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OPTOMETRIST

THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

Friend And Adviser Of President Wilson, Recounts In His Diary The Great Events Of The War In Which His Country Was Concerned.

(Continued from Page 4)

French Insist on Rhine Occupation

The crushing of Germany was inevitable. Ed Note: (In the opinion of General Bliss, the conditions of the armistice with Austria, which showed Germany that such a plan of operations was on the cards, would have obliged the latter power to accept any conditions than might have been proposed in the armistice with it. American Journal of International Law, 16 p. 510. Deprived of her Allies, fighting desperately as her armies retreated from France, she was thus to be threatened on the flank and the forces of her former Ally, Austria, were to be used against her. Her enemies were in a position to set terms for an armistice that amounted to capitulation, and such was in fact the character of the terms Foch laid before the Supreme War Council.

The chief difference of opinion arose between the French and the British; the former insisted on much more rigorous conditions than the latter. General Petain demanded the disarmament of the German troops except for carrying arms and, in addition, the occupation of a broad strip of German territory to serve as a pledge of compliance with Allied peace conditions. In his opinion two things were essential: The first is that the German army should return to Germany without a cannon or a tank, and with only its carrying arms. To attain this he makes practical suggestions. The specification of a timer for withdrawal so short that it will be materially impossible for the enemy to carry away his war material. In addition to the evacuation by the Germans of all invaded territory and of Alsace-Lorraine, the occupation by the Allied leaders not only of the left bank of the Rhine but of a zone fifty kilometers wide on the right bank; at the delivery of 5000 locomotives and 100,000 cars should be demanded. General Petain adds however, that, although these conditions are indispensable in his opinion, it is hardly expected that the Germans will accept them.

British opinion was much more moderate. At the conference of October 25, Field Marshal Haig laid down conditions which seemed insufficient to both French and America. In his view the armistice should be concluded and concluded on very moderate terms. The victorious Allied armies are exhausted. The units need to be reorganized. Germany is not broken in the military sense. During the last weeks her armies have withdrawn fighting bravely and in excellent order. Therefore, if it is really desired to conclude an armistice—and this in his views is very desirable—it is necessary to grant Germany conditions which she can accept. That is to say, the evacuation of the invaded territory in France and Belgium as well as Alsace-Lorraine and the restitution of the rolling stock taken at the beginning of the war from the French and Belgians. If more is demanded, there is a risk of prolonging the war, which has already cost so much, and of exasperating German national feelings, with very doubtful results. For the evacuation of all invaded territories and of Alsace-Lorraine is sufficient to seal the victory.

These opinions were couched in general terms. Pershing declared himself on the whole in accord with Petain. Marshal Foch did not express his own views at the conference of October 25, but on the following day he sent to Clemenceau a letter in which he drafted the terms which he advised. Haig's condition he regarded as insufficient, for the German armies after evacuating the invaded regions would still be in a position to renew a defensive warfare within their own territories, and the existing military advantages of the Allies would have been thrown away. On the other hand, it was not necessary that the German army completely nor did he deem it essential to accept Petain's principle of depriving the Germans of everything, except carrying arms. All that was necessary was to take enough to prevent them from fighting effectively and leave them enough to preserve order and save their feelings. The armament for the surrender of which he asked amounted approximately to one-third of the German artillery and half of their machine guns. He agreed with Pershing that it was necessary to occupy bridgeheads on the Rhine, and insisted upon the establishment of a neutral zone to the east of it.

While the British regarded the terms of Marshal Foch as unnecessarily severe, General Bliss believed they would not fulfill the conditions laid down by President Wilson. I. e. that Germany must not be able to resume the war

during the course of the peace discussions. Foch's terms provided for the concentration of German armies within their own boundaries and, according to Bliss, left them with sufficient armament to threaten a renewal of hostilities. General Bliss crystallized his own, more severe, terms in a simple formula which amounted to unconditional surrender: complete disarmament and demobilization. Such terms, he believed, would not merely render the Germans helpless, but would guarantee the peace of mind of the Allies and render unnecessary the constant renewal of precautions which were later to arouse irritation in Germany.

General Bliss had already had been requested by the War Department to cable his views to Washington. When the Prime Ministers received Foch's terms, they asked House to secure Bliss's plan. 'On the morning of October 27, General Bliss writes, 'Mr. House showed me Foch's document; said that the conference which at that moment was in session in the dining-room of his house on the rue de l'Universite was discussing it, but that they wanted the views of others and among them mine. Accordingly I submitted my attached memorandum. . . . I drew it up in the light of my previously cabled views to Washington and also of Marshal Foch's proposed terms. With Marshal Foch I had already discussed at length his proposition. In substance I had said to him, "The case as I see it is this. President Wilson has made it a condition (and all agreed with him) that it must be made impossible for Germany to suddenly resume the war while peace is discussed. On the side of the Allies, the armistice will be followed by demobilization of a very large part of their forces. On the side of the Germans, your terms require them to concentrate all their armies from all fronts within their 1914 frontiers. So far as concentrated numbers are concerned, the Allies will be weakened and the Germans strengthened. Suppose that while peace terms are being discussed some of them very humiliating to German pride and already foreshadowed to them in your armistice terms of peace. What guarantee have you that they should appeal to them to be wiped out fighting rather than by the terms of peace. What guarantee have you that Germany cannot rearm this concentrated army of hers with the arms that you are going to permit her to carry back, plus those that they may still have in store, together with the great quantities she has captured from you and the British Russians, Italians, etc?" His reply was that they kne wevery piece of equipment that Germany could lay her hands on and that it was absolutely impossible for her to reequip herself.

Purely as an bitter dictum I may say that no sooner was the Armistice signed than the Allies became obsessed with a fear that Germany could rearm herself to such an extent, at least, as would make her very formidable, and for months this fear haunted the Peace Conference. It was the partial disarmament of Germany that protected the Allies from this danger so much as was the complete internal disruption of Germany following the signing of the Armistice.'

To The Victor

On October 29 Colonel House met the Prime Ministers, except Orlando who had not yet arrived, and the Foreign Ministers, to discuss the general terms of the German armistice. There was no indication that the political leaders were inclined to consider seriously the protests of General Bliss that Marshal Foch's conditions would not fulfill President Wilson's stipulation that the German armies must be rendered helpless to renew the fighting. All of them, including Colonel House, were ready to accept Foch's guarantee that his terms were sufficient to prevent a resumption of arms by Germany. It thus resulted that the military terms considered by the Prime Ministers and finally approved were the French terms. These terms, as recommended by Foch as well as those brought in by the Allied Naval Council, they regarded as severe.

'Do you think,' asked Balfour of Clemenceau, 'that there is the smallest prospect of the Germans accepting these terms?' 'They won't the first day,' replied Clemenceau, 'but they will somehow or other contrive not to let the conversations drop.' He suggested however, that the naval terms were 'rather stiff.' Lloyd George then read the terms

"The Island"

(Continued from Page 4)

Still, all this lightness seemed too good for human nature's daily food. Was it indeed true as reported that St. Peter had his own difficulties keeping the Islanders (100 per cent. returns) inside the golden bar? We announce a once that it isn't.

The Island has its politics. It takes them often and hard. We had just started on a glorious morning along the cliff side road where the sea throws its foam flowers up to the red, abrupt shores when our host-guide remarked that the roads might be dusty since the Island had had to import its gravel supply. "Saskatchewan has difficulties that way too," replied we. "Perhaps," he came back, bolting from the blue, "but it had enough sand to get those Grits on the run." Our immediate impression was confirmed later when we observed our friend applauding the Native Son speaker who had announced for the information of the visitors that the Island had a good press, "the Conservative press." For every little Islander who is born into this world alive is either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative.

Thus it is that we are not as clear as we might be upon the school situation. We were told that it was splendid; good schools, good teachers, high school and college provision, everything lovely. And we were told that it was terrible; schools run down, teachers went paid (that is true on the average), and of questionable academic standing, and a commission of investigation promised, which promise was being shamelessly disregarded. We will have to report that the office of the school superintendent, finally run to earth in a corner of the legislative building, did not impress us as a centre calculated to inspire, but far be it from us to get mixed up in anything having to do with Island politics.

We pulled away from the Island reluctantly on a holiday morning accompanied by various picnic parties, all provisioned with fishing tackle and baskets and long rubber boots, also clothed in dignity which befits an angler and especially an Island angler in the cluttering presence of mere outsiders.

suggested by the Naval Council which called for the surrender of 150 submarines, ten battleships, and six battlecruisers, besides lighter craft. 'What are the Allies going to do,' asked Colonel House, 'with the ships they take from Germany?'

'They will divide them,' replied the British Prime Minister. 'You can sink them if you like; you must take them away from Germany.'

'Well,' said Balfour, 'I do not think Germany will agree to these conditions. They are stiffer than those imposed on France in 1781, you will have to beat them in the field worse than they are beaten now.'

'We are all agreed,' wrote House in his diary that evening, 'that the articles drawn up by the navy are entirely to severe and we propose to soften them. We plan to eliminate the German battle cruisers and submarine fleet which will be all that is necessary.'

Colonel House to the President

(Cablegram)

Paris, October 30, 1918

..... I ascertained that George and Clemenceau believed that the terms of the armistice, both naval and military, were too severe, and that they should be modified. George stated that he thought it might be wise to insist on the occupation of the east bank of the Rhine. Clemenceau stated that he could not maintain himself in the Chamber of Deputies unless this was made a part of the armistice to be submitted to the Germans, and that the French army would also insist on this as their due after the long occupation of French soil by the Germans; but he gave us his word of honor that France would withdraw after the peace conditions had been fulfilled. I am inclined to sympathize with the position taken by Clemenceau.

I pointed out the danger of bringing about a state of Bolshevism in Germany if the terms of the Armistice were made too stiff, and the consequent danger to England, France and Italy. Clemenceau refused to recognize that there was any danger of Bolshevism in France. George admitted it was possible to create such a state of affairs in England, and both agreed that anything might happen in Italy.

EDWARD HOUSE

TO BE CONTINUED

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