

6/12/39 - No 1.

FRENCH OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE (MORNING)

The following official communique was issued from
French G.H.Q. . this morning:-

Nothing of importance to report.

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PRESS NOTICE

The Admiralty are desirous of entering in the Navy, 'for service until the end of the period of the present emergency', a limited number of men under the age of 35 who are fully experienced in physical training and in giving instruction thereon. If found suitable to perform similar duties in the Navy, they will be given the appropriate rating, and will receive pay and allowances under the usual conditions.

Applications should be made, in writing, to the Director of Physical Training and Sports, Admiralty, not later than Monday, 18th December, 1939, and candidates should state their qualifications and forward any testimonials they may have received. Subsequent to this date a Selection Board will be arranged at the Admiralty to interview and select applicants. Those who have already applied are not required to send in further applications as they will be invited to attend the Selection Board towards the middle of December, 1939.

ADMIRALTY,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

AUXILIARY SERVICES IN CANADACO-ORDINATION OF WELFARE WORK FOR FIGHTING FORCES

So varied and overwhelming have been the offers in Canada to look after, entertain and provide recreation for the Dominion troops that a new appointment has been made by the Canadian Army authorities -- the Directorate of Auxiliary Services.

This branch will centralise and administer the work of all organisations concerned with the comfort -- spiritual, cultural and material -- of enlisted men.

Old soldiers remember how the lack of centralisation in the last war led to deficiencies in some places and overlapping in others, how one camp would have three recreational huts and another none. That will now be avoided. But more important still, it will be the constant endeavour of the Directorate to ensure that the best of Canadian youth, who are risking their lives in the Empire's cause, will not be deprived through the lack of educational opportunities, of their rightful place in the race of life, but will preserve their potential value as the leaders of tomorrow.

Through the Canadian Legion, direct instruction, libraries, and study facilities will be provided. Recreation will be in the hands of the Y.M.C.A. who have already organised a Garrison Soccer League and soldiers' concert parties. The Red Cross will supervise the distribution of garments and extra comforts supplied by various women's organisations; and in conjunction with the Chaplain Services the men's spiritual life is not being overlooked.

4

For the information of the Press.

Visits to Children in Reception Areas

Special Trains on December 17th.

The Ministry of Transport announces that the departure stations and the stations to which special trains will run on December 17th are as follows:-

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1. | From Paddington | To | Theale
Savernake
Devizes
Trowbridge
Warminster
Witham
Shepton Mallett
Wells
Bruton
Langport East. |
| 2. | From King's Cross
Finsbury Park
Wood Green
New Barnet | To | Holme
Peterborough (N)
Wisbech
Spalding
Grantham. |
| 3. | From Liverpool Street
Stratford
Ilford
Chadwell Heath
Romford | To | Felixstowe Town
Felixstowe Beach. |
| 4. | From Liverpool Street
Hackney Downs
Tottenham | To | Saffron Walden
Brandon
Thetford
Wymondham
Swaffham. |
| 5. | From Liverpool Street
Hackney Downs | To | Newmarket
Bury St. Edmunds. |
| 6. | From Waterloo
Wimbledon | To | Bournemouth Central
Poole
Wareham
Corfe Castle
Swanage. |

Vouchers for the cheap day tickets must be obtained on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of this week.

In all some 4,000 parents and others were taken to see the children in the reception areas by special trains on 3rd December. Some of these had started on their journeys without ascertaining in advance whether when they arrived at their railway destination they would be able to get from there to the towns and villages in which their children were billeted, and it was only through the special efforts of the Railway Companies

and the operators of public service vehicles, and the generous assistance of voluntary workers, that their journeys were successfully accomplished.

The Minister of Transport asks all persons who hold vouchers for trains running on December 10th and 17th, to make quite sure by enquiry at the voucher issuing offices or from persons with whom they are in correspondence in the reception area, that there will in fact be transport available for any road journey they propose to undertake at the end of their railway journey.

Ministry of Transport,
Metropole Buildings,
Northumberland Avenue,
W.C.2.

6th December, 1939.
(17739).

6/12/39 - No. 5

GERMAN AIRCRAFT CRASHES ON EAST COAST

The Air Ministry announces:-

There was some enemy air activity during the night off the east coast of England.

Fighter aircraft were sent up. The weather conditions were bad and no contact was made.

The wreckage of a German aircraft and the body of a German airman were recovered on the coast of East Anglia early this morning. This aircraft crashed during the night. It is presumed that it was engaged on mine-laying operations.

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FROM AIR AFFAIRS.

BUYING FROM BRITAIN

The New Zealand Government placed contracts in the United Kingdom last month to the value of £190,000.

A considerable proportion of the orders was for war material. One £15,000 order for cotton drill was placed with a Lancashire firm.

EVERY LITTLE HELPSCANADA'S CHILDREN COLLECT FOR BRITAIN'S
EVACUATED CHILDREN.

Canada's will to win is being reinforced by the efforts of her humblest citizens. Throughout the Dominion, children, small communities, obscure folk, Canadians of every class and creed, are doing what they can to strengthen their country's arm by raising hard-won dollars and cents.

Three cheques reached the High Commissioner for Canada in London this morning, each of them typical instances of the self-sacrifice with which this story of a nation's effort abounds.

From a small community of Mennonite Brothers from the Niagara district there was a cheque for £6.3.2., despatched via the Canadian Red Cross Society and representing the result of a community collection.

This gift is a really remarkable one, for the Mennonite Brothers are German-speaking, and they are traditionally against war. Their sympathy in the difficulties and inconveniences of the young evacuees from our cities, is, therefore, greater than their pacifism, and their money is being devoted by the Canadian Women's War Emergency Committee, of which Mrs. Massey, the wife of the High Commissioner, is Chairman, to make this a more cheerful Christmas for the little folk away from home.

The second cheque was from a school in Belleville, Ontario, where £2.6.1. was a result of a scheme sponsored by the children for raising money for the Empire, by blacking each other's shoes and selling candy.

The third cheque totalled £5.11.4., the proceeds of a concert by the choir of All Saints Church, Whitby, Nova Scotia. As with the Mennonite contribution, the money is in both cases being devoted to evacuees.

SMOKED SNAILS AND COCOA

For the first time for nearly 30 years, Gold Coast Colony has lived up to its name, for the value of its gold exports in 1938 exceeded the total for cocoa exports by £300,000.

The Colony is still, however, the principal cocoa producer of the world, and the crop gives employment to the large majority of native labour. It is a country of agriculturalists, where the land belongs to the people, though ownership is not necessarily vested in individuals, but in the tribe or family.

During permitted seasons whole villages emigrate to the forests and collect snails, which are smoked and sold in the towns for $\frac{3}{4}$ d. each.

1938 has been remarkable for the progress of native administrations. In 5 years the value of deposits in native Treasuries has arisen from £860 to £80,000. The surplus is being used for the development of social services, work on water supplies etc. Every native authority now maintains its own school and dispensary. But the dispensary has nothing to do with the smoked snails.

BLACKOUT IN PERLIS TOO.

Pedestrians in Perlis, one of the Unfederated Malay States, would be very much at home in a London blackout. This State, it is claimed in the Colonial Office Report for 1938 (or for A.H. 1357 according to the Muslim calendar in use in Perlis) possesses a public thoroughfare which is unique -- -- a causeway of wood 4 feet wide with hand-rails on either side. It runs in inky darkness along the course of a subterranean river, under hills hundreds of feet high.

The stream roars and rushes almost level with the foot-way; sometimes, indeed, it swamps the hand-rails and rises to the roof. But in normal times this curious subway carries scores of wayfarers, who light their steps along it by ascetyline mining lamps and electric torches.

6.12.39/No. 10.

P.N. 1597

PRESS NOTICE.

The Postmaster General announces that the Egyptian Customs Administration has consented to waive the payment of Customs dues on parcels containing Christmas presents addressed to personnel of the British Army and the Royal Air Force serving in Egypt, provided that the parcels arrive in Egypt during the period 14th of December, 1939 to 14th of January, 1940 (both dates inclusive).

The concession also applies to letter packets provided that a Green Customs label is affixed and that a Customs Declaration form is enclosed. These labels and forms can be obtained at most Post Offices. The concession does not, however, extend to either Green Label letters or to parcels containing tobacco, cigars and cigarettes, on which the usual high Customs dues are payable.

Parcels and Green label letters intended for delivery in Egypt before Christmas should be posted as soon as possible.

General Post Office.

6th December, 1939.

COMMUNIQUE

GALLANTRY ON THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

Immediate Awards

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India has been pleased to approve of the following immediate awards for acts of gallantry in action on the North-West Frontier, during October, 1939:-

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

Major J. H. D. PARKIN, 5th Battalion (Duke of Connaught's Own) 11th Sikh Regiment

Major J. H. D. Parkin was in command of two companies which occupied BARRIER RIDGE by 0600 hrs on the 29th October 1939. The enemy were engaged at about 0630 hrs and by 0820 hrs three piquets on the South end of BARRIER were very heavily engaged by parties of enemy that had crept up close to them under cover of some very thick bushes close by. Major Parkin continually visited these piquets. By doing so, he was able to co-ordinate supporting fire and organise an attack on a party of enemy which was threatening one of the piquets. This restored an ugly situation. His strong and determined leadership was entirely responsible for inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy, restoring the situation, avoiding delay, and thus enabling the two companies to be withdrawn without being followed up and suffering further loss. Major Parkin was wounded in the withdrawal but remained with his command until it was safely withdrawn. His devotion to duty, gallantry, leadership and complete disregard for his own safety throughout the action were most conspicuous.

THE MILITARY CROSS

2nd LIEUTENANT MOHINDER SINGH, 5th Battalion (Duke of Connaught's Own) 11th Sikh Regiment

On the 25th October 1939, 2nd Lieutenant Mohinder Singh was in command of a route piquet during the advance by Razcol from Anztalai to Shahwali. His piquet was already under heavy enemy fire, when owing to difficulties of visibility in the thickly wooded country, it also came under fire from our supporting machine guns. Promptly appreciating the situation he immediately occupied an alternative position, but on arrival there found that two men were missing. He immediately reoccupied his former position under very heavy fire and recovered two wounded men and drove off a party of enemy who were working on to the position. Another casualty occurred during this phase.

2nd Lieutenant Mohinder Singh by his cool and determined leadership not only recovered two casualties and prevented the rifles from falling into enemy hands, but restored a very difficult situation, and his piquet was able to retire in due course without further casualties or delay. His cool and determined leadership and complete disregard for his personal safety throughout, was most conspicuous.

INDIAN ORDER OF MERIT (2nd CLASS).

Jemadar Munsha Singh, 5th Battalion (Duke of Connaught's Own)
11th Sikh Regiment.

Awarded posthumously for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty on Barrier Ridge on the 29th October 1939.

Jemadar Munsha Singh was in command of a platoon posted on the right flank of the position to prevent sniping at the Baggage train as it joined the main road from Anztalai Camp. His platoon and the two platoons on his left were heavily engaged by strong parties of the enemy which had crept up close to them in the thick bushes which covered the hill side.

He led an attack on a party of some 15 enemy which were occupying a Sangar about 200 yards to his front and which was outflanking the piquet on his left. He displayed the utmost gallantry in this attack and surprised the enemy. Fighting occurred in the Sangar occupied by the enemy, but they would not stand up to the bayonet and withdrew down the forward slopes of the position. He led his platoon after the enemy and inflicted further casualties on them and then withdrew to the Sangar. Whilst he was advancing down the forward slopes he saw four Pathan rifles which had been abandoned. He therefore re-organised his platoon in the Sangar and arranged for covering fire under which he attempted to collect these rifles, but was killed in the attempt. His gallantry and leadership were most conspicuous.

HAVILDAR HIRE RANA, 2nd Battalion 1st King George V's
Own Gurkha Rifles.

For conspicuous gallantry and bold leadership on two occasions.

On the 25th October 1939, he was in command of the forward platoon of No. 14 route piquet (two platoons), east of ANZTALAI, located on a thick wooded spur, where a party of at least 20 enemy attempted to get to close quarters throughout the morning under close supporting fire from another enemy covering party.

Havildar Hire Rana exposed himself freely to dispose his sections and deal with each threat in turn. When the enemy attempted to rush one flank he led a section across and succeeded in shooting down 2 enemy within 10 yards of him.

When ordered to withdraw he boldly extricated his platoon and, when half way back to the covering platoon, led another counter-attack against a closely following enemy party, shooting down 2 at 20 yards, and 3 more endeavouring to get away.

Again on the 28th October 1939, he was in command of the rear-most platoon of the rear guard crossing an open field exposed to continual enemy fire. When a man in his rear section was wounded, he personally went back and removed the casualty's rifle and equipment and remained exposed to persistent and accurate fire till the whole section reached cover.

Throughout the SHAHWALI Column Havildar Hire Rana showed marked initiative, a disregard for his own safety, and was an inspiring example to all ranks.

THE INDIAN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL.

No. 15258 Sepoy JAGIR SINGH, No. 15262 Sepoy Bachan Singh,
and No. 15408 Sepoy Jarnail Singh, all of the 5th
Battalion (Duke of Connaught's Own) 11th Sikh Regiment.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty on
BARRIER RIDGE on the 29th October 1939.

The Commander of their platoon had been killed on the forward side of the piquet occupied by their platoon, and his body rolled about 20 yards down the slope. Heavy enemy fire was directed at the piquet by a party of some 15 enemy about 200 yards from the piquet. Without hesitation and with complete disregard of their own safety, these three Sepoys jumped out of their Sangar and recovered the body of their platoon commander. They were under heavy close range fire for at least five minutes.

INDIA OFFICE.

EMPIRE AFFAIRS

6/12/39 - No.12.

Asks for Substitute of BULLETIN No.6.

BUYING FROM BRITAIN.

For Release No.6 please substitute the following:-

The New Zealand Government placed contracts in the United Kingdom last month to the value of £109,000. (In the previous month such contracts mounted to £38,000).

A considerable proportion of the orders was for war material. One £15,000 order for khaki drill was placed with a Lancashire firm.

STATEMENT FOR PUBLICATION

Since the beginning of the War the Allied Contraband Control has now intercepted and detained approximately 735,000 tons of Contraband. Of this total 476,500 tons have been detained by Great Britain and approximately 260,000 tons by France.

During the week ending December 2nd The British Contraband Control intercepted and detained 13,700 tons of Contraband goods of which there was evidence that they were destined for Germany. This total included:-

- 4,500 tons of Iron Pyrites
- 1,750 tons of hides and skins
- 1,200 tons of coffee
- 2,800 tons of other foodstuffs
- 850 tons of timber
- 500 tons of cotton
- 400 tons of petroleum products
- 250 tons of chemicals

Other commodities detained included oilseeds, oils and fats, calcium magnesite, tanning materials, wool and rubber.

During the fortnight ended 30th November The French Contraband Control also detained 35,300 tons of Contraband. This total included:-

- 18,148 tons of Foodstuffs, and Feeding stuffs.
- 12,651 tons of Metals and ores
- 2,236 tons of Textiles
- 107 tons of Wool.
- 99 tons of Hair
- 107 tons of Timber
- 253 tons of Resin
- 147 tons of Turpentine
- 100 tons of Cork
- 220 tons of Fats.
- 214 tons of Oilseeds.
- 583 tons of Wine
- 273 tons of Chemicals

Other goods included Jute, Sisal, Silk Rubber and Hides and Skins.

STATEMENT GIVEN TO CORRESPONDENTS
at
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC WARFARE
on
December 6th at 3.30 p.m.

On December 2nd there were 80 neutral ships in the three Contraband Control Bases in the United Kingdom, of which 47 had been there for four days or less. This total included:-

21 Dutch	(13 for four days or less)	
18 Swedish	(11 " " " " ")	
15 Norwegian	(8 " " " " ")	
9 Danish	(3 " " " " ")	
6 Belgian	(4 " " " " ")	
2 Greek	(both " " " " ")	
2 United States	(both " " " " ")	
2 Panamanian	(Both " " " " ")	

Also there were one Spanish and one Rumanian ship, both of which had been there under four days; and two Italian and one Finnish over four days.

During the week ending December 2nd the Contraband Committee considered the cargoes of 110 ships which had arrived since November 25th, and the cargoes of 57 ships outstanding from the previous week. The combined total included ships of the following nationalities:-

35 Italian
27 Dutch
21 Swedish
19 British
14 Norwegian
11 Danish
10 Belgian
6 Greek
6 United States
4 Finnish

In only one ship was an entire cargo seized, whilst the entire cargoes of 91 ships were released.

The system under which advance copies of manifests of cargoes are received and considered before the ship's arrival at ports in this country resulted, during the week under review, in 26 ships being^{so} dealt with and 15 of the ships concerned being released by the Committee, subject merely to the formal checking of the original manifests on their arrival at the Control Bases.

6th December, 1939.

No.15.
M.A.F. 111

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ANNOUNCEMENT

Appointments to Poultry Advisory Committee.

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries has appointed two additional Members to the war-time Poultry Advisory Committee recently set up to give advice on matters affecting the interests of the Poultry Industry under war-time conditions. They are Capt. Guy Clifford and Professor T. J. Dalling, M.A., M.R.C.V.S. Capt. Clifford is a Lancashire poultry farmer, who is Vice-president of the National Poultry Council and Chairman of the Lancashire Utility Poultry Society, while Professor Dalling is Professor of Animal Pathology in the University of Cambridge.

"TRUTH WILL PREVAIL"

SOUTH AFRICA COMBATS NAZI PROPAGANDA.

The Union Unity Truth Legion, which has been organised to combat enemy propaganda in South Africa, yesterday fired its first broadside against Nazism, when 100,000 Afrikaans booklets were sent out to all parts of the country.

The Truth Legion is being organised on military lines. Battalions are being formed in every district of the Union, and it is expected that at least 50,000 Legionaries will be enrolled before the end of the year.

Every Legionary will wear the badge of the organisation -- the Torch of Truth, superimposed on the map of Southern Africa, with the motto "Truth will Prevail".

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6/12/39 - No.17.

RELINQUISHED GREAT WAR PENSIONS.

Early in October last, Sir Walter Womersley, M.P., Minister of Pensions, reported the voluntary relinquishment of Great War pensions by a number of public spirited persons, to each of whom he had sent a personal letter of appreciation.

It has now been learned that offers of this generous and patriotic nature are still being received by the Ministry, who have supplied the following extracts from recent correspondence:-

"Having regard to the present National Emergency I shall be glad if you will accept the cancellation of the pension due to me on the 31st December

As time goes on I will see what I can do further in that direction" (Officer's wound pension and retired pay).

"I have now attained a position which does not necessitate drawing further on the pension and, in view of the new claims likely to arise, do not wish to add to the country's future liabilities unnecessarily".
(Disablement pension).

"I feel it my duty to do my bit in the present crisis and, as a thanks offering to the country, I beg to surrender the right to my pension". (Widow's pension of £2.13s.4d. per week).

Ministry of Pensions.

FIJI'S £F3,000 WAR COLLECTION

A remittance cabled to London to-day brings the total amount subscribed by Fiji for war relief purposes to £F 3,000.

Since the beginning of the war the Governor of Fiji has been sending periodically to the Joint Red Cross and St. John's Appeal Fund in London contributions from all communities in Fiji. These have been transmitted to the Governor by the Red Cross Aide of Fiji; a co-ordinating organisation of women formed to raise money as well as entertainments, concerts, etc; and by the Fiji Times and Herald, which has opened a subscription list.

(Note: £F3,000 - Fijian pounds - represents about £2,702 sterling.)

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ULSTER SAVINGS CERTIFICATES
GREAT RESPONSE IN FIRST TEN DAYS

Ulster Saving Certificates (National Defence Issue) were available for the first time on November 22, and during the ten days to December 2 sales reached the remarkable figure of 183,000, representing £137,250. For the week ended December 2, the sales were 137,000 unit certificates.

By arrangement between the British and Ulster Exchequers, 75% of the money raised in these certificates is being made available direct to the British Exchequer for War purposes.

The response to the Chancellor's appeal in Ulster has far exceeded all expectations, and is perhaps the more remarkable because the Savings Organisation is, of course, not yet working in full swing in the Province.

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6/12/39 - No 20

INDIA AND ST. DUNSTAN'S

On behalf of St. Dunstan's Hostel, His Excellency the Viceroy has issued an appeal for contributions to assist in the training, re-establishment and after-care of soldiers, sailors and airmen from all parts of the British Empire, including India, losing their sight in the war.

In his appeal, the Viceroy states that special provision will be made for training Indian blinded soldiers and for assisting them throughout life and that St. Dunstan's services to Indians who may be blinded will be given under the supervision of the Adjutant General through the Indian Soldiers Board.

Sir Clutha Mackenzie, himself a blinded soldier, is to represent the Viceroy for the purpose of organising the collection of funds in India.

ISSUED BY THE INDIA OFFICE

6/12/39 - No. 21.

MINISTRY OF FOOD ANNOUNCEMENT

BUTTER, BACON & SUGAR SUPPLIES.

The Ministry of Food state that any members of the public who have not registered with retail shopkeepers for supplies of bacon and ham, butter and sugar, should do so immediately. Failure to register will cause a local shortage.

Retailers are reminded that customers' counterfoils should all have been sent to the local food office by now.

The Ministry of Food have been advised that many caterers and proprietors of hotels and residential establishments in submitting their preliminary demands for supplies of butter, bacon and sugar have inserted quantities much in excess of their normal requirements. Caterers' demands for these three commodities should be limited to about half of the amounts normally used, and incorrect statements may render applicants liable to penalties and delays.

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MINISTRY OF FOOD

6/12/39 - No.22.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL
SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

THE NATIONAL JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The second meeting of the National Joint Advisory Council composed of representatives of the British Employers Confederation and the Trades Union Congress General Council, which was set up to advise the Government on matters on which employers and workers have a common interest, was held to-day, Wednesday, at the Ministry of Labour and National Service. The Minister of Labour and National Service was in the Chair. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a statement to the Council on the problems involved in the financing of the War.

There were also present the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Sir William Brown (Board of Trade) Sir Alfred Faulkner (Mines Department) Sir Richard Hopkins (Treasury) Mr. E.M.H. Lloyd (Ministry of Food).

A general discussion was opened on the Chancellor's statement and will be continued at the next meeting of the Council to be held on 3rd January.

6/12/39 - No. 23.

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Supply announces that new orders placed during the week ended the 21st November amounted to £12 millions sterling making a total since the outbreak of war £195 millions. During the week 584 new firms were added to the list of contractors to the Department. A number of new factories were authorised for important engineering extensions.

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6/12/39 - No.24.

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE NEWS DEPARTMENT.

The British delegation to the meeting of the Council and Assembly of the League of Nations will include, in addition to those already announced, Mr. Roger Makins and Mr. Peake of the Foreign Office, of whom the latter will be going instead of Mr. Lias as representing the News Department.

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The War Office,

London, S.W.1

6th December, 1939.

The following correspondence has been exchanged between Lord Iveagh and Mr. Leslie Hore-Belisha, Secretary of State for War.

2nd December, 1939.

My dear Hore-Belisha,

My Company would like to offer 150,000 bottles of Guinness as a Christmas present to the British Army in France.

We will have them packed in cases and sent to the Embarkation port free of all charge. It will take, of course, about ten days or a fortnight to get them ready so that we ought to start the preparations at once.

I understand that you would be willing to accept so perhaps you would ask the Quartermaster General to give directions as to the port to the Managing Director, Messrs. Arthur Guinness Son & Co., Park Royal Brewery, London, N.W.10.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) Iveagh.

4th December, 1939.

My dear Iveagh,

Your most refreshing gift will bring great comfort, I hope in time for Christmas, to the British Expeditionary Force, and on behalf of the Army I would like to thank you most deeply for this most generous act of your Company.

Nothing is more remarkable in this war than the readiness with which those at home are trying to make those overseas feel nearer to us. Your gift is an outstanding and most welcome example.

I will put the Quarter-Master-General in touch with you, so that all the details can be arranged.

It is an additional kindness on your part to have the bottles packed in cases and sent to the embarkation port free of all charge.

With my very best and most grateful wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

(Sgd.) Leslie Hore-Belisha.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

6/12/39 - No. 26.

Please do not quote War
Office as official source.

GERMAN RIFLES FOR FINLAND

After declaring quite baselessly that the Finns had been using British land-mines in their fight for liberty, the Soviet war correspondents dwell on the accuracy of the Finnish rifle fire although they declare that the marksmen secrete themselves in trees and behind snow-drifts, rather than offer their bodies as honourable targets to the superior numbers of the Russians. The Russians may be glad to know that many of the rifles have lately been sent to Finland from Germany. These were partly Czechoslovak rifles, which were first sent to a Northern port, and thence by rail to Helsinki. Germany has now, however, offered new rifles at a lower price.

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WAR OFFICE

SIERRA LEONE: £2,000 FOR BRITISH RED CROSS

The Legislative Council of Sierra Leone at a meeting to-day voted £2,000 for the British Red Cross Society.

HITLERISM & CATHOLICISM

A typical piece of German propaganda is attributed by the German wireless to the Prague newspaper "Lidove Listy" which is at pains to deny reports in the foreign press of the persecution of Catholics in the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Since the establishment of the protectorate, the newspaper is alleged to declare, Czech Catholicism has been going through an important internal change and the Czech people are adapting their relations to Catholicism to an entirely new positive foundation.

This is doubtless a reference to the positive Christianity of which Herr Hitler has claimed to be the protagonist in Germany. What positive Christianity means in Germany is only too well known to Protestants and Catholics.

In 1933, Herr Hitler concluded a Concordat with the Vatican. Article 4 of this treaty provides that instructions, ordinances, pastoral letters etc. may be published freely. For years the secret police in Germany have taken effective steps to prevent the publication of any pastoral letters in the Reich. Article 5 of the treaty provides that ecclesiastics shall enjoy the protection of the state to the same degree as officials of the state. Nevertheless, the Pope, Catholic bishops and priests, continue week by week to be the victims of the most scurrilous attacks in German newspapers. Article 23 provides that the maintenance of the Catholic confessional schools and the erection of new buildings are guaranteed. These schools have been abolished by the order of the state. Article 31 provides that care will be taken that members of juvenile organisations regularly fulfil their religious duties on Sundays.

It/

It is notorious that in Germany to-day steps are taken by the leaders of the Hitler Youth Movement to prevent Catholic members from fulfilling their religious obligations. In a word, almost every right enjoyed by the Catholic church under the Concordat has been cynically destroyed by the German Government.

The so-called new positive foundation in Bohemia and Moravia is the positive Christianity of the Third Reich. It is clear that the Catholics there are being treated on the same footing as Catholics in the Reich and no further evidence is required of their persecution.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

6/12/39 - No. 29.

MINISTRY OF SUPPLY ANNOUNCEMENT (CORRECTION)

The Ministry of Supply wishes it to be understood that with regard to the announcement issued today of new orders placed, the figure of £12 millions sterling should refer to the week ended November 28, and not the week ended November 21, as originally stated.

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29 May

6/12/39 - No. 30.

FRENCH OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE

The following official communique was issued
this evening from French G.H.Q.:—

No event of importance to report.

Activity of our patrols.

6/12/39 - No. 31.

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF
THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION.

TWENTY THREE YEARS AGO

by
THE RT. HON. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE.

Wednesday, 6th December, 1939: 9.15 p.m.

MEM. TO SUB EDITORS: As this script is being issued in advance,
it is necessary to check it against the actual broadcast
at 9.15 this (Wednesday) evening on 391.1 or 449.1
metres.

Twenty-three years ago to this day King George V. appointed me Prime Minister of this realm. We were then at the end of the third campaign of the greatest war ever waged amongst the nations of earth. We view this struggle now through the splendour of a dazzling triumph won by the valour and sacrifice of millions. It is difficult to realise that there was a time when not only the Germans, but many neutrals, anticipated or apprehended a victory for the Central Powers, and had every apparent reason for coming to that conclusion. Even strong supporters of the war like Lord Lansdowne expected no better result than a stalemate. Such a time was December 1916. I recall this depressing situation as an encouragement for times when we may be passing through a bad spell.

When I surveyed the task which at the request of the King I has undertaken in the dark winter days of 1916 this was the prospect with which I was confronted.

Three of the Allied countries, Belgium, Serbia and Roumania, had been trampled to the ground by the legions of the Central Powers. The conquest of Roumania with her rich grain and oil fields had temporarily broken a blockade which had been gradually, but surely depriving Germany and Austria of essential supplies. The immense armies of Russia had at last been broken by the hammer strokes of the German artillery. Throughout Russia there was complete disorganisation, despair and disaffection at the front and behind. That great country was seething with the spirit of revolution and could not be depended upon to make any further effective contribution to the winning of the war. The North-Eastern section of France with its important coal mines, industries and cornfields was still in the hands of the Germans. Their armies were firmly entrenched within forty miles of Paris. They were almost as near Paris as Reading is to London. A series of most sanguinary battles fought in 1914, 1915 and 1916 - battles which had cost the Allies millions of casualties - had failed to dislodge them. On the eastern front we had suffered a signal defeat at the hands of the Turks on the Dardanelles, where to save our army from utter destruction, our troops had to escape to our ships in the dead of night. We had been beaten in a pitched battle on the borders of Palestine and in Mesopotamia a British army had been forced to surrender to the Turkish troops.

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In Salonika the Allies were too late to save Serbia from being over-run, or to prevent Bulgaria from joining the Central Powers. Notwithstanding the indomitable courage displayed by the Italian Army in scaling formidable mountain ranges they made but slow progress against the Austrian forces owing to the difficulty of the terrain and the superiority of the Austrian artillery. But the most serious menace of all to the Allies was at sea. The Germans had recently intensified their submarine campaign, with terrifying results.

The intensification of the campaign began practically in September 1916, firstly by the launching of a new swarm of large cruiser submarines, and secondly by attacking ships without warning. The result was that the monthly losses in the last four months of 1916 more than quadrupled the monthly losses of the first eight months of the year. And we knew the worst was yet to come, for there were well-founded rumours that an unrestricted campaign was projected and would soon be started against ships - Allied and neutral - carrying cargoes to Allied ports. It was evident that unless we could cope with this formidable monster of the deep we should be starved into surrender within a year. Already our food supplies had been brought dangerously near the margin of famine. The Admiralty were frankly in despair, and expressed doubt as to the possibility of finding a remedy. They had emphatically turned down as impracticable the proposal which I then made for convoys.

Taking all these things into account it was altogether a dark and well-nigh desperate prospect. There was a general and well-founded feeling that a more vigorous and effective prosecution of the war on all fronts was essential in order to retrieve us from disaster. What was wrong? There was an obvious lack of co-ordination between the various departments and services at home. There was the absence of any real unity between the Allies in their military, naval, aerial and economic efforts. This state of things had so far prevented us from making full use of the superiority in men, materials and strategic position which the Allies either had or could have attained.

I had for some time come to the conclusion that to entrust the direction of the war to a Sanhedrim of some twenty Ministers chosen largely for party reasons and all engaged in the administration of Departments which demanded their whole attention was worse than worthless. After attending to their urgent and important Departmental duties they had no spare time nor strength to master the main problems of the war.

I therefore picked out the best men available from all Parties, who were not charged with any Departmental responsibilities, but whose sole duty would be to survey the whole field of action with a view to grappling effectively with the tangle of difficulties which confronted us on all sides.....

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I created a small Cabinet, about one-fourth of the size of the ordinary Party Cabinets, out of able and experienced men. These formed a Supreme War Directorate. Being free from the detailed responsibilities of administrative control, they were able to give their whole minds and energies to the problems of the war as a whole. They were to meet practically every day to consider the situation, take counsel together as to what ought to be done to win the war, and issue the necessary orders. Having no departmental bias, and that was important, they would be able to assist in co-ordinating the efforts of the various Departments, and to settle the many difficulties and conflicting claims which impeded united and concentrated action. They had to take cognisance of all the many and complicated and vast issues in which victory for the Allied cause as a whole was involved and to arrive at prompt decisions. I set up machinery to follow up these decisions and to see that they were being carried out by the Departments. Any delays were reported to me. Delay hitherto had been well-nigh fatal to our efforts.

Mr. Bonar Law, who was my partner in the formation of this new Government and whose loyalty and unselfishness I always recall with gratitude and genuine affection, was in entire agreement with the line which I took, and courageously faced and tactfully overcame criticism from powerful quarters in his own Party in order to make this reconstruction a reality and not a sham. I also remember with admiration the patriotic and distinguished part played by the late Lord Balfour in this crisis. I was one of those who in 1916 had criticised his administration at the Admiralty. With a magnanimity which is rare, he overlooked all that and subordinated all personal resentments to the salvation of the country and the cause which he loved. I recognise also how much we owed to the bold and courageous course taken in the crisis by Mr. Arthur Henderson and also by Mr. J. H. Thomas. In the formation of the new Government they subordinated all party predilections or prejudices to a consideration of what was essential to saving their native land and the cause of justice throughout the world from unutterable disaster.

Mr. Bonar Law and I, in choosing men for all the most important offices disregarded personal and party claims and selected those who were qualified by their knowledge, their experience and their ability to discharge the duties of their respective offices. We went outside Parliament to pick several members of the Administration because of their special qualifications. When we found that our judgment had not been justified, we had no hesitation in shifting misfits out of their posts, despite all personal or party considerations.

After settling the new Ministers at their various tasks, the first concerted measure we undertook as a War Cabinet, was to give the nation and the neutrals a clear idea as to the concrete aims for which we were fighting - the kind of peace we sought to achieve. The absence of any clear definition of our peace objective was dividing the neutrals, and spreading a feeling of disunion and apathy amongst considerable sections of the population at home.

An Inter-Allied Conference was summoned and met in London on Christmas morning 1916, to formulate the peace objectives for which the Allies were contending. The Germans were seeking to win neutral opinion on their side by a professed anxiety for a peaceable termination of the war. We decided that this peace campaign could only be countered not by vague phrases but by a frank and full statement of our concrete plans for a peace settlement. We published it to the world.

Our outline made a favourable impression on neutral countries, and won many of them to our side, but more especially it had its effect in America and contributed materially to that great country's historic decision to throw in her lot with the Allies. Having made it clear that we were fighting, not merely for victory over our enemies, but for the purpose of establishing beyond challenge certain definite principles of eternal justice and right, we proceeded with our task of winning that victory which alone could enable us to vindicate those principles. The drive all along the line of victory was unintermittent right to the end. In dealing with the submarine menace, we failed to persuade the Admiralty to accept the convoy system. I therefore went to the Admiralty myself and when the Board appeared to be still sceptical, I gave them a direct order from the Government to organise convoys for ships bringing essential commodities to our shores. The effect of that order was immediately shown in an appreciable and growing reduction in the sinkings of our ships. The losses were brought down to a figure which was more than compensated by the gain we achieved by our programmes of ship-building, by reduction of unessential imports, by a thorough reorganisation of all our shipping, port, harbour and other transport facilities. The latter were completely reorganised in order to save the tremendous waste which was due to unbusinesslike control and management of these vital services. These measures enabled us to make the most of our carrying capacity.

We initiated a new campaign for the relentless chasing of the submarines. It was carried on with renewed vigour and more conspicuous success. We utilised to the full the daring and skill of our mariners in every craft and the resourcefulness, ingenuity, and inventiveness of our scientists. As a result the number of submarines sunk in the last two years of the war were more than double the sinkings in the preceding year.

To increase our food supplies a great campaign of increased cultivation of our soil was inaugurated - machinery and manure being supplied by the Government for this purpose. The home-grown food supply of the country was thus substantially increased in spite of the shortage of labour. In the field of military action we had formidable difficulties to encounter in making the most effective use of Allied resources. In the end we were able to attack the enemy in his most vulnerable flanks and above all we secured unity of direction and command in the armies of all the allies and their Navies and also in the distribution of the essential supplies for the Allied Powers. It is acknowledged that unity of command played a decisive part in achieving the final overthrow of the Central Powers. I have no time to dwell upon matters like the setting up of the first Imperial Cabinet in the Empire - not for discussion but for deliberation and action.

I have confined myself to summarising briefly what happened in the crisis of twenty three years ago and endeavoured to give some idea of the effect upon the fortunes of the war. It is always gratifying to me to hear that oft-repeated Ministerial phrase in alluding to some method or measures adopted today, "that was only done in the third year of the last War". That is not to say that everything is now being done that was done in the third year of the war, but my function tonight is to tell the story of the 6th December 1916. I therefore refrain from any criticism of what is being done or not done on the 6th December 1939.

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STATEMENT FOR PUBLICATION

The Ministry of Economic Warfare announces a further extension of the "navicert" system, which is now available for exports to certain European countries from the United States of America, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. Henceforth navicerts will be issued by His Majesty's representatives in these four countries in respect of shipments to Portugal, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, and Hungary, in addition to the countries previously announced, which were: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

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Press Section,
Ministry of Economic Warfare.

GERMAN MALTREATMENT OF THE POLES.

In a recent interview with Lord Halifax, the Polish Ambassador in London, Count Raczynski, informed the Foreign Secretary that millions of Poles were being turned out of their homes at a few hours' notice and deprived of their possessions. Moreover, with a view to breaking the spirit of the population, the Germans had during the last few days begun to execute many of the better-known Polish citizens. The Polish Government had the names of many of the victims, who included the Mayor of Bromberg. Permanent landowners had also been put into concentration camps.

The Polish Government also had information of serious ill-treatment of Poles in those parts of Poland which had formerly belonged to Austria. Cracow itself had been affected by the transfer of populations from the Rhineland, and a Polish ghetto was being created in that city. All the professors of the Cracow University have been assembled, arrested and taken to Germany.

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