

# RISK LIVES TO AVERT ANOTHER DISASTER

## Citizens Board Blazing Munition Ship in Halifax Harbor and Extinguish Fire.

### NEW STORIES OF COLLISION

#### Two Survivors Blame Mont Blanc, and Vice Versa—Confusion Giving Place to Order.

HALIFAX, Dec. 11.—With complete disregard for their own lives, in an effort to prevent another catastrophe, a group of citizens of Dartmouth, opposite Halifax, early today boarded a steamship said to have been laden with munitions, which was afire and was being abandoned hastily by her crew.

The vessel carried a deck load of oil. As she came in close to shore, with smoke pouring from her superstructure, the sight of her fleeing crew stirred the watchers ashore to prompt action. A volunteer fire-fighting force was quickly organized and the burning ship was boarded. After hard work the flames were extinguished. The crew remained ashore today, preferring the scant relief shelter provided in Dartmouth.

Since the explosion on the Mont Blanc crews of French munition vessels are reported to be unwilling to enter Halifax Harbor.

According to statements obtained today from survivors of the Norwegian steamer Imo, which collided with the Mont Blanc, causing the explosion last Thursday, the latter ship flew no red flag to indicate that she carried a cargo of explosives. They declared also that they were not aware that the Mont Blanc was munition-laden, and that when they saw her crew running away they thought it was due to the fire and not fear of an explosion. They asserted the Mont Blanc was coming into the harbor on the wrong side when the collision occurred.

#### A Confusion of Signals.

There was a slight mist, they said, and while in the narrows they heard two blasts, indicating that a ship was approaching on the Halifax side of the harbor, which was the wrong side. The Imo's course was directed toward the Dartmouth side, and while taking that course they heard one blast, which indicated a vessel was on the right side. The Imo attempted to stop, but could not, and the Mont Blanc was struck under the bridge, starboard.

Hope was abandoned today for sixty men who were loading provisions on the steamer Pictou at the Acadia Sugar Refinery at the time of the disaster. There were shells on the ship, and when the fire broke out on the Mont Blanc they decided to put the covers on the holds, though most of them knew the Mont Blanc carried high explosives. As the shocks came the pier to which the ship was moored collapsed, a mass of wreckage. It is believed the sixty men were buried in the ruins.

In order to augment the police force and give the much-overworked constables a chance to rest, a number of prominent men of the city undertook the work of regular constables tonight.

The early confusion which attended the handling of the bodies of the explosion victims has given way to order. Mass funerals will be held daily in the local cemeteries for some weeks to come. Grave digging has been hampered fur-

ther by the heavy frost which succeeded yesterday's snowstorm.

#### Boston Saved the Day.

The American hospital and relief units were working full blast today. Except for the immediate dispatch from Boston of a special relief train the death toll, members of the General Committee declare, would have been greater. Today enough supplies had been received to relieve distress, and the homeless discarded the burned and tattered garments they had been wearing since the munition ship exploded, and felt warm and comfortable again in good clothes.

While trains bearing glass to replace the thousands of windows shattered by the shock are speeding here American surgeons are still picking the broken fragments from the faces, eyes, and heads of hundreds, many of whom may be marked for life or blind. At Bellevue Hospital, where the first Massachusetts relief unit is stationed, surgeons took stock today and found that glass wounds predominated. In one ward are five children, half-blind, and no specialists ever worked harder than they are working to save the eyesight of the little ones, still dazed and terrified by the roar that shook down their homes.

Full praise has been given by the city to Americans for what they have done and are doing. The situation as it relates to the injured is excellent, the General Committee has announced, and the greater task of reconstruction is going forward in a manner which would indicate that in a little while Halifax will be in large part restored.

#### American Bluejackets Help.

American bluejackets, the happiest crowd in this saddened city, turned to and helped put the American relief stations in good shape, and then wanted to know if there wasn't something else to be done. There was, so the jacksies were sent to serve as stretcher bearers.

Arrests of German residents were continued throughout last night and today.

Troops patrolling the ruined area have been ordered to shoot any looter who tries to escape.

Reports of miraculous escapes from death have raised in many minds false hopes for the safety of loved ones, and have been followed by distressing scenes in the devastated district. Half-frantic relatives, indifferent to personal danger, seek persistently for some trace of their families, turning over with their bare hands the piles of brick and wood where their homes once stood. Many return to this occupation day after day, alternating it with repeated rounds of the hospitals and morgues.

#### Found Alive After Five Days.

A man who survived the explosion was found among the ruins today. He was discovered while searchers were removing the debris from the North Street Railway Station. He had been caught between two beams, and beyond a few bruises was unhurt. It is presumed the man had been unconscious since Thursday. When placed on his feet he seemed dazed and asked what had happened. His identity has not been learned.

Since Thursday, Halifax has practically been cut off from mail communication with the outside world. The few officials able to work at the Post Office, with the condition the building is in, have been unable to sort the mails.

#### SENDS \$5,000 TO HALIFAX.

#### Gift of Chamber of Commerce—Money Alone Wanted Now.

The Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York at a special meeting of the Executive Committee yesterday contributed \$5,000 for Halifax relief. It was also directed that letters be sent to the members of the Chamber urging them to contribute individually through the New York Chapter of the American Red Cross.

THE NEW YORK TIMES has turned over to the Red Cross contributions as follows: Private P. W. Hatheway, Fort Wright, N. Y., \$5; A. Louise Erlanger, \$25; Alexander McClane, \$25.

The most helpful gift now is money, it was announced at the headquarters of the Red Cross. This is so because supplies have been sent to Halifax in sufficient quantities to meet immediate needs. Contributions may be sent to the New York County Chapter, American Red Cross, 369 Fifth Avenue, or to Jacob H. Schiff, Treasurer, New York County Chapter, 52 William Street. Contributions as follows were acknowledged

yesterday: Charles M. Hough, \$25; Miss C. C. Hehn, \$10; Mrs. John Woodruff Simpson, \$50; Miss Mary Taber, \$100; Jacob H. Schiff, \$1,000; Mrs. Fitch W. Smith, \$50; Rosalie M. Knapp, \$10; Henry B. Towne, \$500. Total, \$1,745.

Acting Mayor Dowling received a telegram from R. T. MacIlreith, Chairman of the Relief Committee at Halifax, saying:

"Deepest appreciation of prompt and generous action of your city, in common with the other cities in your magnificent country, in coming to our aid at this terrible moment. For the present future assistance should take the form of financial aid."

The Halifax Relief Committee of the Canadian Club, which has headquarters at the Hotel Biltmore, decided to devote its efforts to taking care of and finding homes for children rendered orphans by the disaster. So far the club has raised \$15,000; it has set \$25,000 for its goal. A number of women of means telephoned to the club their desire to adopt or provide temporary homes for children who lost their parents at Halifax.

The Brooklyn Chapter of the Red Cross reported contributions of \$30,100 for Halifax relief. The Atlantic Division of the Red Cross reported \$2,351.75, including \$1,000 from the Van Cortlandt Chapter. Passengers on the Twentieth Century Limited arriving at the Grand Central subscribed \$1,200, which was placed in a safe at the Hotel Biltmore for the Atlantic Division.

#### MONT BLANC CAPTAIN'S STORY.

#### Lamedoc Says Imo Caused Disaster by Disobeying Pilotage Rules.

HALIFAX, N. S., Dec. 11.—A description of what took place on the French steamship Mont Blanc up to and after the explosion is contained in a statement issued here today by the master of the vessel, Captain Lamedoc. He places the blame for the collision on the Norwegian Belgian relief ship Imo.

"We had on board nearly 5,000 tons of freight, mostly explosives," Captain Lamedoc said. "The ballast tanks were filled with water. In the forward hold was stored picric acid; then came a steel bulkhead, and in the next hold was T. N. T., a high explosive. We also had T. N. T. in the third hold. On top of the forward deck were stored about twenty barrels of benzol, over the

picric acid, with a steel deck in between.

"It was a clear morning. The water was smooth, and we were at half speed on the starboard side toward the Bedford Basin. There were no vessels in our course until we sighted the Belgian relief ship Imo coming out of Bedford Basin and headed for the Dartmouth shore. She was more than two miles away at the time. We signaled we would keep the Mont Blanc on the starboard tack going up to the basin, where we were to anchor.

"We headed a little more inshore, so as to make clear to the Imo our purpose. She signaled that she was coming on the port, which would bring her on the same side with us. We were keeping to the right, or starboard, according to pilotage rules, and could not understand what the Imo meant. But we kept on our course, hoping that she would come down, as she should, on the starboard side, which would keep her on the Halifax side of the harbor and the Mont Blanc on the Dartmouth side.

"But to our surprise the Imo kept coming down on the port side, so we signaled again. We saw there was danger of collision, and signaled to stop the engines, at the same time veering slightly to port, which brought the two vessels with starboards parallel when about 300 feet apart.

"Then we put the rudder hard a port to try and pass the Imo before she should come on us, and at the same time the Imo reversed engines. As she was light and without cargo, the reverse brought her around slightly to port. This brought her bow pointing toward our starboard, and, as a collision was then inevitable, we held the Mont Blanc so she would be struck at the forward hold, where the picric acid was, a substance which would not explode, rather than have her strike us where the T. N. T. was stored.

"The Imo cut into us about a third through the deck and hold, and the benzol poured into the picric acid, igniting it and causing a cloud of smoke to arise from the vessel forward. I saw there was no hope of doing anything more and knew that an explosion was

inevitable, so the boats were lowered and all hands got aboard them and rowed for the Dartmouth shore. Pilot McKay went with us.

"In all, there were forty-one men aboard the Mont Blanc. She was headed at the time for the Halifax shore, and toward Pier 8. She was making very little headway, as we had to push the boat away from the side.

"The picric acid was in flames; it did not explode. Meanwhile the Imo had backed away toward the Dartmouth shore. We landed and ran into the woods. About twenty minutes after we left the ship we heard the explosion. It knocked nearly every one of us down, and we were struck by bits of trees and other things, but only the gunner was seriously injured. He has died."

#### CARRIER PIGEON CAPTURED.

#### Apparently Hurt in Explosion—That It Bore German Message Denied.

HALIFAX, Dec. 11.—The capture of an exhausted carrier pigeon which sought refuge in a house near the burned area the day after the explosion was the subject of investigation by the police of Dartmouth and the military authorities. An early report made to Chief of Police McKenzie of Dartmouth said that the bird bore a message "either in German or Austrian."

Later, after the inquiry had begun, the authorities refused to give any information, and Mrs. McColl, a Quartermaster Sergeant's wife, who found the bird, denied that it carried any message. There was a celluloid band on its leg bearing the number "20-20."

The pigeon flew in through a broken window of Mrs. McColl's house and lighted on the shoulder of one of her children. It had apparently been hurt slightly by the explosion, as its feet were bleeding. It was still in Mrs. McColl's possession tonight.