

BALKED HOPES OF ARMAMENTS REDUCTIONS

The 1912 Negotiations Between Britain and Germany Fell Through. All Possible Offers Made.

London, Sept. 4.—The British foreign office tonight issued a lengthy statement concerning the negotiations between Great Britain and Germany in 1912, compiled from the official records in the foreign office. The statement follows:

"An account of the 1912 Anglo-German negotiations was published in the semi-official Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung last month. This account was misleading and no doubt was intended to mislead. It made it appear that the British government had at that time rejected what would be regarded in many quarters as a reasonable offer of friendship from Germany. In these circumstances it may be well to publish a statement of facts compiled from the official records here.

The German Proposals.
"Early in 1912 the German chancellor sketched to Lord Haldane (then British Lord High Chancellor) the following formula as one which would meet the views of the Imperial government:

"First: The high contracting parties assure each other mutually of their desire for peace and friendship.

"Second: They will not, either of them, make or prepare to make any unprovoked attack upon the other or join in any combination or design against the other for the purposes of aggression; or become a party to any plan of naval or military enterprise, alone or in combination with any other power, directed to such an end, and declare themselves not to be bound to any such engagement.

"Third: If either of the high contracting parties becomes entangled in war with one or more powers in which it cannot be said to be the aggressor, the other party will at least observe toward the power so entangled benevolent neutrality, and will use its utmost endeavor for the localization of the conflict. If either of the high contracting parties are

forced to go to war by obvious provocation by a third party they bind themselves to enter into an exchange of views concerning their attitude on such a conflict.

Duty Of Neutrality.
"Fourth: The duty of neutrality which arises out of the preceding article has no application insofar as it may not be reconcilable with existing agreements which the high contracting parties already have made.

"Fifth: The making of new agreements which render it impossible for either of the parties to observe neutrality towards the other beyond what is provided by the preceding limitation, is excluded in conformity with the provisions of Article 2.

"Sixth: The high contracting parties declare they will do all in their power to prevent differences and misunderstandings arising between them and other powers.

One-Sided Conditions.

"These conditions, although in appearance fair as between the parties, would have been grossly unfair and one-sided in their operation. Owing to the general position of the European powers and the treaty engagements by which they were bound, the result of Articles 4 and 5 would have been that while Germany, in case of a European conflict, would have remained free to support her friends, this country would have been forbidden to raise a finger in defence of hers.

"Germany could arrange without difficulty that the formal inception of hostilities should rest with Austria. If Austria and Russia were at war Germany would support Austria, as is evident from what occurred at the end of July, 1914, while as soon as Russia was attacked by two powers France was bound to come to her assistance. In other words, the pledge of neutrality offered by Germany would have been absolutely valueless, because she could always plead the necessity of fulfil-

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ling her existing obligations under the triple alliance as an excuse for departing from neutrality.

Britain Would Be Tied.

"On the other hand, no such departure, however serious the provocation, would have been possible for this country, which was bound by no alliances, with the exception of those of Japan and Portugal, while the making of fresh alliances was prohibited by Article 5. In a word as appeared still more evident later, there was to be a guarantee of absolute neutrality on one side, but no on the other. It was impossible for us to enter into a contract so obviously inequitable and the formula was accordingly rejected by Sir Edward Grey (the British foreign minister.)

"Count Paul Wolf-Metternich (then German ambassador to Great Britain) upon this pressed for counter-proposals which he stated would be without prejudice and not binding unless we were satisfied our wishes were met on the naval question. On this understanding Sir Edward Grey on the 14th of March, 1912, gave Count Wolf-Metternich the following draft formula, which had been approved by the cabinet:

Britain's Promise.

"Britain will make no unprovoked attack upon Germany and pursue no aggressive policy towards her. Aggression upon Germany is not the subject and forms no part of any treaty, understanding or combination to which Britain is now a party, nor will she become a party to anything that has such an object."

"Count Wolf-Metternich thought this formula inadequate and suggested two alternative additional clauses: "Britain will therefore observe at least benevolent neutrality should war be forced upon Germany, or

Britain will therefore, as a matter of course, remain neutral if war is forced upon Germany."

Depended On Naval Program.

"This, he added, would not be binding unless our wishes were met with regard to the naval program. Sir Edward Grey considered that the British proposals were sufficient. He explained that if Germany desired to crush France, Britain might not be able to sit still, though if France were aggressive or attacked Germany no support would be given by His Majesty's government or approval by Britain.

"It is obvious that the real object of the German proposal was to obtain the neutrality of Britain in all eventualities, since should war break out Germany would certainly contend that it had been forced her and would claim that Britain should remain neutral.

"An admirable example of this is the present war, in which, in spite of the facts, Germany contends war has been forced upon her. Even the third member of the triple alliance who had sources of information not open to us, did not share this view, but regarded it as an aggressive war.

Desire For Peace.

"Sir Edward Grey eventually proposed the following formula:

"The two powers being mutually desirous of securing peace and friendship between them, Britain declares that she will neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack upon Germany. Aggression upon Germany forms no part of any treaty, understanding or combination to which Britain now is a party, nor will she become a party to anything that has such an object."

"Sir Edward Grey when he handed this formula to Count Wolf-Metternich, said that the use of the word neutrality would convey the impression that more was meant than was warranted by the text. He suggested that the substance of what was required would be obtained from the more accurately expressed words 'will neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack.'

German Naval Bill Figured.

"Count Wolf-Metternich thereupon received instructions to make it quite clear that the chancellor could recommend to the Emperor to give up the essential parts of the Novelle, (the bill then pending for an increase of the German navy) only if we could conclude an agreement guaranteeing neutrality of a far-reaching character and leaving no doubt as to any interpretation. He admitted that the chancellor's wish amounted to a guarantee of absolute neutrality failing which the Novelle must proceed.

"Count Wolf-Metternich stated that there was no chance of a withdrawal of the Novelle, but said that it might be modified. It would be disappointing to the chancellor if we did not go beyond the formula we had suggested. Sir Edward Grey said that he could understand that there would be disappointment if His Majesty's government were to state that the carrying out of the Novelle would put an end to the negotiations and form an insurmountable obstacle to better relations. His Majesty's government did not say this, and they hoped that the formula which they had suggested might be considered in connection with the discussion of territorial arrangements, even if it did not prove effective in preventing an increase in the naval expenditures.

Hope Of Reduction Gone.

"Sir Edward Grey added that if some arrangement could be made between the two governments it would have a favorable, though indirect effect, upon naval expenditures, as time went on, it would have more over a favorable direct effect on the public opinion of both countries. "A few days afterwards Count Wolf-Metternich communicated to Sir Edward Grey the substance of a letter from the chancellor, in which the latter said that as the formula suggested by His Majesty's government was, from the German point of view, insufficient, and as His Majesty's government could not agree to the larger formula for which he had asked, the Novelle must proceed on the lines on which it had been presented to the Federal Council. "The negotiations then came to an end, and with them the hope of a mutual reduction in the expenditures for armaments by the two countries."

ON KEEPING COOL

It is one of the claims of militarists that a regime of discipline, drilling and obedience to orders tends to a better physical and mental development. The man is improved and his judgment is made cooler and more rational. Much of this is no doubt quite true. Certainly any regulated exercise and orderly life in the open air is beneficial. But the attitude of intolerance and irritation evinced by the great majority of militarists towards all who venture to differ with them, the tendency to accuse the pacifist of cowardice or to proclaim him a misguided crank and faddist seek to refuse the claim that military discipline has a sobering mental effect or tends to cool and dispassionate thought. Canada, for example, does not seem to possess a war editor at the moment who can refrain from abusing a pacifist opponent instead of attempting to discuss the merits of the matter which may happen to have brought about a difference of opinion.

No doubt many advocates of militarism are sincere in their abuse; nearly all, we think, are sincere in their conviction of the necessity of larger armaments as the best means of maintaining peace. There are some who are interested otherwise in the creation of larger armies and navies, but with these there is no argument for limitation that can hope to succeed.

Time will come after the present war when Canadians along with the people of many other countries will be divided into militarists, and by this is meant preparedness, and pacifists, or those who put the most emphasis on principles and on international law and comity as a mode of settling disputes. The present attitude of militarists, however, is such as to lead the thoughtful and impartial observer to the conclusion that the big armament advocates in putting so much emphasis on patriotism and justice and honor are convincing themselves that the pacifist is not influenced by these things. It is a peculiar mental condition that assumes that because a neighbor differs from you in a matter of public policy he is a coward and a traitor, a crank, or a faddist, or a sneak, or a combination of everything antagonistic to the things that honorable citizens hold dearest. The pacifist does not want the flag dishonored any more than the militarist does; he is just as patriotic, just as determined to maintain national honor and integrity, just as jealous of his liberties as is the militarist. But he thinks he sees a better way of securing and maintaining national rights, a more humane way, a more Christian way. While the militarist puts his faith in big guns and death dealing instruments of all kinds the pacifist places his hope in what may be termed the spiritual forces.

The question should be discussed on its merits if there is not to be continued strife and bickering, with an unnecessary amount of abuse on the one side. The pages of history both ancient and contemporary are open, all the precedents are available for our guidance and the opinions of many great minds are obtainable. Nothing seems lacking for an instructive discussion of this great question but common courtesy on the part of one of the debaters who has hitherto shown a tendency to substitute violence of language for argument and to emphasize his belief in the insincerity of his opponent while arrogating to himself all the virtues involved in the issue.—The Citizen.

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