden, are also favorable to an election this summer. The premier himself is guided in political matters largely by the advice of these ministers, but other members of the cabinet including Messrs. Doherty, Casgrain, Coderre, Blondin and Sir Geo. Foster are understood to be holding out for another year power and no election till next year.

The minister of militia, Major-General Sam Hughes, also wants to stay on the job and finish the war before he turns his attention again to politics. It is unlikely that any decision will be reached for a week or so yet, at any rate pending the return of Hon. Messrs. Reid, Cochrane, White and Doherty to the capital.

Montreal, April 20--Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Lomer Gouin, premier of Quebec, Hon. George P. Graham, Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, Hon. Sydney Fisher and Hon. Charles Murphy along with some of the lesser lights in the Liberal party, met in private at the Windsor hotel, Montreal today and talked over the political situation.

The opinion seemed to prevail amongst the Liberal leaders gathered here that a general election would be held either in June or September, this year.

Paris, April 21--An official statement says that French troops have occupied the important crests of Vosges and are operating along the different rivers of Alsace in their efforts to flank the German right wing by reaching the Rhine. Daily hand-to-hand combats are reported. It is believed that part of Kitchener's new army is to be used to help General French in Alsace.

EXPLOSION AT WOOLWICH

(SPECIAL CABLE TO THE MAIL.)

London, April 21--An explosion early this morning endangered the buildings of Woolrich arsenal in the south eastern suburbs of London. Three men were severely burned. The cause of the explosion is unknown.

Paris, April 21--The Journal states that the British successes in the region south of Labassee has resulted in advance of 600 meters which is more than one-third of a mile

Petrograd, April 21--The number of Austrian prisoners in Russia on April 1st was 400,000.

MOSLEMS INVADE INDIA

(SPECIAL CABLE TO THE MAIL.)

Simla, India, April 21--A Moslem force has invaded India from the Afghanistan frontier, four thousand strong, but the Afghan officials succeeded in persuading the Afghan Mohammedans not to join the fight. A British force at Elly Khader Pas defeated the Moslems. Many offers of aid have been received from chiefs in the Beshawur district by the British.

FIGHTING IN THE DARDANELLES

(SPECIAL CABLE TO THE MAIL.)

Petrograd, April 21--An official statement says that the Russian Black Sea fleet has bombarded the Turkish positions. The result is unknown.

Constantinople, April 21--An official report says that the allied fleet made another attempt to force the Dardanelles on Monday but failed. There is no confirmation of this. Six warships are said to have been engaged.

STATEMENT BY EYE-WITNESS

A London, cable to the Montreal Star says:-- "Discussing conditions in the German army, a statement by the British Eye Witness say:--

"The general state of mind prevailing in the enemy's ranks is hard to realize. The discipline is principally that of fear, the men being in positive terror of their officers, who behave with a kind of stieded truculence, befitting slave drivers. This is borne out by the use of cat o' nine tails, one of these implements being captured by us near Neuve Chapelle.

"A prisoner states that, while twenty men were engaged in trench digging, the subaltern in charge suddenly drew a pistol and declared he would kill the first man he caught shirking."

BRITISH CASUALTIES LIGHT

London, April 21--The Marquis of Crewe, Secretary of state for India, announced in the House of Lords today that the Turkish casualties in the recent

fighting with the British in Mesopotamia were not less than 2,500. According to a report issued by the Indian office last week, the Turkish force, consisting of some 23,000 Turks, Kurds and Arabs, attacked the British positions at Kurna, Ahwaz and Shaiba on March 12, but were driven off.

The British casualties were given as 92 men wounded. The Marquis said the Turks proved to be thoroughly trained fighters and that they concealed their trenches so well that they were invisible at forty yards. The British government was never under any delusion as to the possibility that the Turks might bring up a force of considerable magnitude to attack the British positions. It was for this reason that British forces were sent to Mesopotamia from Egypt and India.

SHORTAGE OF BREAD

Ancona, Via Paris, April 21--Information received here from Fiume, the chief seaport of Hungary is to the effect that food shortage is assuming serious proportions, mostly bread.

SURPRISING ANSWER TO A QUESTION IN THE HOUSE

Government Does Not Know How Much is Due the Principal Contractors on the Valley Railway-- Government Official Also a Contractor

In answer to a question by Mr. Pelletier in the House on Tuesday, the government replied that it had no information as to what amounts are due the three principal contractors on the Valley Railway, viz: Messrs. Corbett, Kennedy & McDonald and the Hibbard Company. As these contractors have been constantly seeking a settlement through the government for their claims the answer is certainly a surprising one.

The government does seem to have knowledge, though, that contractors and others have received second mortgage bonds for their accounts on the Valley Railway, because, in answer to another part of the same inquiry, it says:

"They are expected to hold the bonds for a period of twelve months from the receipt of the same subject to re-purchase by the St. John & Quebec Railway or by the government at ninety-five cash or to exchange for similar bonds at par."

A question by Mr. Dugal brought out the information that David F. Maxwell is still employed by the government as provincial railway engineer at \$2,400 a year and his expenses, and also that J. Brown Maxwell, who was employed last year eleven months and thirteen days on crown

land classification at \$100 per month, was also paid during the same period \$2,955 for work done on the McAdam-Harvey highway, in the County of York.

The House met on Thursday at 3 o'clock.

Mr. Dugal gave notice of inquiry with regard to the purchase of potatoes for the patriotic fund.

Mr. Pelletier gave notice of inquiry as to fees paid by municipalities and towns on bonds issued by them.

The House went into committee with Mr. Young in the chair, and agreed to a bill relating to a loan for the Normal School Annex, and a bill to establish a home for girls and women at Moncton, for the Counties of Westmorland, Kent and Albert.

The House again went into committee with Mr. Munro in the chair, and agreed to bills to amend the act relating to settlement of certain crown lands by New Brunswick Company, Limited.

The bill to amend the act respecting coroners was then taken up. This bill provides for the taking of evidence by stenographers, of the filing by a medical officer of his report of post mortem examination with the nearest hospital, makes provision for

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