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THE WORLD'S PROGRESS

THROUGHOUT England and, indeed, the whole British Empire, the most absorbing topic at present is the prospect for peace in South Africa. After two and a half years of persistent fighting, including a long series of skirmishes during the past winter, the war situation gave promise, in the early part of April, of a speedy termination, and rumors to that effect, received first with diffidence, have since gained in strength and have inspired confidence among the British people.

The Peace Conferences

On the 10th of April, Acting President Schalkburger, Mr. Steyn, and Generals Botha, De Wet, and Delarey, with other Boer leaders, gathered at Klerksdorp, near the scene of the Hart's River engagement in which the Canadian soldiers distinguished themselves, to confer on peace terms with the British authorities. Later sessions were held at Pretoria. Chief among the demands made by the Boer leaders were independence, remuneration for property, complete amnesty, and withdrawal of the banishment proclamation. They consented to surrender, but they asked very handsome terms. On the first of these points they were willing to compromise, but they insisted upon the two last, which the British quite as firmly declined to grant. The Boer chiefs, thus brought to realize that Britain meant to

stand firm, and that they would receive no better terms—realizing also that the ultimate defeat of the rebel cause was certain, finally accepted the situation, and when promised by Lord Milner one or two seats in the Legislative Council, they practically agreed to the British terms. It is a precept of the Boers, however, that all peace treaties must be referred to the Volksraad, and this body being now non-existent the delegates were obliged to “go to the country” and put before their commandoes, for their approval, the decision which had been thus reached by the leaders. The delegates then visited each district of the Transvaal and Orange Free State in rotation, the burghers having previously been summoned to meet them. After this appeal to the people had been completed, there was a conference on May 15th at Vereeniging, near Pretoria, when a final decision was to be made. It is confidently expected that this decision will be for peace, and at the present writing a cessation of hostilities is looked for early in June. The burghers are hardly likely to seriously oppose their leaders, and the prospect for peace is much more certain than at any previous time in the war.

Britain's Plans and Methods

Meanwhile there has been no cessation of military activity. The British Government had already made arrangements for