

THE MAFEKING MAIL

SPECIAL SIEGE SLIP.

ISSUED DAILY, SHELLS PERMITTING.

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No. 101

Tuesday, March 27th, 1900.

166th Day of Siege

The Mafeking Mail.

TUESDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1900.

HIC JACET Z.A.R. O.F.S.

In another column will be found the text of Lord Salisbury's reply to the despatch from Presidents Kruger and Steyn, in which they offer to stop the war if Great Britain guarantee the independence of the two Republics. In the opinion of any right-minded man the suggestion is an impertinence and it is a source of gratification that Lord Salisbury, backed up by a unitedly firm Cabinet, takes the only view of this proposal likely to be appreciated by those it affects. i.e. the present and future colonists of the whole of South Africa. The most corrupt autocracy and its hideous abuse of trust and the disgusting duplicity with which it has plotted the overthrow of the power on which its existence depended, must have been for the past fifteen years an object lesson for those would-be Republicans whose visionary ideal should, supposedly, effect an improvement upon the constitution we are proud to exist under. His Lordship's declaration that the great calamity we have suffered is the penalty for having hitherto acquiesced in the existence of these "Republics" will strike a unisonant chord in the breast of every loyal subject of the Empire; and the logically following statement that "Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to assent to the independence of either of the Republics" will cause profound gratification throughout that Empire and especially in this portion of it.

By the courtesy of Capt. More we are enabled to publish the following communication which he received from Mr. H. Wallis:—

Goode Siding,
Sunday, 11th March, 1900.

I received yours of the 6th inst. and was awfully glad to hear about you again. On the night of the 25th February the wily Boer evacuated his strong position on the hills round Crocodile Pools and consequently did not reply to our Monday morning's shelling from a brand new bomb proof I erected on Forther's Kopje. We have since moved on steadily, leaving the Johnnies in charge of their positions. The 20 ft. South of Crocodile Pools was messed up in their usual hearty manner and they took out about sixteen pairs of rails between that point and Ramoutsa, and dragged the material with oxen to different places, varying from fifty yards to a mile and half a way. From there to 923 miles no damage was done by Boers, but the weeds and grass have grown enormously all along right up to as far as we have got. I do only five miles a day, weeding. The stuff is quite three feet high and it is impossible to see the road. At 923 miles several pairs of rails were artistically removed and the culvert at Kruger's cottage—just North of Ootsi—was destroyed and a cattle truck of wood tipped into it. Ootsi bridge was all right and so was the road up to a few miles of Lobatsi, where some more rails were taken out and two culverts destroyed. The double culvert at 918 was messed up and seventeen pairs of rails taken out and two sheep trucks buried in the permanent way and filled with muck. Then we came to Lobatsi, which was untouched as far as the road and pumps were concerned;

but the double 20 ft. South of the Siding was blown up and the girders damaged. Singularly enough they did not touch the pier. In the gorge the miserable offenders had irretrievably damaged and blown up three pairs of rails and blown two holes, five feet deep, into the rock formation. This we overcame and proceeded here without further inconvenience, other than the weed nuisance. The Colonel still makes me stable at Lobatsi for the night. He sent out a strong patrol yesterday to Pitsani Pothlugo, when two Boers saw them and bunked like mad. We are told by Natives that the Boers from Crocodile Pools are divided. Some are at Korwe, some at Swatz's farm; some were said to be at Gopani, but we sent two squadrons there and didn't find any. About Natal and Colony nothing but good and heart-inspiring news has arrived. Buller has relieved Ladysmith and killed about 2,000 Boers, but this is not confirmed by the High Commissioner as yet. Lord Roberts is moving on Bloemfontein and has received Cronje's surrender with nearly 10,000 Boers. The old d— surrendered unconditionally, and all outlying Boers are being entreated to fall back on Bloemfontein where they are going to make a stand under Gen. Joubert, of the Transvaal. Kruger has gone to Natal to inspire his forces there with the smug countenance and classical oratory. I fancy they are beginning to pray for the earth to open and swallow them up. Native reports state that they intend clearing across the Kalahari to the German Colony at Wal-fish Bay.

We are now 36 miles from you and are straining our ears to hear the bellow of the 94-pdr.; we have

not been successful as yet. The two niggers you sent me turned up as hungry as blazes, and spake darkly about *soup* and the flesh of the noble companion of man, as food. You people seem to get a heap of news and photos through, for the illustrated papers teem with photos of all you celebrities and your doings. Mr. T is coming down here in a day or two, and I will give him your latest despatch. G. might have written to me as he is doing no travelling at present and one can duck for a shell just as well sitting as standing. I *do* hope the Colonel will make a speedy move and bunk into Mafeking with a crowd of good scoff for you people, and we can stand by and see you feeding once again.

LORD SALISBURY'S REPLY.

London, March 11, 1900.

From Lord Salisbury to the Presidents of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State.

I have the honour to acknowledge Your Honours' telegram dated the 5th of March, from Bloemfontein, of which the purport is principally to demand that Her Majesty's Government shall recognise the incontestable independence of the South African Republic and Orange Free State as Sovereign International States, and to offer on those terms to bring the war to a conclusion. In the beginning of October last, peace existed between Her Majesty and the two Republics under the Conventions which then were in existence; a discussion had been proceeding for some months between Her Majesty's Government and the South African Republic, of which the object was to obtain redress for certain very serious grievances under which British residents in the South African Republic were suffering. In the course of these negotiations the South African Republic had, to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government, made considerable armaments, and the latter had consequently taken steps to provide corresponding reinforcements to the British garrisons of Capetown and Natal. No infringement

of the rights guaranteed by the Conventions had up to that point taken place on the British side. Suddenly, at two days' notice, the South African Republic, after issuing an insulting ultimatum, declared war against Her Majesty; and the Orange Free State, with whom there had not even been any discussion, took a similar step. Her Majesty's dominions were immediately invaded by the two Republics; siege was laid to three towns within the British frontier, a large portion of the two Colonies was overrun, with great destruction to property and life, and the Republics claimed to treat the inhabitants of extensive portions of Her Majesty's dominions as if those dominions had been annexed to one or other of them.

In anticipation of these operations the South African Republic had been accumulating, for many years past, military stores on an enormous scale which by their character could only have been intended for use against Great Britain. Your Honours make some observations of a negative character upon the object with which these preparations were made. I do not think it necessary to discuss these questions you have raised but the result of these preparations carried on with great secrecy has been that the British Empire has been compelled to confront an invasion which has entailed upon the Empire a costly war and the loss of thousands of precious lives. This great calamity has been the penalty which Great Britain has suffered for having in recent years acquiesced in the existence of the two Republics. In view of the use to which the two Republics have put the position which was given to them, and the calamities which their unprovoked attack has inflicted upon Her Majesty's dominions, Her Majesty's Government can only answer Your Honours' telegram by saying that they are not prepared to assent to the independence either of the South African Republic or of the Orange Free State.

Mr Escombe, ex-premier of Natal is dead,

RELIEF! AT LAST!! HURRAH!!!

Corroboration has been received from several sources that our relief from the South, is now well this side of Vryburg. Some boys who came in last night with letters for Mr Weil, reported having seen British soldiers at Vryburg last Tuesday. They are accompanied, he states, by many wagons of food.

Our Thermometer of Hope.

Miles from here.		
0.	Mafeking.	
11.	Madibi.	
24.	Maritzani.	
38.	Kraaipan.	
50.	Maribogo.	
65.	Doornbult.	
80.	Devondale.	
96.	Vryburg.	March 20th
139.	Taungs.	
153.	Phokwani.	
179.	Vaal River.	
223.	Kimberley.	Feb. 9th
247.	Modder Rvr.	Nov. 29th.
279.	Belmont.	Nov. 23rd.
300.	Orange Rvr.	October.

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NOTICE.

AS a register is desired of all horses in Mafeking broken to the saddle and fit for immediate work, in case extra horses should be required by Government for a few hours at a time, all persons having any coming up to the necessary standard, are requested to communicate at once, with the Brigade Transport Officer.

The rate paid by the authorities will be 8s. per diem, and the owner must state the price he wants for his horse if killed whilst in Government employ.

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