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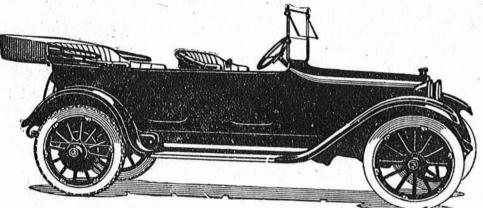
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HOW AMERICA MET

FRENCHMEN IN 1798

Took No Foolishness "in the Brave Days When We Were Twenty-One."

U. S. DIDN'T DECLARE WAR

Poughkeepsie Representative Revamps Measures Passed by Fifth Congress.

Washington, Feb. 25 .- With regard to the widespread belief that President Wilson will ask Congress for authority to arm American merchant ships for protection against submarines in the European "war zone," it is timely to note certain historical have taken that law and copied facts called to the attention of the House by Representative Platt, of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., in support of three bills introduced by himself.

Congressman Platt recounted that in 1798, when England and France were at war and were recklessly disregarding the rights of neutrals, the United States did not hesitate to take aggressive defensive measures, comparatively feeble, though, our country was 119 years ago. The laws and measures then applied to the problem

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were more radical than the President would be likely to ask today.

"Both England and France," said Representative Platt in his speech, were interfering in 1798 with the rights of neutrals on the seas, but the French were doing the most damage at that time, so that our action was taken against France and not against England.

"One of the laws we enacted authorized American merchantmen to arm for defense. Another shut off commercial intercourse with France and provided that no ship leaving the United States should go directly or indirectly to France or to any French dependency or trade with anyone resident in France. I almost word for word, substituting 'Germany' for 'France.' If passed now, it will shut off all commercial intercourse with Germany and will prevent any further disputes with England

"The third law authorized war vessels of America to go out upon the high seas and capture French war vessels or French armed vessels wherever found; and substituting the word 'German' for the word 'French' this bill would give our navy absolute right today to go out and capture or sink German submarines or wherever they may be found."

After explaining that he had himself introduced these three bills with the wording slightly altered to bring them up to date and make thom suit the circumstances, the New York Congressman continued:

"That is what we did in 1798, when we were a little nation of 5,000,000 people, and surely we cannot be afraid to do the same thing to protect our rights now when we are a nation of 100,000,000 people.

"We could do today just exactly what we did then. We did not declare war against France. We did not even formally break off diplomatic relations with France. We had no minister in France at that time, it is true, and there was no French minister here, but there was no formal rupture of diplomatic relations.

"We were nominally neutral, 'although we went on the high seas and captured of sunk eighty-four armed French vessels and had two or three fights between frigates (the battleships of that day) that are famous in the animals of the American navy, notably between the 'Constitution' and the 'Insurgente,' which we captured.

"In introducing the bills which would give the President authority to put a stop to the illegal and inhuman German submarine operations without declaring war, I do not mean to imply that I shall not support him if he shall decide to go further I shall support with my whole energy and adequate measures which the President may recommend for ending the preseit intolerable situation."

sail on February 22, traveling together. Word reached Berlin on February 16 of this intention, and, thereupon, the ship owners were expressly informed that unconditional safety could not be granted for February 22. as there was no certainty that all the submarines engaged in the waters to be traversed would receive the wireless order. At the same time it was insisted that outside the indicated course no guarantee whatever would be given with respect to the danger of mines.

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SAY THAT HOLLANDERS ARE RESPONSIBLE ONES

Berlin Declares Ship Owners Should Have Held -Vessels Till March 17.

'N OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Berlin, Feb. 24 .- (Via Sayville eb. 25.)—An official statement with reference to the sinking of the Dutch steamers by a German submarine is given out through the medium of the Overseas News Agency as follows:

"According to telegrams received from Holland on February 22 at 5 o'clock in the afternoon several Dutch ships were destroyed which, with the agreement of Germany, wanted to leave the barred zone in a westward direction from Falmouth and Dart-

"In answer to this, it is stated in authoritative quarters, that after the declaration of the barred zone, Dutch ship owners asked the British authorities to permit thirty-three steamers lying at Falmouth and Dartmouth, or which twenty were loaded with grain, for the Dutch Government, to proceed out of the barred zone, which were still there after the expiration of the time fixed (by Germany) February 5.

Germany Agreed. "The German authorities agreed to this, making an exception in order to let the twenty cargoes of grain reach the Dutch Government, but the condition was added that the ships ought not to sail later than midnight, February 10-11. In this way the ships would have been able to leave in all safety the barred zone within the extended time, which was known to all submarines, and the termination of the period, February 21-23.

"The Dutch ship owners accepted this offer, but were, for unquestionable reasons unable to get their ships out of the English ports within the alloted time. They renewed their request for permission to sail later and were informed that the vessels could leave Dartmouth and Falmouth either, in full safety, on March 17, or with only relative safety, on Feb-

ruary 22 by an indicated route. "Eighteen of the ships decided to

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