

communicated to the Servian Government, and since the first steps taken by Russia, five days had elapsed, and yet the Vienna Cabinet had not taken one step to meet Russia half-way in her efforts towards peace. Indeed, quite the contrary; for the mobilisation of half of the Austro-Hungarian army had been ordered.

The German Government were kept informed of the steps taken by Russia. At the same time it was explained to them that these steps were only the result of the Austrian preparations, and that they were not in any way aimed at Germany. Simultaneously, the Russian Government declared that Russia was ready to continue discussions with a view to a peaceful settlement of the dispute, either in the form of direct negotiations with Vienna or, as suggested by Great Britain, in the form of a conference of the four Great Powers not directly interested, that is to say, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy.

This attempt on the part of Russia was, however, equally unsuccessful. Austria-Hungary declined a further exchange of views with Russia, and the Vienna Cabinet was unwilling to join the proposed conference of the Powers.

Nevertheless Russia did not abandon her efforts for peace. When questioned by the German Ambassador as to the conditions on which we would still agree to suspend our preparations, the Minister for Foreign Affairs declared that these conditions were Austria's recognition that the Austro-Serbian question had assumed a European character, and a declaration by her that she agreed not to insist upon such of her demands as were incompatible with the sovereign rights of Servia.

Germany considered this Russian proposal unacceptable to Austria-Hungary. At that very moment news of the proclamation of general mobilisation by Austria-Hungary reached St. Petersburg.

All this time hostilities were continuing on Servian territory, and Belgrade was bombarded afresh.

The failure of our proposals for peace compelled us to extend the scope of our precautionary military measures.

The Berlin Cabinet questioned us on this, and we replied that Russia was compelled to begin preparations so as to be ready for every emergency.

But while taking this precautionary step, Russia did not on that account abandon her strenuous efforts to find some solution of the situation, and she announced that she was ready to accept any pro-