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FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1916

ONE CENT PER COPY

LANSING TELLS WHY THE U. S. PEACE NOTE WAS FORWARDED

Reply to German Peace Note Ready Before Christmas

Door Will Likely be Left Open for Germany to Submit Concrete Proposals--Great Britain's Reply Will be Along Lines of Lloyd George's Speech.

LONDON, Dec. 20.—There is a strong probability that Great Britain's note in reply to the German peace proposal will be made before Christmas. This was the opinion in well-informed government circles today, where it is also believed the reply will be brief and will likely follow the lines of Mr. Lloyd George's maiden speech as Prime Minister in so far as it will leave the door open for Germany to make concrete peace proposals.

Great Britain's official reply to Germany as prominent officials preferred to term it, will be despatched simultaneously with that of her Allies. Ever since the German note was handed to the Foreign Office by the American Ambassador, it has been the subject of discussions by the Premier and his cabinet council, which meets daily. The note and the nature of the reply also have been discussed with Great Britain's Allies, and it is stated that these conversations have progressed so rapidly that preliminary drafts have already been made. It would therefore not be surprising if the Allies' replies were ready by the end of the week. Especially, it is said, would this be true in the case of Great Britain's note, which the Prime Minister is declared to be anxious to despatch without delay.

When the terms of the note are definitely agreed upon, and the document is signed by Lord Robert Cecil, who is acting Foreign Secretary in the absence of Mr. Balfour, it may be handed to Ambassador Page with the request that he forward it to the State Department at Washington for transmission to Germany and her allies.

German Chancellor Was Given a Free Hand To Conduct the Teutonic Peace Negotiations

LONDON, Dec. 21.—A despatch to Reuter's Telegram Co. from Zurich says information has been received there from Berlin that Dr. Von Bethmann-Hollweg, in a secret conference with the party leaders preceding his announcement of Germany's peace offer in the Reichstag, was given full powers to conduct peace negotiations without further consultation even with the party leaders.

"The Chancellor," says the despatch, "refused pointblank to give the leaders any detailed particulars of his peace terms, although he stated bluntly that peace terms would not take any consideration of the various expressed wishes of the numerous parties within the Empire."

"When the leaders objected to granting the chancellor's demand for full powers to negotiate, Dr. Bethmann-Hollweg countered with the statement that he would resign forthwith unless his demands were met."

"After a long argument the leaders voted the powers the Chancellor wished, explaining later to followers that they were compelled to do this owing to the fear that if Von Bethmann-Hollweg resigned he would be succeeded by Von Tirpitz."

The British Nation is Ready to Mobilize For National Service Along Lines Laid Down

LONDON, Dec. 21.—While the morning papers give much prominence to American and other foreign comment on Premier Lloyd George's speech, the question of peace was sidetracked today for the discussion of the projected national service. The comment everywhere indicates the readiness of the nation to mobilize.

The description of Rowland E. Prothero, President of the Board of Agriculture, of Britain as a beleaguered country, and his dictum "the war may be won or lost in our cornfields and potato fields," are featured as furnishing the keynote to a situation which calls for the utmost national effort.

FRENCH OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

PARIS, Dec. 21.—The French official statement on the progress of hostilities given out this afternoon by the War Office says there has been relative calm on the front in France, with the exception of aerial activity. Four enemy airplanes have been brought down by French pilots, and French aircraft have been employed in throwing down explosives behind the German lines.

MARITIME MEN IN CASUALTY LIST

Ottawa, Dec. 21.—Casualties among eastern men are reported as follows:

Infantry.
Killed in action—T. B. Blunden, In-den Island, Nfld.
Previously reported wounded, now wounded and missing—Edward Mumford, Halifax.
Wounded and missing—Cyril Bishop, Cupid's, Nfld.
Seriously ill—Alex. Carlson, Black Point, N. B.
Wounded—G. A. Marr, Millville, N. B.

Irish Prisoners To be Released

London, Dec. 21.—The correspondents of the morning papers in the lobby of Parliament believe that a majority of the Irish prisoners interned after the rebellion will be released today.

Their belief is based on inquiries following a sympathetic statement made by Henry E. Duke, Chief Secretary for Ireland, in reply to a question made by John Dillon, one of the Irish leaders, in the House of Commons last night, indicating that the Chief Secretary and the Premier were inclined to release the prisoners.

Mr. Duke said there had been a steady course of improvement toward the appeasement of Ireland in the past two or three months.

Services Dispensed With.

Sergt. Jas. J. Jones and Sergt. John Markey, who had been engaged in recruiting duty in Sunbury and Queens counties for several months, have been notified by Capt. F. F. May, of St. John that their services will not be required after Dec. 31st in the recruiting service. Sergt. Jones intends to conduct a lunch counter in this city. Both men were invalided home from France.

PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT OF THE IRISH QUESTION

Sir Horace Plunkett is Hopeful That an Understanding May be Reached--Will Stimulate Recruiting in the Emerald Isle--Conscription Impractical.

NEW YORK, Dec. 21.—Arriving aboard the Adriatic from Liverpool, Sir Horace Plunkett, the Irish leader, predicted a provisional settlement which will bring Ireland and England into closer harmony, and expressed a belief that Ireland will give between 130,000 and 150,000 more men for the defence of the United Kingdom.

Sir Horace, who has been ill, came here in search of health. "At the start of the war," he said, "political conditions affecting Ireland were so acute that she was slow to realize the importance of the struggle. Ireland has since been awakening to the realities of the war and she will respond with the fullest requirements of patriotism when education has spread further."

"I don't believe recruiting in Ireland has gone as it should. There has been some mishandling of the Irish question by men whose understanding of Ireland was not gained on Irish soil. Through the awakening of patriotism, the difficulties will be solved, and I believe between 130,000 and 150,000 more men will enlist. Conscription is impractical and I do not believe it could be carried through."

Another Premier Named for Austria

Vienna, via Berlin, Dec. 20, to London, Dec. 21.—Alexander Spitzmueller has failed in his effort to construct a new cabinet and the task has been turned over to Count Clam Martiniz, a former minister of agriculture, in whose cabinet Herr Spitzmueller will have the finance portfolio.

Italian Steamship Sunk In Collision

Paris, Dec. 21.—The sinking of an Italian steamship in a collision with the French armored cruiser Ernest Renan, is reported in a despatch from Marseilles. The steamship, which was taking Italian soldiers home on leave, was cut in two. Several persons, most of them passengers, were drowned. The number of survivors is given as 120.

PRESIDENT WILSON'S PEACE NOTE CAME AS GREAT SURPRISE

Did Not Offer Mediation But Seeks An Expression of Opinion From the Belligerents on Peace---Comment of the New York Press.

LONDON, Dec. 21.—The suggestion of the United States for an exchange of views among the belligerents has been received at the Foreign Office, and is now under consideration, pending which no statement will be made.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21.—Distinct surprise was apparent among diplomatic officials in Washington today over President Wilson's plea to the European belligerents to discuss peace terms. Publication today of the note, finished Monday and despatched Tuesday to American diplomatic representatives abroad, gave most officials the first notice that such a step was even contemplated at this time.

Opinion here inclines toward the view that the action would give strong encouragement to some sort of a chance which result in discussion of definite peace terms between the belligerents. It was believed further that since the President seeks only a clarification of peace views and does not offer mediation, the United States will not be in an embarrassing position of the European nations should be unable finally to develop a basis on which to approach each other.

Count Von Bernstorff Appears to be Convinced That Conference Will Be Held

Officials of the British Embassy declared they were wholly unable to explain the President's action.

Count Von Bernstorff, the German ambassador, said: "Now I am perfectly convinced that there will be a conference." He may confer with Secretary of State Lansing today.

NEW YORK, Dec. 21.—The following editorial comments regarding President Wilson's note are printed here in this morning's editions of the newspapers:

The Tribune regrets that President Wilson should at this time have made any gesture which, however honestly intended to promote the cause of peace, will inevitably tend to complicate and not clarify the situation.

The United States Not a Nation Dedicated To the Championship of Noble Principles

In the eyes of Europe today the United States is not a nation dedicated to the championship of noble principles and committed to the support of a just peace. Today and henceforth we have become the agents and purveyors of a German proposal of peace. The nation that did not protest when Belgium was invaded could not wait until the liberation and restoration of Belgium were assured before raising its voice on behalf of, what? Of whatever German purpose lies undisclosed behind the German peace proposal.

The World says: "What may come of the President's request can only be conjectured; but for one thing it cannot be ignored, and the answers must go further than any European statesman has yet gone in defining the objects of the war and the terms of peace. The worst that can happen is that the war will continue without conclusive results; but in the meantime the United States and all other neutrals will have obtained a clearer notion of the measures which they must take if the war is to continue, to protect and safeguard their welfare."

Claims That Wilson Represents Sentiments Of the Majority of the American People

"Of one thing there can be no question, in trying to find a common ground upon which the warring nations can meet, President Wilson represents the sentiment of a vast majority of the American people and that sentiment is without ulterior or selfish motive."

The Herald says: "Despite his disclaimer, the President's action in proposing at this time that the belligerent nations exchange views on possible terms of peace is bound to be construed by the peoples of those nations and by many Americans as having direct relation to the Berlin cry for peace. If the suspicion is not warranted, the responsibility is Mr. Wilson's alone, for the coincidence is striking. It will be surprising if the mere suspicion raised in nations that are fighting for their existence does not militate greatly against the end to which the President is aiming."