

WASHINGTON GROWING MORE CERTAIN THAT WAR IS NEARING AN END

By John Edwin Nevin.
Washington, Dec. 21.—The conviction that peace in Europe was probable tonight because of President Wilson's not to belligerents and neutrals is growing here in the nation's capital.

Administration officials and diplomats of experience so declare. They base this belief on their knowledge that the president's frank declarations of the desire of the people of the country that the belligerents frankly proclaim what they are fighting for must have great weight in Great Britain. And, after all, officials and diplomats alike agree that the final decision is in England's hands.

Germany must accept the suggestion of the head of the greatest neutral state. In effect she already has avowed her desire to end the war and her willingness to make concessions to bring about that result. Her allies will follow her lead to any length.

But whether the entente powers can be influenced to co-operate with real peace conferences still is very-very uncertain.

France and Russia are expected to resent the American note. Naturally, they cannot look with equanimity on conferring with an enemy whose armed forces hold portions of their territory. But Great Britain is in a different position and officials here are hopeful that she will see the advisability of giving the most serious consideration to the suggestions fa-

thered by President Wilson. The president hopes so and Ambassador Page will be directed to use all of his influence to attain that end. And it is admitted that Great Britain can influence all of her allies for any plan that meets her approval.

Officials at the white house and State Department said that the president now will "mark time" and await the responses from his note before even considering whether any further step will be possible. Up to tonight no word had been received of the manner in which the note was received. It was understood to have been delivered to the British and French foreign offices today and State Department officials said that it should reach all of the chancelleries to which it was addressed not later than tonight.

The British and French governments had not yet made the note public in their respective countries so far tonight. It was suggested in diplomatic circles that probably a cabinet council and an exchange of opinion between the allies would precede its being published in any of the entente countries. It is expected that the note will be published in Germany as soon as it is delivered in Berlin.

The suggestion was made in entente quarters tonight that it was likely that the joint reply of the allies to the Teutonic peace suggestions would be completed before any action was taken on the Wilson note in view of the president's emphatic disavowal of any connection between the two propositions. If this is so it may be a week or ten days before any reply is received from the entente.

Capital City of Rumor.
Washington has been a city of wild

rumor throughout today. Following the issuance of a statement by Secretary of State Lansing in which he made it plain that the growing encroachment on the rights of the United States by all of the belligerents was bringing the United States closer and closer to forced participation in the war and that the president's note was virtually in the nature of self-defense, a report industriously was circulated by persons close to the entente embassies and a very few correspondents that the Lansing statement was in effect a veiled threat to Germany. This report gained in strength as it was spread to such an extent that it caused real annoyance both at the white house and the State Department.

Mr. Lansing finally conferred with the president and issued a statement in which he made it emphatically plain that he had never intended to be understood as indicating any change in policy or neutrality by the United States. What he had done, he said, was to show the very direct and necessary interest the United States had in the possible terms which the belligerents may have in mind.

Because of the issuance of the two statements reports were set on foot of friction between the president and his chief adviser. These were declared by everyone in a position to know the facts to be absolutely unwarranted. Mr. Lansing, it was explained, not only was in complete accord with the president in the drafting and sending of the note, but he personally suggested certain changes in the original draft which materially strengthened it.

Lansing's Statement.
The original statement, as issued by Secretary Lansing, was as follows:

"It was not so much our material interests that we considered when the note was prepared and sent but the fact that more and more our rights have been infringed and involved by the belligerents on both sides. The situation had become intolerable to such an extent that it was becoming increasingly critical. I mean by that that we are drawing nearer the verges of the war ourselves and we are, therefore, entitled to know exactly what each belligerent seeks in order that we can regulate our conduct in the future.

"No warring nation had previously been sounded by President Wilson in preparing this note. There was neither consideration of the German overtures or the speech of Premier Lloyd-George in the formulation of the communication. The only thing that the German overtures did was to force the withholding of the communication for a few days although the president did not definitely and finally make up his mind to send it forward until last Monday.

"Of course one difficulty that faced the president was the fact that the note might be construed as a movement for peace and on the side of the German overtures. To prevent this he specifically disavowed this in the communication itself.

"Sending of this note will indicate that we realize the possibility of our being forced into the war. Neither the president nor myself regards this note as a peace note; it simply is an effort to get the belligerents to define the aims for which they are fighting."

The secretary was asked whether he believed that the sending of the note will make for a speedier ending of the war. He said:

"It is possible that it may not but it will indicate that there is a possibility of our being forced into the war and if this government were forced into the war on one side or the other, it would prove a potent factor toward ending the war. This possibility ought to serve as a restraining and sobering force and safeguard American interests."

Following his conference with President Wilson the secretary then issued the following additional statement:

"I have learned from several quarters that a wrong impression was made by the statement that I made this morning and I wish to correct this impression. My intention was to suggest the very direct and necessary interest which this country, as one of the neutral nations, has in the possible terms which the belligerents may have in mind, and I did not intend to intimate that the government was considered any change in its policy of neutrality which it has consistently pursued in the face of constantly increasing difficulties. I regret that my words were open to any other construction, as I now realize they were. I think that the whole tone and language of the notes to the belligerents show the purpose without further comment on my part. It is needless to say that I am unreservedly in support of that purpose and hope to see it accomplished."

The secretary had the hardest day since he succeeded William J. Bryan as secretary of state. This was diplomatic day, when all diplomats may call without previous appointment.

And hardly a single diplomat failed to visit the department for a personal word with the secretary and to ask for himself whether there was anything to be learned that had not been covered in the public announcement.

The German, British, Japanese, Italian and Brazilian ambassadors were among the first to call. They were quickly followed by ministers and charges and for the first time since the outbreak of the war "Eddie" Savoy, the secretary's confidential messenger, was found to open three reception rooms, one for each of the belligerents and one for the neutrals. But even then there was a near collision as just when Count von Bernstorff was being ushered from his conference with Mr. Lansing he came face to face with Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British ambassador. Although before the war they had been very close personal friends, neither evinced the slightest knowledge of who the other was, although the German ambassador said "it was too dark in the corridor" to see anyone.

Entente Surprised.
Each of the visiting diplomats was given an official copy of the president's note, although all were familiar with the contents. They also were told by Mr. Lansing that copies already had been sent to their home governments. The entente representative admitted that they had been greatly surprised by the action of the United States. They had had no warning that the president had any such course under consideration and declined to venture a guess as to the reception the proposition would get when it reached their home governments.

Count von Bernstorff maintained his optimistic attitude. He reiterated his belief that this action would result in a peace conference of the belligerents within a reasonable time. He insisted that the note of the United States is bound to have great weight backed as it will be by the influence of the neutrals.

The neutral diplomatic representatives refused to make any statements for publication pending word from their home governments. They said they had no doubt that their governments would endorse in every way the statements of President Wilson. This was especially so of the representatives of the "buffer" nations—Switzerland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden and Holland. At the latter legation it was said there was no doubt that the people of Holland would applaud the action of the United States and support it in every way.

Senor Riano, the Spanish ambassador, said that he felt "every optimistic" over the outlook for a restoration of peace. The position of the European neutral representatives, judging from their guarded conversation, which distinctly was not for publication, was that they felt that the president had squarely put up to the belligerents the honesty of their professions that they were fighting to safeguard humanity and for their own existence. If this were so, then these diplomats said, the enemies must consent to a peace conference.

Reference to the possible concert of nations was said to be a splendid strategic stroke by the president. It was felt that the majority of the belligerents favored such a plan and that they might see an advantage in agreeing to it.

The vatican is expected to co-operate with the president if given the opportunity. Speaking for Mgr. Bonzano, the papal envoy, Father Burrage, his secretary, said: "President Wilson has taken a good step. We devoutly hope that it will be fruitful in inspiring such further expressions from the belligerents as will open the way for peace. The president's communication should be instrumental in securing from the belligerents such further expressions as will open the way for peace."

The president's action was the subject of much comment at the capitol. Most of the senators and representatives applauded the action, but several of them expressed the fear that the motive would be misconstrued because of the fact that the allies have just practically rejected the overtures of Germany. Senator Hitchcock, Democrat of Nebraska, introduced a resolution, which read:

"Resolved, That the senate strongly endorses and approves the action taken by the president in sending diplomatic notes under date of December 18 to the nations now engaged in war, suggesting and recommending the first steps in possible negotiations to arrange the terms of peace."

"Resolved, That it is the sense of the senate that this action of the president represents the overwhelming public sentiment and earnest desires of the people of the United States."

Senator Borah, Republican of Idaho, a member of the foreign relations committee objected to immediate consideration of the declaration, as he said the subject was of too great importance to allow snap judgment. Then, at the request of the introducer, it was referred to the foreign relations committee.

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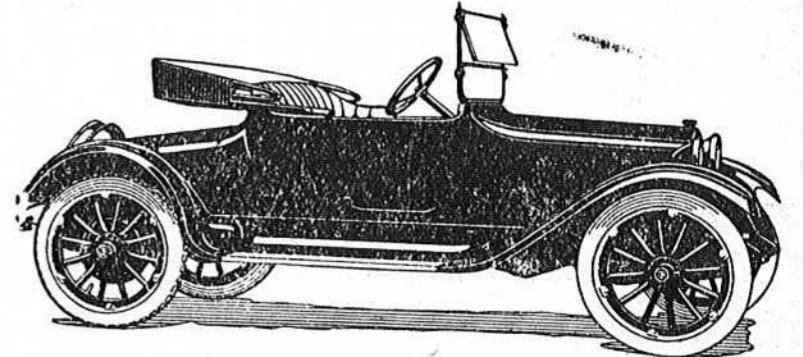
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Senator Borah gave out a statement explaining his position.

"By objecting to consideration of the resolution I did not of course intend in any sense to criticize the action of the president," he said. "He undoubtedly has acted upon full information and after long and mature reflection. But when I cast a vote in the senate upon a matter of this kind it must reflect my judgment.

"We all want peace. Nothing could add more to the happiness of our Christmas holidays than to feel that it was on the way. But I think it will generally be conceded that to want peace and to secure it are two different propositions. The one is a question of sentiment, the other requires a vast amount of judgment. I repeat, I do not find fault with the president. But I want to be informed myself when I take part in the proceedings.

"I sometimes think we do not appreciate what this war is about. We are liable to convince both sides in Europe that we simply want peace, regardless of the worth of it, the reliability of it, or the honor of it. If such an opinion of our attitude, selfish, superficial and indifferent of the interests in Europe, we will have but little influence when the vital hour comes for action. I simply do not propose to cast any vote nor take any step myself until I have given the matter every consideration which it is possible for me to give it."

MASTER'S SALE.

State of South Carolina, County of Clarendon, County of Sumter.

By virtue of a decree of the Court of Common Pleas for Sumter County, in the case of T. E. Hodge, as Administrator of the Estate of Barney R. Hodge, deceased, against Dorothy P. Hodge, Barney Grace Hodge, Susie May Hodge, et al, I will sell at public auction to the highest bidder at the Court House in the City of Manning,

in the County of Clarendon, State aforesaid, on Salesday in January, 1917, being the first day of said month, the following described real estate, to wit:

That tract of land in Clarendon County, in the State aforesaid, containing ninety-six acres, more or less, bounded on the North and East by land of W. L. Osteen, on the South by land of James Smiling, and on the West by the line between Sumter and Clarendon Counties.

Terms of sale: Cash, purchaser to pay for papers.

E. C. HAYNSWORTH, Master for Sumter County.

MASTER'S SALE.

State of South Carolina, County of Clarendon, County of Sumter.

By virtue of a decree of the Court of Common Pleas for Sumter County, in the State of South Carolina, in the case of Combahee Fertilizer Company against Daisy F. King, L. M. King, the City National Bank of Sumter, S. C., The British & American Mortgage Company, Limited, et al, I will sell at public auction, to the highest bidder at the Court House in the City of Manning, in the County of Clarendon, State aforesaid, on Sales Day in January, 1917, being the first day of said month, the following described real estate to wit:

All that tract of land situate in Clarendon County, said State, containing eighty-six acres, more or less, bounded on the North by land of W. C. King; East by land of J. W. Broadway and J. H. King; South by land of Gardner and of Eadon, and West by land of Eadon and of Wilder. The said tract of land being that which was designated as parcel 5 on a plat made by McLellan & Palmers, Surveyors, dated February 6, 1912.

Terms of sale: Cash, purchaser to pay for papers.

E. C. HAYNSWORTH, Master for Sumter County.

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