

NO NEGOTIATIONS WITH AUTOCRACY STATES ASQUITH

Former British Premier Praises Replies Made by President Wilson to Germans and Declares Him Best Qualified to Act as Allied Spokesman—No Compromise.

LONDON, Oct. 17.—Herbert H. Asquith, former premier, speaking at the National Liberal club here today, said that there was no man in the allied world better qualified to be a spokesman of the entente nations than President Wilson. He spoke in part as follows:

"Back of the enemy's proposals are purposes which we have confronted during the most trying ordeals in our history. We might have held aloof in August, 1914, but nobody in England can wish that the country had acted otherwise at that time. In saving her soul, Great Britain has saved the world.

"We yield full measure of acknowledgment and gratitude to our allies, particularly Belgium, which bore the first brunt of the German invasion. The Belgium army is today under the personal leadership of Belgium's indomitable king, taking its share in the struggle and successes of the allies.

Tribute to British
"In no spirit of egotism or vanity do we express our pride in the achievements of our own army and navy. We must not forget that while Field Marshal Haig and his gallant troops are clearing Belgium and northern France of the invader, it has been the British navy and its auxiliaries whose vigilance and persevering activity has drained away drop by drop the enemy's enormous reservoir of power. Never has there been in history a more signal tribute than this war has afforded to the power which comes from the command of the seas.

"The German peace overtures are sincere in the sense that they have evidently proceeded from the German people who in their heart of hearts have given up the game. If, in addressing her overtures, not to the European allies but to our American associates, Germany has sowed seeds of possible discussion and jealousy, it was another illustration of the chronic clumsiness of German diplomacy.

Wilson as Spokesman
"There is no one better qualified to be the spokesman of our common cause than President Wilson. His two replies to the German notes were both in spirit and substance exactly what the occasion required. They were terse, dignified and outspoken and went to the heart of the matter, leaving no loophole for dialectical or rhetorical escape.

"President Wilson's latest note was addressed, not to Austria, but to Germany alone. I wish to emphasize the importance and justice of these conditions laid down and point out the impossibility of negotiating with the enemy who sunk the Lusitania, has wantonly destroyed towns and villages in France and Flanders and practiced incredible barbarism on prisoners.

SPOKANE HOTEL USED FOR FLUE HOSPITAL

SPOKANE, Wash., Oct. 17.—An eighty-room hotel was taken over today by the city and county health authorities to be used as a temporary hospital for sufferers of influenza. Twenty-one new cases of influenza were reported to the city health office, making 729 cases reported since the epidemic started.

GERMAN DEFENSE CRUMBLES
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the march of the Belgians on Ghent will have a marked influence on the general retreat in the west to which the Germans were irrevocably condemned by the Flanders advance.

Swift Retreat Enforced
General Ludendorff will be obliged to seek to re-establish his fast crumbling front far in the rear of the present operations. The Lille-Messines line will be out of the question as it will be outflanked and Ludendorff probably will have to defend the German frontier on the line Antwerp-Namur-Metz. To reach this line, however, he will have to retreat swiftly on a wide front. Such a maneuver, it is believed here, would be most perilous with Marshal Foch hammering unrelentingly on the retreating armies.

In any event the German commander has to preserve at all costs the Ardennes pivot. That is why the Germans are offering such determined resistance to the French north of Vouziers and to the Americans on both sides of the Meuse. The enemy might give way on other parts of the line with little strategic loss, but to fail in defending the Ardennes pivot would mean disaster.

HUNGARIANS TO VOTE SECESSION FROM AUSTRIA

Parliament Hears Proclamation of Independence Read—Burian Declares Peace Outlook Favorable and That Germany Will Accede to President Wilson's Demands.

LONDON, Oct. 17.—At a meeting of the Hungarian parliament a proclamation was read declaring Hungary to be an independent state, says a dispatch to Berlin forwarded from Copenhagen to the Central News Agency here.

People to End War
ZURICH, Switzerland, Oct. 17.—"The counts declared war, but the representatives of the people will conclude peace," the socialist newspaper Arbeiter Zeitung of Vienna says in a current article on the situation created by the Teutonic peace proposals and the replies to them.

Burian Optimistic
BASEL, Switzerland, Oct. 17.—Baron Burian, the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, spoke in the most optimistic manner of the prospects for an early peace in an address to the foreign affairs committee of the Austrian delegation at its meeting on Wednesday, says a Vienna dispatch.

"I nourish the hope today most fully," said the foreign minister in this connection, "for if the contents of President Wilson's reply are studied there is nothing to be found to frustrate such a hope or even to delay its realization considerably."
"The political point in President Wilson's reply is settled," Baron Burian declared, "as Germany's reply will undoubtedly establish, by the

modifications which are being made in the constitution."

Both Sides to Speak
"In the armistice negotiations," he continued, "both sides should speak. That grows out of the very idea of negotiations. Hence Germany's proposal of a commission.

"We can be fully convinced that Germany will be in a position to accept the president's demands regarding the humanization of the war. I do not believe that in his demands generally he goes beyond what Germany intends, especially as regards the moment the war may be considered to be terminated.

"I believe that in her exchange of views with President Wilson, Germany will give the explanations necessary to avoid the superfluous hardships of war. It is clearly understood that Germany will insist that no conditions be imposed during the preliminary phase of the negotiations which are incompatible with her dignity."

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17.—Further indication of the serious state of affairs in Austria-Hungary reached the state department today in a dispatch from Bern which said the dual empire is facing a decisive political crisis. It is reported that the emperor will at a meeting of the Austrian and Hungarian delegations, take occasion to issue a manifesto to the people granting a more liberal system of government.

LILLE FALLS TO BRITISH.

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they were halted late last week. In Flanders the allies have gained important new successes while from the Oise to the Meuse the allied pressure is maintained strongly. In the angle north of Laon the Germans apparently are retiring from between the Oise and Serre rivers.

New Drive at Cambrai
Since the beginning of the week there has been little heavy fighting southeast of Cambrai, where the British and Americans made such rapid strides last week after the capture of Cambrai. The Germans resisted strongly on the line of the Selle and it is these defenses that the British and probably the Americans under the same command are assaulting.

South of Bohain the southern end of the attacking front, the French troops are reported in contact with the Germans along the whole Oise-Serre front. This undoubtedly means the Germans are retiring from the awkward angle between the two rivers in a continuation of the withdrawal movement from the Laon massif.

Pressure on All Fronts

On a front of more than 30 miles in Flanders, the Belgians, French and British continue to push forward vigorously. Courtrai and Thorout, important railway junctions on the flanks of the attacking front, have fallen to the Belgians and British, while in the center the French have taken Lichtervelde and Ardoye. Courtrai probably is the most important of the rail centers feeding the Lille area. Thorout is 12 miles southwest of Bruges which is less than 10 miles from the Dutch frontier.


On both sides of the Meuse the Americans maintain their pressure which resulted Wednesday in the capture of important ground north and northeast of the Argonne forest. East of the river the Americans have gained important high ground.

Forced by Pressure

American forces occupied the village of Grandpre, situated on the north side of the Aire river as it runs westward through the Argonne forest. They have also captured Montin-les-Pas, to the eastward, and have control of Lozes wood, an isolated bit of forest land which has afforded the Germans good cover in the fighting east of the Argonne. Hill 182, north of St. Juvin, is now being consolidated by the Americans.

Italian units in Albania have made a new advance northeast of Durazzo.

In Syria, the army commanded by General Allenby has moved far to the north of Beirut and patrols are moving northeast from Damascus. It is probable that with the return of cooler weather, the British forces in Mesopotamia may make a new drive to join General Allenby and thus force a line from the Mediterranean to the Persian gulf.



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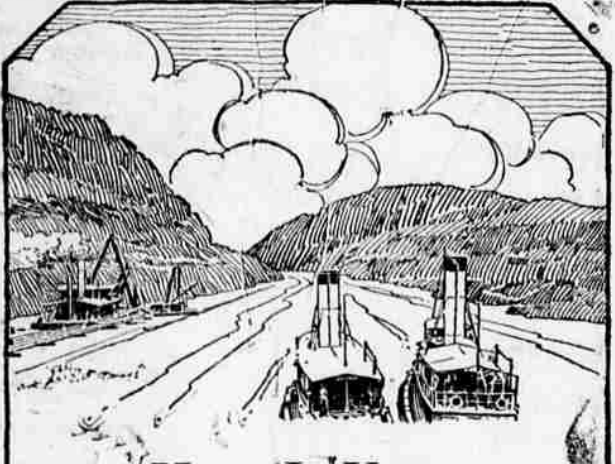
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