

The St. John Standard

VOL. VIII. NO. 233

TEN PAGES

WEDNESDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 27, 1916

WEATHER—FAIR

PRICE TWO CENTS

GERMANY SUGGESTS AN IMMEDIATE MEETING TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF PEACE TERMS

Washington Not Impressed with the Answer of the Central Powers to President Wilson's Suggestion—Not a Reply at all so Much as Another Shrewd Plan to Place Upon the Allies Responsibility for Continuing the War.

WHILE NOTE DOES NOT MEET REQUEST OF PRESIDENT, WASHINGTON STILL HOPES

With Nothing But Unofficial Text to Go By, United States Capital is Chary of Forming Definite Opinions—Regarded as Revision of Mr. Wilson's Proposals Rather Than As Any Useful Contribution to the Question Under Discussion.

Berlin, Dec. 26.—The text of Germany's answer to President Wilson's note was transmitted today to James W. Gerard, the American ambassador. Germany proposes an immediate meeting of belligerent delegates to discuss peace.

The answer, which also contains the reply of Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, says:

"The high-minded suggestion by the President of the United States, in order to create a basis for the establishment of a lasting peace, has been received and considered by the Imperial government in the friendly spirit which was expressed in the President's communication. The President points out that which he has at heart and leaves open the choice of road. To the Imperial government an exchange of views seems to be the most appropriate road in order to reach the desired result.

"It begs, therefore, in the sense of the declaration made on Dec. 1, 1916, which offered a hand for peace negotiations, to propose an immediate meeting of delegates of the belligerent states at a neutral place.

"The Imperial government is also of the opinion that the great work of preventing future wars can be begun only after the end of the present struggle of the nations.

"It will, when this moment shall have come, be ready with pleasure to collaborate entirely with the United States in this exalted task."

The answer of the Central Powers concludes with the usual diplomatic terms of politeness.

(Continued on page 2)

THE DOMINIONS WILL BE CALLED TO AN EMPIRE WAR CONFERENCE

Matters Affecting the Prosecution of the War, Possible Conditions of Peace, and Problems of the Future to Engross Attention of Imperial Council Board — Meeting Not Later than February.

London, Dec. 26.—The secretary of state for the colonies has sent a telegram to the dominions explaining the purposes of the forthcoming imperial conference, announced by Premier Lloyd George. The telegram explains that what the government contemplates is not an ordinary imperial conference, but a special war conference of the Empire.

The prime minister of each of the dominions is "invited to attend a series of special meetings of the War Cabinet, in order to consider urgent questions affecting the prosecution of the war, possible conditions on which, in agreement with our Allies, we could assent to its termination, and problems which would then immediately arise."

The premiers are urged to attend at an early date—not later than the end of February.

Ottawa, Dec. 27.—In a cable to the governor-general, given out tonight, the prospective imperial conference is a special war conference to deal with war problems. The attendance of the prime minister is urged. The cable reads:

"I wish to explain that what is contemplated by His Majesty's government is not a session of the ordinary imperial conference, but a special war conference of the Empire. His Majesty's government therefore wishes your prime minister to attend a series of special and continuous meetings of the war cabinet, in order to consider urgent questions affecting the prosecution of the war, the possible conditions on which, in agreement with our Allies, we could assent to its termination, and the problems which will then immediately arise. Your prime minister for the purpose of these meetings, would be a member of the war cabinet. In view of the extreme urgency of the subject of discussion, as well as of their supreme importance, it is hoped that your prime minister may find it possible, in spite of serious inconveniences involved in attending at an early date, not later than the end of February.

While the presence of your prime minister himself is earnestly desired by His Majesty's government, they hope that if he sees insuperable difficulties he will carefully consider the question of nominating a substitute, as

GERMANY WILL NOT SELL SHIP SHARES.

Amsterdam, Dec. 26, via London, (6 p. m.)—The Frankfurter Zeitung reports that the Bundesrath has forbidden the sale abroad of German shipping shares, the object being to prevent an undesirable foreign influx in German shipping.

The New Grit Propaganda

During the past couple of weeks the newspapers playing the game of the machine wing of the Canadian Liberal party have engaged in an attempt to convince the people that the Federal Government is not embracing to the full the opportunities for Empire service, that what is wanted is a National Government in the sense of a coalition government, and that until some such movement is made the people have an excellent excuse for not throwing themselves with might and main into the business of prosecuting our necessary war measures.

It is a transparent political trick. The Liberals were planning to force an election by refusing to extend the term of Parliament in the hope that, by means of a solid Quebec and such disaffection as they were able to arouse in the other provinces, they would snatch the reins of power, not for a business or a non-political government, but for the old gang back again.

Notice was served upon the Quebec leaders that a portion of the Ontario wing of the party and many of its western members would stand by them. Filled in this, they are now attempting to pave the way for a refusal to extend the term of Parliament unless a so-called "non-partisan administration" is brought into power.

It is time that the thinking men of both political parties asked themselves these questions: Would Sir Wilfrid Laurier be an addition of any value to the present Government?

Would he draw a single additional recruit from the province of Quebec, or does he even sincerely desire to do so?

Has he a single Quebec colleague to whom the people of Canada would give credit for either the ability or the desire to place patriotic welfare above party advantage?

Outside of that province, where are the men the Grit party has to offer? Is there one of them, who, in the hour when Sir Robert Borden placed the need of Empire before the Parliament of Canada, did not rise in his place and vote against participation in assistance to the British navy?

There was no peril, they cried; these men of little vision failed to sense the danger until civilization burst into flames before them.

Yet today their organs assert lack of leadership in the present Government, a failure to bring forth recruits, a want of ability to marshal Canada's resources in the Empire's interest.

When have these detractors of Sir Robert Borden and his Government gained a genius of leadership?

What miracle has given them the foresight which they so conspicuously lacked when the Naval Aid Bill was before the House of Commons?

Would the restoration of the Fieldings, the Grahams the Carvells, the Pugsleys and the Macdonalds, to even a share of power, prevent them from again attempting to conduct the business of the country along lines subservient to their party interests?

Where, outside of the two political groups, are there in Canada the men whom the Toronto Star and its fallen sisters of Canterbury street would place in office?

Why not bring forth the names and give the people an opportunity of passing judgment upon a concrete suggestion? The answer is obvious. It would not be playing the game of the little politicians to open places except for those of their kind.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier had better pick the beam out of his own eye before he attempts to pluck the mote out of that of his neighbor.

Public men are judged by the results they accomplish and when Sir Wilfrid and his associates can point to "a solid Quebec" contributing another Canadian division at the front through the efforts of these men, then, not until that day, will Canada be willing to tolerate for an instant the idea of calling to her councils the men who have miserably failed to appreciate their God-sent opportunity to help the Empire.

NEW YORK HEARS REPORTS OF MYSTERIOUS SQUADRON IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

New York, Dec. 26.—For some days skippers of the Atlantic and coastwise steamers have been bringing to port reports of strange appearing craft that are making their way westward. They made no reply to signals, and could not be approached. They steered a vagrant course, and were described variously as of the fashion of merchantmen, transports, light cruisers and even of submarines.

Pieced together, these reports fitted in with the suspicion, now apparently confirmed, of shipping men.

The commerce protectors are described as large and powerful, but capable of fair speed. They were designed, it is said, to meet the German sub boats, and in anticipation of an attempted raid off the Canadian coast similar to that made by the U-53 off Nantucket on October 8. The British admiralty, it is said, determined to make impossible another such raid, and the fleet of commerce protectors was the result.

TORNADO KILLS 70 IN SOUTH

Arkansas Storm Swept—Seventeen Known Dead at One Place — Convicts Among Victims.

Little Rock, Dec. 26.—From 17 to 70 persons were killed in a tornado that struck South Central Arkansas, this afternoon, according to reports received here tonight. Four are known to be dead at England; 17 reported killed at Keo, and several are reported killed at the state convict farm at Tucker.

BRITISH ARE POUNDING AT HUNS IN WEST

Report from British Headquarters in France Shows that our Troops Continue Their Aggression.

London, Dec. 27.—The official report from British headquarters in France tonight reads:

"Some fifty Germans approached our lines Monday night in the neighborhood of Lesbouef. Eighteen of them were taken prisoner; the remainder suffered heavy casualties from our machine guns.

"Monday night we entered trenches northeast of Armentieres and drove off an enemy working party. The enemy positions east of Ploegsteert were also raided; casualties were inflicted upon the enemy and prisoners were secured.

"In the neighborhood of Lesbouef and Gueudecourt we bombarded the enemy trenches during the day, with satisfactory results.

"At other places along the front artillery activity has continued.

"On the night of December 24-25 our airplanes carried out successful bombing operations on places of military importance behind the enemy's lines."

BERLIN HAD ADVANCE INFORMATION OF THE REPLY TO WASHINGTON

Answer to President Wilson's Peace Note Given Out Before it Officially Reached U. S. Capital.

Washington, Dec. 26.—Officials here are surprised that Germany's answer to President Wilson's peace note was given out in Berlin before it reached this country in official form.

They pointed out that in sending his note President Wilson allowed two days between the time of its despatch and making it public, that it might first reach the German government. In the absence of an official reply official comment was withheld.

ROUMANIA STILL CONTINUES THEATRE OF MUCH ACTIVITY; LITTLE INTEREST IN PEACE

Premiers of Great Britain's Colonies to Attend Special War Conference During the Month of February.

British Score Successes in Mesopotamia and Against the Turks, Capturing Guns and Material—Russians Holding their Own in Dobrudja While Italians Make Minor Gains Over Austrians.

Roumania continues the theatre of greatest activities. In Northern Wallachia, along the southern Moldavian border, and in Dobrudja the Teutonic allies continue to make gains over the Russians and Roumanians. Thirty miles southwest of Braila the invaders have captured the town of Filipesti, and west of Rimnik Sarat are on the offensive. In this latter region during the past few days 5,500 Russians have been made prisoners.

In Mesopotamia the British forces are still in quest of Kut-el-Amara in which sector they have made further advances on the right bank of the Tigris and consolidated and extended their position south and east of the town. Gassabs Fort, twenty miles southeast of Kut, a base from which hostile Arabs had been operating against the British, has been destroyed.

The British victory over the Turks at Maghdaba, ninety miles east of the Suez Canal, was of considerable proportions. In addition to making prisoner of 1,350 men of the Turkish force of about 2,000, seven guns, a large number of rifles, much ammunition and large quantities of other war stores were captured.

On the other fronts there have been only artillery engagements. The Teutonic allies are favorable to an immediate meeting of delegates from the belligerent states at some neutral point in order that an exchange of views with regard to peace may be carried out.

This has been declared by the German government, in replying to the recent note of President Wilson suggesting that the belligerent nations make known their basis for peace. It is announced, in the note, that Germany is of the opinion that the work of preventing future wars can be begun only after the end of the present struggle, but that then Germany will be ready to collaborate with the United States "in this exalted task."

Nothing has yet come through to indicate what will be the tenor of the reply of the Entente Allies to President Wilson's suggestion, and so far as is known, none of them has yet given an answer to the announcement made to them in the note of the Teutonic allies that Germany is ready to discuss peace.

Meantime the premiers of Great Britain's colonies have been urged to attend at an early date—not later than the end of February—a series of special meetings of the war cabinet. At these meetings, says the British colonial secretary, "urgent questions affecting the prosecution of the war, possible conditions on which, in agreement with our allies, we could assent to its termination and problems which would then immediately arise," are to be discussed.

Artillery Fighting in West.

Paris, Dec. 26.—The war office bulletin issued tonight reads: "There was great activity by both artilleries in the sectors of Belloy-En-Santerre and Fouquescourt. Everywhere else the cannonade was intermittent."

The Belgian communication: "The usual artillery activity prevailed."

Germans Claim Success.

Berlin, Dec. 26, via Sayville.—The Russians have been driven from several positions in northeastern Wallachia, says tonight's army headquarters statement on operations, which reads:

"On the north bank of the Somme there was temporarily strong artillery fire. Elsewhere on the western and eastern fronts nothing important occurred.

"In Great Wallachia the Russians were ejected from several positions. "Conditions in Macedonia were calm."

Italians Gain 300 Metres.

Rome, Dec. 26, via London, (5.20 p. m.)—"There have been desultory actions along the whole front, interrupted by bad weather," says today's war office statement.

"On the Carso, south of Montefeltro, we straightened our lines by a surprise advance to a depth of 300 metres. In one of the crater-like holes in the area occupied by us we found 150 cases of artillery ammunition which had been abandoned by the enemy."

British in Mesopotamia.

London, Dec. 26.—An official statement on the Mesopotamia situation issued tonight reads:

"On the 22nd British detachments advanced to the right bank of the Tigris. Their position subsequently

BRITISH HOLD A GREEK LINER AT GIBRALTAR

The Patris with 600 Passengers from Piraeus to New York Detained Pending Blockade.

New York, Dec. 26.—The Greek line steamship Patris, with 600 passengers aboard, bound from Piraeus to New York, is detained by the British at Gibraltar, it was learned today from N. A. Galanos, local agent of the line.

"We have been officially informed by the British government that the Entente Allies have declared a blockade against Greek shipping," said M. Galanos. "The Patris, we presume, will be detained until the blockade is lifted." The liner is several days overdue.