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"Certain less favourable symptoms having appeared in the international situation, the Government has decided to be prepared for all eventualities and not to permit any military leave for the time being." Troop dispositions, transport facilities and frontier defenses were further organized. The Dutch Government later ordered a complete black-out in future at Den Helder, the naval base facing the island of Texel. On January 17th announcement was made in the official gazette that the areas already under a "state of siege" (see despatch No. 107 of Nov. 3, 1939) has been extended in certain coastal areas in South Holland province.

10. Notwithstanding these precautionary measures, reinforcing those taken at the time of the November crisis and constantly improved since then, the Dutch press and people were unexcited by the fresh developments and remained much more calm than in November. They seemed far less convinced, over this week-end, of the gravity of the new menace than they had been on the former occasion in November last.

4. A Bluff?

11. By Tuesday the 16th and Wednesday the 17th there was a growing tendency to suspect that this present crisis was an elaborately staged "scare" by Germany, to threaten the Low Countries once more into an acquiescent and compliant attitude and to compel them, under threat, to yield to German economic and commercial demands. This view obtained currency in France, England and the United States. The London TIMES, for example, stated on Jan. 16th:

" It is remembered that the Germans manufactured an elaborate scare last November, when the Low Countries had quite naturally to take precautions. It would not be the first time that the Germans, adepts at threats and bullying, had kept small countries in a state of false alarm for a long time in order that, when the real danger was suddenly upon them, they should be off their guard .... There are some who believe the present heightened tension to be due simply to a variant of the same tactics - particularly as the Germans are reported