

Scheldt Cost 40,000; Antwerp Port in Use

London, Nov. 29 (CP). — Prime Minister Churchill warned Parliament today that his earlier prediction of Germany's defeat by early summer might have been too optimistic, announced the opening of the great Belgian port of Antwerp to ocean traffic and told of British and Canadian losses in the drive into Holland and Germany.

"In these operations, including the storming of the (Scheldt) Island of Walcheren, which contained episodes of marvellous gallantry and great feats of arms, the British and Canadian forces suffered about 40,000 casualties," the Prime Minister said after the King opened the 10th session of Parliament, fourth longest in British history.

The operations he referred to included the month-long nightmarish struggle by the 1st Canadian Army to clear the Scheldt Estuary so that the port of Antwerp, 40 miles up the winding Scheldt, could be used. Now, said the Prime Minister, it is "receiving the large convoys of oceangoing ships, thus making an incomparable sea base available for the nourishment of the northern group of British armies and the various groups of American armies also deployed in these operations."

While the Prime Minister warn-

ed against his earlier prediction of German defeat being too optimistic, he told the House that the enemy "has everywhere been thrust back" with enormous losses.

War on Last Lap

The war in the west is obviously on the last lap, added the vigorous Prime Minister on the eve of his 70th birthday.

A major breakthrough in the north, he said, would have the highest strategic consequence. But then he added that the Allies had not yet reached the Lower Rhine, much less established a bridgehead there, and that an invaded Germany would be fighting with a desperation that marked Britain's efforts in 1940 and 1941.

So ended one of the most colorful beginnings of a new Parliamentary session since the war began.

King George opened the day by reading to members of the Houses of Lords and Commons the Throne Speech asserting that Britain would "reinforce as rapidly as possible" her attack against the Japanese. The speech voiced "greater confidence than ever before" in final victories.

Then, while the assembly stood, he took the Queen by the hand, and led her from the throne. He wore

the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet; the Queen was attired in black dress and hat and silver fox scarf as a mourning costume for her father, the Earl of Strathmore.

For the 338th time since the Guy Fawkes gunpowder plot, seven of the King's "Beef-Eaters" clad in traditional costume searched the vaults of Westminster before their Majesties appeared between the guard of honor furnished by the Parliamentary Home Guard.

Mr. Churchill was far from pessimistic during his speech, but he warned against "any indulgence in the feeling that the war will soon be over."

He recalled his earlier prediction that the war against Germany might possibly run until late spring or early summer, and then added:

"My present inclination is not at all to mitigate those forecasts, or guesses—for they can be little more

than guesses. Indeed, if I were to make any change in the duration of the unfolding of events, it would be to leave out the word 'early' before the word 'summer.'

Praises Americans, French

The Prime Minister was high in his praise of the American fighting forces, which he said were holding the greater portion of the front and "bearing the brunt with customary distinction and courage." He likewise gave one of his most stirring tributes to the French.

"The vast battle that is in progress in the West has yielded us important gains," he said. "The enemy has everywhere been thrust back. The captures of Metz and Strasbourg are glorious and massive achievements.

"The brilliant fighting and manoeuvring of the French Army near the Swiss frontier, and their forcing of the Belfort Gap and advance on a broad front to the Rhine, is not only a military episode of high importance, but it shows what many of us have never doubted—that the French Army will rise again and be a great factor in the life of France and Europe, and that the French soldier, properly equipped and well led, is unsurpassed among the nations."

Mr. Churchill entered one of his most moving passages when he described the light in the eyes and the alert bearing of the French troops he reviewed at the southern end of the Western front—a scene against the background of a swirling snowstorm and in fading light.

"They were all young men of 18 to 22," he said. "The average age was 20—and what a thing to be a Frenchman 20 years of age: well armed: well equipped: and with your native land to avenge and save."

Expects Christmas News

The Prime Minister said he might be able to expand his military review with "more cheering facts" after Christmas.

"We have to carry the war through to its closing stages with all the energy of unity, not only at home among ourselves but among the great united powers of the grand alliance, who, I am happy to say, were never more closely and intimately and comprehendingly united than they are at this moment," the Prime Minister concluded.

The 13-minute Speech from the Throne said that "In Western Europe my forces from the United Kingdom and Canada and their comrades from the United States, with the valuable aid of the armed forces of my European allies and of the peoples who have risen to meet them, have routed the enemy in a series of decisive battles and are now pressing him on the borders of his own country."

It related advances in Italy and Russia and forecast legislation for a comprehensive health service, national insurance, a new scheme of industrial insurance, family allowances and some measures for the transition period after the war with Germany.

The old session was prorogued yesterday, but that fact was concealed by censorship until today in order not to disclose to the enemy that the Royal family would travel to Westminster again today.

149
WAR
EUROPEAN
1939
EUROPE
INVASION

*Netherlands
Churchill*