

ACTION AWAITS DATA ON WAY FROM GERMANY

Cabinet Discusses Submarine Crisis With President, But No Decision Arrived At—President to Insist Upon Strict Interpretation of Rules of International Law.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—Germany's latest formal note declaring that assurances regarding submarine warfare given in the Lusitania case have not been modified by her announced intention to treat armed merchant ships as auxiliary cruisers after midnight tonight was before President Wilson and his cabinet today for consideration.

The state department was understood to feel that possibility of difficulties arising in the near future as a result of the new German and Austrian policy is more or less remote.

Secretary Lansing took with him to the White House a pouch understood to contain the German memorandum and other papers relating to the case.

It was indicated in well informed circles that the president would insist on a strict interpretation of the rules of international law as applying to Germany's new submarine warfare.

Information forwarded from Berlin purporting to contain proof that the British admiralty had instructed captains of armed merchant ships to attack submarine ships had not arrived, Mr. Lansing said. The delay was believed to be due to conditions resulting from the war.

Secretary Lansing today issued the following formal statement:

"In view of the publication this morning of what purports to be the view of the state department on the communication received yesterday from the German ambassador, I wish to say that the contents of the communication have not been made public by me, and that any statement as to the views of the state department on the communication are absolutely unauthorized.

"I have made no comment and expressed no opinion in regard to the matter."

Discussed by Cabinet. Germany's latest communication on submarine warfare was discussed in detail at today's cabinet meeting and at a separate conference between President Wilson and Secretary Lansing, but no conclusion was reached. It was decided to await data on the way from Berlin regarding instructions, alleged to have been issued by the British admiralty to merchant captains for attacks on submarines.

Cabinet members carefully avoided questions of whether Germany's position as outlined by Count von Bernstorff in a note to Secretary Lansing yesterday was acceptable to the American government. It was said that merely the facts were laid before the cabinet without any effort being made to arrive at a decision.

POST OFFICE BILL PASSES HOUSE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—The annual postoffice appropriation bill carrying approximately \$321,000,000, went to the senate today, following its passage by the house last night over bitter and persistent opposition.

As it left the house the bill contains provisions for substituting a space basis for the present weight system of paying railroads for carrying mails and prohibiting any increase in the existing limit of fifty pounds on parcel post packages.

ARMED ITALIAN LINERS PERMITTED TO CLEAR

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—The Italian liner Giuseppe Verdi and San Guglielmo, at New York with mounted guns aboard, were ordered cleared today on assurance of the Italian government that their armament was for defensive purposes only.

KAISER TO SINK ARMED SHIPS AT MIDNIGHT HOUR

New Rule of Submarine Warfare Goes Into Effect Tonight—Spectacular Opening Is Planned—Hope Abandoned of Assistance From Washington.

BERLIN, Feb. 29.—The Associated Press is informed by Germany's leading statesman that the new rule of submarine warfare which was announced in the German memorandum regarding the future treatment of armed merchantmen will positively be put in effect at midnight tonight.

At that time the period of warning for neutrals, giving them opportunity to advise their nations not to travel on armed merchantmen, will expire.

For several days there has been more than a possibility that Germany at the last moment might make a proposal that she would discontinue practices of reprisal and sink no merchant ships—freighters or passenger liners—without first halting the vessel for examination and putting the crew in a place of safety as in the old style of naval warfare, if the allies would remove armament from merchantmen.

Hopes Prove in Vain.

It was thought England might accept this proposal or that the United States and other neutrals would be convinced if England refused that she had no intention of discontinuing the use of armament for offensive purposes. This might possibly have given President Wilson proof that armament on merchantmen was not used purely for defense and thus enable the president to reconcile the two conflicting viewpoints regarding the impropriety of merchantmen carrying armament and the impossibility of the United States altering the established law of nations.

Publication of President Wilson's letter to Senator Stone, however, apparently convinced Germany's leading statesman that no assistance was to be expected from Washington in ending the present anomalous situation regarding rules of submarine warfare and that it was useless to make proposals, the only result of which would be to give England more time to replenish her stores while a discussion was in progress at Washington and London. At least two of the highest officials directly concerned appear to be now convinced that Washington has no desire to embarrass Great Britain in the conduct of the war or to do anything which might permit Germany to use the submarine in warfare against commerce.

Spectacular Opening.

Newspapers and the German public generally are primed for a spectacular opening of the new submarine campaign.

Leading German statesmen have little expectation that President Wilson will change his attitude, even after the receipt of the justificatory evidence attached to the German memorandum in the form of appendices, which apparently were not contained in the American embassy's eblegram giving the text of the memorandum itself, and is being forwarded by mail. It is not believed that Americans will be warned from traveling on armed merchantmen or that adequate measures will be taken to see that armament is used only for defensive purposes.

MACKENSEN TO VISIT CONSTANTINE

MILAN, via Paris, Feb. 28.—(Delayed.)—An Athens dispatch to the Corriere Della Sera says that Field Marshal von Mackensen will visit King Constantine in the Greek capital. An effort will be made by the German military leader, the dispatch says, to counteract the impression made by General Sarrail, the French commander of the allied camp at Saloniki, on his recent call on the king and to regain for the central empires the ground lost in Greek opinion since the fall of Erzerum.

DEAD IN GROUPS UPRIGHT IN FIELD ABOUT VERDUN

Shambles Exceed Anything in History of Warfare—Air Pressure From Continuous Discharge So Terrific That Blood Rushes From Ears and Lungs Cease Working.

PARIS, Feb. 29.—Military critics express the opinion that the German forces, which at the beginning of the battle around Verdun numbered probably half a million, now exceed 750,000.

"The situation is now decidedly better," is the phrase commonly used this morning in the Paris press regarding the struggle for the great French stronghold. The French are beginning to react vigorously against the German "bludgeon strokes," which are having less and less effect and are being delivered with diminished energy. It is expected, however, that they will be renewed again today, but at new points. The fact that the battle is now shifting is taken as a sign that the German general staff has begun to despair of making a real impression on the French defense.

"I fought since the beginning of the war," says a soldier who has returned to Paris and who was present at the fighting at Ornes.

Worst Shambles Ever Known.

"I saw the shambles at Sippes and Souain. They were nothing to what I saw last week. The enemy advanced and we retired under orders, but we killed them by the dozens. It was so terrible that I, who have watched my comrades fall around me almost with indifference, shudder as my memory recalls those scenes.

"As their battalions advanced upon us they were in serried masses, by files of twenty. The shrapnel from our 75-millimeter guns and the projectiles from our heavy artillery fell among them and you could see great gaps as if a mower had passed with a scythe. The high explosive shells which burst on contact fell and limbs shot into the air. We were so close that pieces of their torn flesh fell among us. Eventually we reached Moncourt and took shelter for a time in a wood. Although it was 3 o'clock in the morning, the bursting shells made it clear as day, giving the battlefield the aspect of a fairy scene.

Dead Stand in Groups.

"From behind us the French artillery fired into the German masses, the German shells flying over our heads toward the Douaumont section. Then our machine guns, placed in batteries every five yards, began to play and we saw the dead in groups upright where there was not room to fall. From Moncourt I followed the supply road to Fleury, where I took the light railway toward Verdun. The heavy guns near Douaumont and Damoups were firing as fast as they could be loaded. When we passed between the two points the air pressure, produced by the continuous discharges, was so terrific that blood rushed from our ears and our lungs almost ceased working."

CLOSING LAW IS HELD ILLEGAL

SALEM, Or., Feb. 29.—The Oregon supreme court today pronounced the classification of an ordinance, passed by the city of Astoria, requiring certain mercantile establishments to close at 6 p. m. on week days, arbitrary and unfair, and it reversed the action of the state circuit court of Clatsop county, which dismissed a suit to restrain enforcement of the ordinance.

The ordinance excluded from its operations, drug, cigar, millinery, fruit, confectionery, furniture and book establishments.

"It is the constitutional right common to all citizens," said the court, "that no law shall be passed granting any citizen or class of citizens privileges or immunities which shall not equally belong to all citizens."

POLICE NET STRETCHED TO TRAP SOUP POISONER



Jean Crones.

Police in all parts of the country have been furnished descriptions of Jean Crones, chef, said to be an anarchist and leading figure in a gigantic plot to blow up churches and churchmen in the United States. Crones was employed as chef when a banquet was given in Chicago in honor of Archbishop Mundelein and was sought in connection with an attempt to poison 300 persons who attended the banquet. Poison was found in the soup served.

TWO AMERICANS REPORTED KILLED BY VILLA BANDITS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—The murder of Grover C. Varn, an American, by Villa forces at his home last night, twenty-five miles north of Durango, was reported officially today to the state department. No other details were given.

EL PASO, Texas, Feb. 29.—Washington dispatches reporting the killing of Grover C. Varn caused intense interest here, where Varn was well known. Varn left El Paso two weeks ago to join his brother, E. J. Varn, at their ranch near Santa Lucia, twenty-five miles north of Durango.

TORREON, Coahuila, Mexico, Feb. 29.—It was reported here today that an American hotelkeeper named Harris has been hanged by bandits at Sombrerete. The date and other details were not given, although it is known that Harris has lived at Sombrerete forty years. Sombrerete is in Zacatecas state. Bandits are reported to have looted the ranch of John Kramer, an American, at Ojinepa, west of Durango City. Kramer, with his American employes, are said to have saved their lives by hiding in a hog pen.

EL PASO, Texas, Feb. 29.—The American hotelkeeper of Sombrerete reported in Torreon dispatches today as being hanged by bandits was identified here today as Edward Harris, well known among American mining men. The news of his death causes inquiry as to the possible fate of Henry Carnaghan, manager of the Das Hombres mine, in the Sombrerete district. Carnaghan lived at Chahchilitos.

71 MINERS TRAPPED BY COAL EXPLOSION

REMPTON, W. Va., Feb. 29.—Seventy-one men were trapped by an explosion in the mine of the Davis Coal & Coke Co. near here today soon after they went to work. Two succeeded in making their way to the surface and rescuers within an hour had brought out thirty-seven, four of whom were dead and two so badly hurt that it was feared they could not survive.

Volunteers were working under the direction of trained rescue crews in an attempt to reach the others. The working force today had just reached their places when the explosion, which seemed to have affected only a part of the workings, occurred.

Rescue crews were quickly recruited from nearby mines. They brought out the men who had not been injured and recovered the dead not far from the main entry. The trapped men were said to be much farther from the opening.

ABANDON HOPE OF COLUMBIAN TREATY

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—Administration senators admitted today they had practically no hope of ratification for the Colombian treaty proposing payment of \$15,000,000 to Colombia for the partition of Panama and making mutual expression of regret.

DIAZ LANDS IN VERA CRUZ TO BEGIN REVOLUTION

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—Reports today to the department of justice said General Felix Diaz, who hopes to start a new revolution in Mexico, left the United States on February 18 on a ship bound from Tampa, Fla., to Tierra, in the state of Vera Cruz, Mexico.

This advice came from an agent of the bureau of investigation and officials were inclined to give it credence. Every effort was being made to confirm it. No details as to the ship on which Diaz sailed were received.

Agents of the bureau were busy today watching the threat of the reported Diaz plot in other sections, with a view to checking any effort to send him arms or ammunition.

NEW ORLEANS, La., Feb. 29.—Diaz adherents said today they had advised that Felix Diaz landed in the state of Vera Cruz last week and was joined there by several thousand troops. Diaz, it was said, intended purchasing into his home state of Oaxaca to join 10,000 troops to begin his campaign against Villa and Carranza. Zapata troops, it was said, would join the Diaz army.

Several million dollars was declared to have been provided to finance the movement.

PRICE OF WHEAT RALLIES AND FALLS

CHICAGO, Feb. 29.—Assertions that then ex German note opened a way to avert a break with the United States today helped to rally the price of wheat. The market, however, continued nervous and to undergo wide fluctuations. Talk of a probable serious decrease in the number of ships available for the export trade acted as a decided check on the bulls. The opening, which ranged from 1 1/4 off to a like advance, with May \$1.88 to \$1.89 1/2 and July \$1.05 to \$1.07 1/2, was followed by a general upturn to 2 1/2 above yesterday's finish and then a material setback.

GERMAN DRIVE UPON VERDUN LOSING FORCE

Berlin Claims Progress, But Little Gain Made—Bombardment Continues With Great Intensity—Manheulles Taken, But Lost—Captured Trenches Retaken by French.

BERLIN, Feb. 29, via London.—Progress for the Germans in their drive toward Verdun in the Woerth district was announced by the war office today. The German troops have passed Dieppe, Abaucourt and Blain and have also taken Manheulles and Champton.

The war office also announced that a small armored fort west of Douaumont has been stormed by the Germans.

The official announcement gives the total number of unwounded prisoners taken as 16,575. There have been captured also 78 cannons and 86 machine guns.

PARIS, Feb. 29.—The bombardment to the north of Verdun is continuing with great intensity.

East of the Meuse last night there was a resumption of violent local attacks. Near the village of Douaumont the fighting came to a hand-to-hand encounter, and the Germans were repulsed by French troops.

After intense artillery fire German forces captured the village of Manheulles, but a counter attack brought the French to the western boundary of this location. They are now holding Manheulles under their fire.

In Lorraine the Germans succeeded in occupying small sections of French trenches, but they were very shortly driven from these positions. There is nothing to report from the remainder of the front.

HOGS HIGHEST IN 16 MONTHS, STILL GOING UP

CHICAGO, Feb. 29.—A jump of ten cents in the price of hogs today sent the market to \$8.59 a hundred pounds, the highest in sixteen months. According to veterans at the local stockyards, the "whole country is going into hog raising and more pork and bacon is being eaten today than ever before."

From the first of the year until yesterday, 2,155,000 hogs were received at the Chicago yards, according to figures compiled today. This is an increase of more than half a million head over the similar period of 1915. For the eleven principal markets of the country the total hog shipments from January 1, 1916 to date is more than 7,100,000 as against 5,700,000 for the same period in 1915.

This, it is pointed out, is in spite of the fact that the German lard market is closed.

The extra demand for pork created by the war, the spreading of the knowledge of the profits of hog raising and the failure of last year's corn crop are the causes to which the unusually heavy hog shipments are attributed.

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U. S. POLICIES MOST IRRITATING SAYS ADMIRAL

President of Navy War College Says No Time Should Be Lost in Building Strongest Navy in World to Preserve Nation—Says Menace Exists, But Declines to Tell How.

Other world events, the admiral declared, made it seem probable that at the close of the European war, various foreign powers, believing that these American policies conflict with their interests might declare they would no longer accept them.

Says Nation Is Menaced.

Admiral Knight's statements were drawn out by Representative Calloway, who insisted he could see no danger to justify a race for naval supremacy.

"Are we in any way menaced?" he demanded.

"In my opinion we are," said Admiral Knight.

"How?"

"I wish to be excused from answering this question."

"I would like to find somebody who would answer it," said Representative Calloway.

"Is the date 1925, set for the completion of this great fleet, the date when this thing will break?"

"I don't believe it will break at all, if we prepare now," said the admiral.

Tremendous Expenditures.

To equal the British fleet by 1925, Admiral Knight said, 29 dreadnaughts, 15 battle cruisers, 20 scout cruisers, 75 submarines and 75 destroyers would have to be added to the present fleet. He thought Great Britain would not regard an American building program as directed against her.

The present navy, he said, should be eliminated in considering the possibilities of any attack on the New England coast because it lacked scouts and might easily be drawn far southward by a feint, while the real attack was made. For that reason, he said, he wished to see at least nine battle cruisers and eight scouts laid down this year.

GERMANS LURED OVER MINED WOODS BLOWN TO ATOMS

PARIS, Feb. 29.—"Do you know about the trick we played on the Germans in Caures wood?" was the question with which a French soldier who had been in the Verdun fighting introduced today his account of an incident at the front.

"Well, to the north of Verdun," he continued, "a little beyond Beaumont, lies Caures wood. It was a point to which the Germans devoted special attention and therefore everything was done to give them as good a reception as possible.

"While our infantry on the fringe of the wood held off the enemy, a lieutenant of engineers and his men made their final preparations in the wood, which had been carefully mined beforehand. When all was ready the infantry fell back and the Germans, convinced that our men were bolting, tore after them in the woods, yelling exultantly.

"When the last Frenchman was safely out of the wood on the other side someone posted near Beaumont pressed a button. There was a heavy boom and trees, mingled with bodies of the enemy in the wood had been killed."