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WEATHER—UNSETTLED

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WASHINGTON DISCLAIMS INTENTION OF ENTERING WAR—LANSSING'S BAD BREAK; VIOLENT BATTLE IN NORTHERN DOBRUDJA

UNITED STATES SAYS NO THREAT MADE

President Wilson and His Secretary of State Confer Regarding Latter's Alleged Statement That Republic Might be Neutral No Longer—Lansing's Bad Break Causes Consternation Throughout the World.

President Wilson's "Peace" Note Declared by Washington to be a "Hit Around the Whole Circle," Without Intention of Favoring or Condemning Either Entente Allies or Central Powers, "To Prejudice of the Other."

Washington, Dec. 21.—President Wilson's note to the belligerents, urging discussion of peace, was officially interpreted today as not bearing any threat that the United States might be forced to enter the war because of the continued invasion of its rights by the warring powers on both sides.

This interpretation was made late today by Secretary of State Lansing, in a formal statement made to overtake what were characterized as widespread misconstructions placed on one given out earlier in the day, saying that because of the increasingly critical position of the United States as a neutral, it was entitled to know exactly what each belligerent seeks in order that it might regulate its conduct for the future. Secretary Lansing's final statement, formally prepared and issued after he had been called to the White House for a conference with President Wilson, declared that he had not intended to intimate that the United States was considering any change in its policy of neutrality, and that the whole tone and language of the note were sufficient to indicate its purpose without further comment on his part.

Lansing Misunderstood? Mr. Lansing's first statement, made orally, and of which no official copy was distributed, led to exaggerations of its language and purpose throughout official Washington. Its most striking phrases, on which the widest speculation was based, were that the United States was "drawing nearer the verge of war," and that the sending of the note "will indicate the possibility of our being forced into the war," and that neither he nor President Wilson regarded the note "as a peace note."

Secretary Lansing in his first statement said: "The sending of this note will indicate the possibility of our being forced into the war. That possibility ought to serve as a restraining and sobering force safeguarding American rights. It may also serve to force an earlier conclusion of the war. Neither the president nor myself regard this note as a peace note. It is merely an effort to get the belligerents to define the end for which they are fighting."

FIFTY-NINE PERSONS LOST

Copenhagen, via London, Dec. 21.—The Russian steamer Skiffa has been sunk by striking a mine near Abo, Finland, according to a despatch received here. Fifty-nine persons were killed in the disaster. Only one person aboard the steamer was saved.

KAISER WILL SUMMON AMBASSADOR GERARD. London, Dec. 21.—In Berlin diplomatic circles, says an Exchange Telegraph despatch from Amsterdam, it is understood that the German Emperor will, at an early date, summon to headquarters the American ambassador, James W. Gerard, with a view to discussing with him possible American mediation and action.

GOVERNMENT SILENT AS TO WILSON NOTE

Entente Allies Stand Firm as Gibraltar Itself Regarding Reply which will be Made to Kaiser William.

London, Dec. 21.—In government circles official silence is observed regarding President Wilson's note suggesting an exchange of views among the belligerents, which will be given out for publication in Friday morning's newspapers. It is explained that this delay in publication is due, in part, to the absolute surprise caused by the receipt of the note, which was altogether unexpected, and in part to a desire to admit of its simultaneous publication in all the Allied countries.

No Resentment. While it cannot be said that the note was received with anything resembling a feeling of resentment, the Associated Press can say that its sudden and unexpected receipt puzzled officialdom, which was unprepared for it is close on the heels of the German peace proposals. It is therefore believed the note will not interfere with the plans of the Allies for sending a joint reply to the German proposals, which will probably be done before Christmas.

It is understood that opinion in official circles is that the speeches delivered within the last fortnight by the spokesmen of all the Allied governments, the latest by Premier Lloyd George, form the most effective replies to the proposals of Chancellor Von Bethmann-Hollweg, and really state the position of all the Allies regarding any peace movement from any quarter.

WILL RELEASE THE IRISH PRISONERS

London, Dec. 21.—The government has decided to release the Irish prisoners, who were interned after the rebellion in Ireland. Henry E. Duke, chief secretary for Ireland, announced in House of Commons today. "The time has come when the advantages of the releasing these men far outweigh the risk, and I have so advised the government. Steps therefore were taken today to proceed with the least possible delay, to return the interned prisoners to their homes."

According to the statement of the secretary of home affairs in the House of Commons last October, there were 576 Irishmen interned in connection with the recent rebellion.

VIOLENT BATTLE RAGING IN DOBRUDJA, ROUMANIA

Teutonic Allies Driven from Heights in Regions of Balabanica and Dachkoi—Russians and Roumanians, Opposing Peace, Make Fierce Drive Against Von Makensen.

In the Dobrudja region of Roumania, where the Russo-Roumanian forces have turned upon the invaders, the Teutonic Allies have been driven from heights in the region of Balabanica and Dachkoi, and the Russians and Roumanians are now disputing with them, in a violent battle, the possession of other positions along this line. In Roumania proper the Teutons are advancing along both sides of the Insu-Racovitzer road, but are meeting with steady resistance from the Russians and Roumanians. Along the Perlitza-Stankuca front the Teutonic Allies have pushed back the advancing guard of the defenders.

Except for the battles in Roumania, in the Carpathians south of the Kimpolung-Jacobeni railway, where the Russians have captured several heights and at various points on the Russian front where attacks by the Germans have been repulsed by the Germans, little infantry activity is being displayed.

Little Doing in France. The artillery duels have been spruced at various points along the French front. Berlin reports a raid by Germans on British trenches and the capture of four officers and 26 men. In another raid British troops entered German trenches near Arras, but later were ejected. On the Verdun sector, where the French made a notable advance last week, the Germans have violently bombarded the Louvemont-Vaux front.

In Mesopotamia the British report successful bombardments of Turkish river craft and land positions in the region of Kut-el-Amara.

Attack Kut-el-Amara. London, Dec. 21.—The following communication concerning the operations in Mesopotamia was issued to-night:

"During the night of Sunday British airplanes successfully bombed the enemy's river craft west of Kut-el-Amara. Monday and Wednesday strong reconnaissances were made to the west of the Shumran bend of the Tigris. "During the last few days the enemy's positions about Sannayyat and Kut, and his shipping west of the latter place, were heavily bombarded with satisfactory results. The bridge over the Hal river, near its junction with the Tigris, was destroyed by our fire."

Great Battle in Dobrudja. Petrograd, Dec. 21, via London, 5.30 p. m.—(British Admiralty per Wireless Press.)—A violent battle is in progress in Northern Dobrudja, where the offensive was assumed by the forces of the Central Powers, which at first carried several heights but later were driven from a position of the captured ground, the war office announced today. Russian attacks in efforts to gain control of the remaining heights are going on.

On the left bank of the Danube, north of Buzen, engagements took place with our advanced detachments. Between the Buzen-Rimnik and the Insu-Racovitzer high-roads firing between advanced infantry detachments and artillery duels are proceeding. The enemy about a regiment strong in infantry and cavalry, is advancing on both sides of the Insu-Racovitzer high-road, but is being held by our fire. "On the Perlitza-Stankuca front the enemy has pressed back our advanced guard. "In Dobrudja the enemy assumed the offensive on the front from the Danube to Bachkoi, in the neighborhood of Balabanica and Dachkoi and he succeeded in occupying a series of heights. "The enemy was dislodged from several heights by our counter-attack, and for the domination of the rest the battle is continuing. "On the Black Sea one of our submarines sank, near the Bosphorus a steamer and twelve sailing vessels."

Special to The Standard. Ottawa, Dec. 21.—Sir Robert Borden returns to Ottawa on Saturday from his western national service tour and there are some important matters awaiting his consideration. Chief among these is the situation created by the threatened resignation of Chief Whip Col. John Stanfield, M. P. for Colchester. Col. Stanfield has not actively resigned, he has simply written out his resignation and handed it to the political executive of his county, but that body has not forwarded it to Ottawa, and it is regarded here as doubtful if it will ever reach here. Therefore Mr. Stanfield will remain a member of parliament.

But the consensus of opinion here is that a new whip will be named at the first caucus when parliament opens. It is believed that either Richard Blain, of Peel, or W. S. Middlebro, of North Grey, will be appointed. They are strong party men, thoroughly seasoned. Another matter for the Premier to decide will be the date of the opening of parliament. The probable date is Thursday, January 25.

The question of the imperial conference announced by Premier Lloyd George will also have to be considered. The Dominions are all being consulted regarding the date of that important event and the likelihood so far as Ottawa is concerned in the decision, is that it will take place next spring, although there are those who believe that it cannot take place next year at all owing to the demands upon the time of the leading men of the far-flung dominions being so largely taken up with matters concerning the actual carrying on of the war.

GREAT BRITAIN SURPRISED BY NOTE OF WILSON

Declaration of Premier Lloyd-George in Reply to Von Bethmann-Hollweg Widely Endorsed in England—Sir John Simon Backs Up Premier.

LOYD GEORGE "HAS NOT SLAMMED DOOR ON PEACE, BUT HAS POINTED OUT THAT ANY DISCUSSION WITHOUT SOME PREVIOUS SUGGESTION OF TERMS MUST NECESSARILY BE DELUSION AND SHAM."

London, Dec. 21.—Absolute and startling surprise was the first feeling in Great Britain aroused by President Wilson's note. The government was surprised, and frankly admitted so. The members of parliament were equally surprised, when the news spread through both houses during the afternoon session.

The newspaper offices were surprised, and undoubtedly the public will be equally surprised when they read Ambassador Page's statement to the foreign office in the morning papers. All information from America in the past few days, both in despatches from the usually best-informed Washington correspondents and in advices to the banking and business firms, has said that the president had no intention of taking any steps toward peace or making any move in European affairs. When he transmitted Germany's note to Great Britain without comment it was assumed that this action represented his general attitude towards the European situation.

The Allies Firm. Most of the newspapers commented upon this course with satisfaction. The tenor of their comments tomorrow will be that Premier Lloyd George's speech, and the speeches of the Russian, French and Italian statesmen have affirmed the Allies' position, and that until the German government gives notice of the nature of the proposals which it would bring to a conference the Allies cannot accept the invitation to sit around an European council table for a discussion of its terms. (Continued on page 2)

SIR ROBERT WILL RETURN SATURDAY

Understood New Conservative Whip will be Appointed—Col. Stanfield to Retain Seat in House.

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ENGAGEMENT OF MISS ELIZABETH ASQUITH. (N. Y. Evening Sun.) Dublin, Dec. 21.—The engagement of Miss Elizabeth Asquith, youngest daughter of the former premier, to Hugh Gibson, first secretary of the American embassy in London, will be announced soon, is the report here.

Danish Ships Sunk. London, Dec. 21.—Lloyd's reports the sinking of the Danish steamers Chasle Mærsk, 1,037 tons gross, and Gerda, 755 tons gross.

STEAMER FROM MONTREAL SUNK

Washington, Dec. 21.—An official report to the state department today from the American consul at Malta said that the British horse ship St. Ursula, bound from Saloniki to Montreal, in ballast with six Americans in the crew, was sunk without warning by a torpedo from a submarine of unknown nationality on December 13. The survivors, including the six Americans, were landed at Malta. Four men are still missing. The state department has ordered further investigation.

NOTE OF ENTENTE ALLIES TO GREECE

London, Dec. 21.—The new note of the Entente Allies to Greece, which, according to the understanding here, was presented today, includes, says Reuter's Telegram Company, the following principal demands: "The control of telegraphs, posts and railways; the release of all Venizelist prisoners; the prohibition of meetings of reservists; and an inquiry by a mixed commission into the disturbance of Dec. 12."

STMR. KANSAS HITS MINE

Nantes, France, Dec. 21, via London, 1.55 p. m.—The American steamship Kansas, has been damaged by striking a mine. An effort is being made to remove part of her cargo and take her to dock.

The Kansas sailed from Boston, Dec. 6, for St. Nazaire. She is owned by the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company of New York. She was built at Camden, N. J., in 1903. Her gross tonnage is 7,912.

STOCK MARKET PANIC AGAIN ON IN FULL FORCE YESTERDAY

Total of 3,176,000 Shares Sold, Various "War" Stocks Declining From 5 to 33 Points—Scotia Steel Tumbles 20 in General Cataclysm—Many Investors Wiped Out.

New York, Dec. 21.—On transactions aggregating 3,176,000 shares, a record almost without precedent, stocks today experienced another serious reversal of quoted values, the most thorough, in fact, since the inception of the decline in the early part of last week. The market's action was again ascribed to the developments in the peace situation.

The opening, at which prices were depressed two to seven points, was but a prelude to the increasing weakness of the later hours. The spectacular feature at the outset was an offering of 50,000 shares of United States Steel at 104½ to 105½, a maximum decline of 3½ points. This was not only the largest individual operation of the day, but, so far as is known, without parallel in the history of the exchange.

U. S. Steel Loses Seven. Steel later fell to 100½, and closed at 101, a net loss of seven points. Other industrials, including those of the so-called peace class, registered extreme losses of three to five points, while those popularly regarded as "war brides" receded ten to thirty-three points. Bethlehem Steel common losing eleven points, with ten for the preferred, while Nova Scotia Steel lost twenty points, with thirty-three for Gulf States Steel common, and twenty-five for the second preferred.

In the group of prominent equipments, American Locomotive lost over seven points, Baldwin Locomotive almost twelve, and New York Air Brake 15½. Among the less distinctive munitions and related issues, Lackawanna Steel fell nine points and Crecolite Steel ten and a half.

Heavy Losses. Issues of a more remote war class, such as Central Leather, American Hide and Leather, Industrial Alcohol, International Nickel and the metals as a whole forfeited five to fourteen