

THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE



BEHIND THE POLITICAL CURTAIN

1912-1915

*'House longed to get good accomplished and
was content that others should have the credit.'*

VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON







*The President and Colonel House
New York 1915*

THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

Arranged as a Narrative

BY

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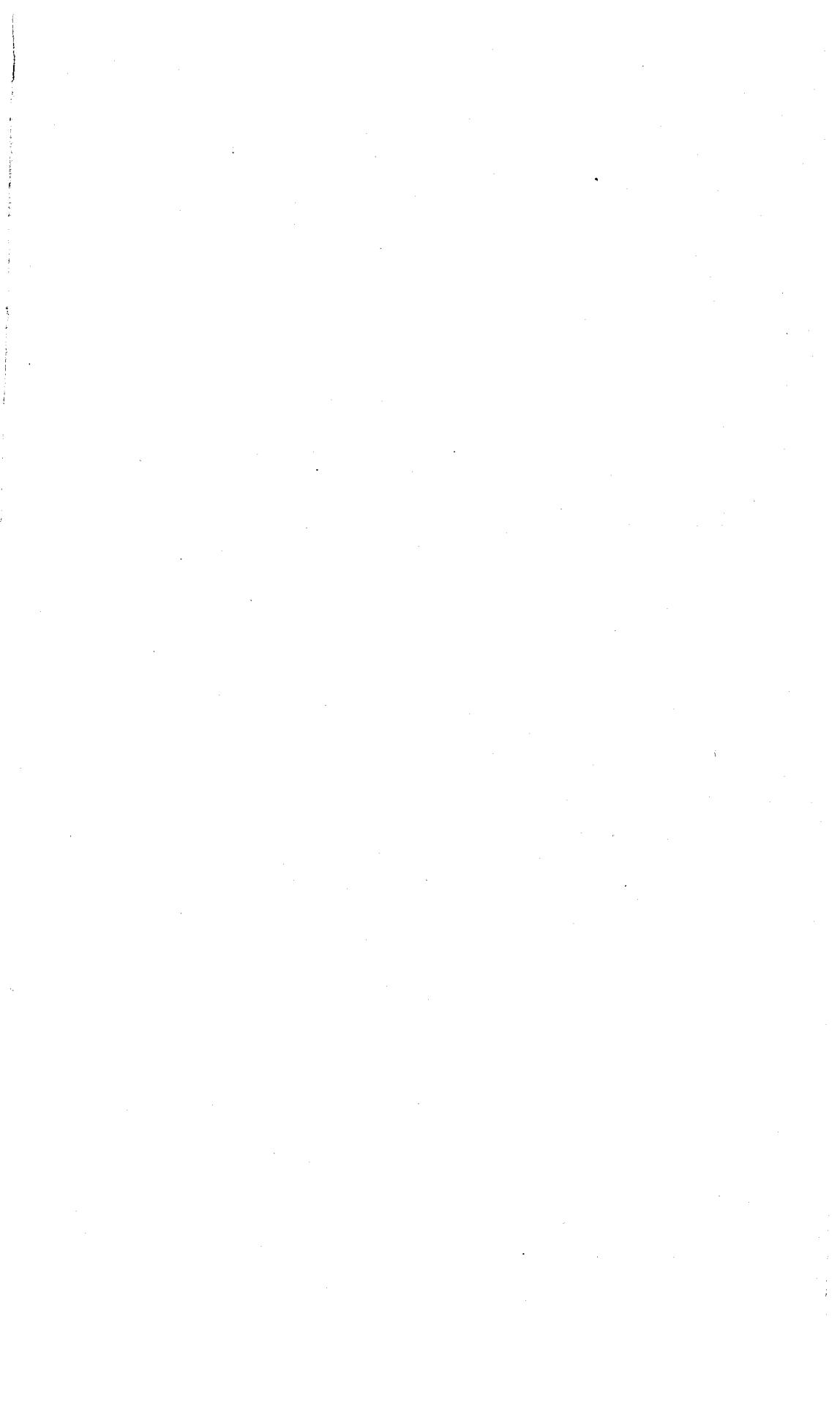
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TO
SIDNEY EDWARD MEZES



PREFATORY NOTE

By COLONEL HOUSE

THIS book written around my papers is in no sense a conventional *apologia* such as, despite my best intentions, I should probably have written had I attempted to describe the stirring and controversial events in which it was my fortune to play a part. The reader must bear in mind that it treats only of such matters as came within the orbit of my own activities. The President and his Cabinet dealt with many questions which could not enter into this narrative. My chief desire has been to let the papers tell their own story, and for this reason I have preferred to leave their arrangement in the hands of an historian.

Dr. Seymour in arranging these papers has felt it his duty to assume a highly critical attitude toward some of the chief actors. Especially he has attempted to present the great central figure of the period, Woodrow Wilson, in a purely objective light. As for myself, I frankly admit that I was and am a partisan of Woodrow Wilson, and of the measures he so ably and eloquently advocated. That we differed now and then as to the methods by which these measures might be realized, this book reveals as one follows the thread of the story, and never more sharply than in the question of military and naval preparedness.

The President, I believed, represented the opinion prevailing in the country at large, apart from the Atlantic seaboard; and I was not certain, had he advocated the training of a large army, Congress would have sustained him. But I was sure, given a large and efficient army and navy, the United States would have become the arbiter of peace and probably without the loss of a single life. When the President became convinced that it was necessary to have a large navy, Congress readily yielded to his wishes. But, even so, it is not

certain that had he asked for such an army as I advocated he would have been successful. The two arms do not hang together on even terms, for the building of a great army touches every nerve centre of the nation, social and economic, and raises questions and antagonisms which could never come to the fore over a large navy programme.

In my opinion, it ill serves so great a man as Woodrow Wilson for his friends, in mistaken zeal, to claim for him impeccability. He had his shortcomings, even as other men, and having them but gives him the more character and virility. As I saw him at the time and as I see him in retrospect, his chief defect was temperamental. His prejudices were strong and oftentimes clouded his judgments. But, by and large, he was what the head of a state should be — intelligent, honest, and courageous. Happy the nation fortunate enough to have a Woodrow Wilson to lead it through dark and tempestuous days!

Much as he accomplished, much as he commended himself to the gratitude and admiration of mankind, by some strange turn of fate his bitterest enemies have done more than his best friends to assure his undying fame. Had the Versailles Treaty gone through the United States Senate as written and without question, Woodrow Wilson would have been but one of many to share in the imperishable glory of the League of Nations. But the fight which he was forced to make for it, and the world-wide proportions which this warfare assumed, gradually forced Woodrow Wilson to the forefront of the battle, and it was around his heroic figure that it raged. While he went down in defeat in his own country, an unprejudiced world begins to see and appreciate the magnitude of the conception and its service to mankind. The League of Nations and the name of Woodrow Wilson have become inseparable, and his enemies have helped to build to his memory the noblest monument ever erected to a son of man.

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

SOME three and a half years ago Colonel House gave to Yale University, for deposit in the University Library, his entire collection of political papers. For permission to select and publish the most significant of these, I myself and all students of recent history are deeply in his debt. The responsibility for the choice and arrangement of these papers, as well as their interpretation, must rest upon me. Colonel House, whose sense of the scientific historical spirit is very lively, agreed that no essential document which might affect the historicity of the narrative should be omitted. Whatever deletions appear in the published papers have been dictated by the exigencies of space or by a regard for the feelings of persons still alive, and in no case do they alter the historical meaning of the papers.

The comment and advice of Colonel House have been invaluable. He has carefully avoided, however, any insistence upon his personal point of view, at the same time that he has offered priceless aid in throwing light upon innumerable aspects of the political story which would otherwise have remained obscure. For the time and interest and freedom which he has given me I am profoundly grateful. It is a rare privilege for the historian that his documentary material should be explained by the chief actor in the drama. I am indebted also, and beyond measure, to Colonel House's brother-in-law, President Sidney E. Mezes, and to his secretary, Miss Frances B. Denton, for constant assistance and criticism. They have read the manuscript and proof, and by reason of their intimate first-hand knowledge of the events concerned, they have corrected many misinterpretations.

My gratitude must also be expressed for the help given by many of those who themselves played an important political

rôle during the past thirteen years; they have been willing to discuss freely the history of that period and to permit me to publish their letters. I would mention Ambassador James W. Gerard, Ambassador Brand Whitlock, Ambassador H. C. Wallace, Attorney-General T. W. Gregory, Postmaster-General A. S. Burleson, Mr. Frank L. Polk, Mr. Vance McCormick, Mr. John Hays Hammond, Mr. Gordon Auchincloss, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, the Earl of Balfour, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Austen Chamberlain, Sir Horace Plunkett, Sir William Tyrrell, Mr. H. Wickham Steed, Mr. J. A. Spender, Sir William Wiseman, M. Georges Clemenceau, M. Ignace Paderewski. All of these came into close touch with Colonel House, and the personal and political sidelights which they have thrown upon him have been of inestimable value.

The volumes owe much to those who have cordially permitted the publication of letters now in the House Collection of the Yale University Library. I take pleasure in thanking Mrs. Walter Hines Page, Mrs. Thomas Lindsay, Mrs. Franklin K. Lane, Lady Spring-Rice, Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State Robert Lansing, Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo, Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston, Justice James C. McReynolds, President Charles W. Eliot, Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey, Mr. A. H. Frazier, Mr. E. S. Martin, Mr. George Foster Peabody, Mr. James Speyer.

In the arrangement of the papers and their interpretation I have made constant use of the numerous letters from President Wilson to Colonel House now deposited in the House Collection. It seemed wise to the literary legatee of the President not to grant permission to publish these letters textually; something of the personal attractiveness of Mr. Wilson has thus been lost. But the sense of the letters, setting forth his intimate feelings and policies, has been freely translated into the pages which follow. A list of the letters

which I have thus utilized is appended.¹ None of them have been published; many of them were typed by the President himself without a copy being made, often in the private code used only by Colonel House and himself.

To the authorities of Yale University who have provided facilities for the care of the House Collection and to the staff of the University Library, especially the Librarian, Mr. Andrew Keogh, I would express warmest gratitude, as well as to those alumni of Yale who by financial assistance have made possible the filing and organization of documents given by Colonel House and others. I am indebted in particular to my assistant in the curatorship of the House Collection, Miss Helen M. Reynolds; every page of these volumes bears witness to the devoted effort she has expended upon the construction of the manuscript, the verification of references, and the correction of proof. Finally I must acknowledge the constant encouragement and practical assistance of my wife in the large task of selecting the most significant documents and arranging them so as to make a coherent narrative.

C. S.

YALE UNIVERSITY
January 1, 1926

¹ See page xv.

LETTERS FROM WILSON TO HOUSE

Utilized for the period, October 1911–March 1917

DATE	SUBJECT
1911	
October	18 Wilson's party regularity. 24 Desirability of abolishing two-thirds rule in National Democratic Convention.
December	4 Engagement to dine with House and Dr. Houston. 22 Pre-Convention campaign organization. 26 Pre-Convention campaign organization.
1912	
January	4 Personal. Bryan's attitude. 27 Personal.
February	6 Personal. 14 Personal.
March	15 Pre-Convention outlook. Political strength of Champ Clark, Underwood, Harmon.
May	6 House's political organization in Texas. 29 Personal. [Telegram.]
June	9 Plans for Baltimore Convention. 24 Convention organization.
July	17 Plan of electoral campaign.
August	22 Plan of electoral campaign. 31 Plan of electoral campaign.
September	11 McCombs' possible resignation as National Democratic Chairman.
November	7 Comment on result of election. Gratitude for House's services. 30 Personal. House's Washington visit for study of Cabinet material.
December	3 Personal. House's Washington visit.
1913	
January	6 Discussion of Cabinet material. 23 Discussion of Cabinet material.
February	5 Cabinet appointments. 7 Cabinet appointments.
May	9 New York appointments. 17 Federal Reserve Bill. 20 Personal. [Telegram.]
July	17 Personal. [Telegram.]

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DATE	SUBJECT
1913	
September	4 Personal. 18 Massachusetts appointments. 26 Request for House's help in personal matter. 29 Personal.
October	17 One Hundredth Anniversary of peace among English-speaking peoples.
November	5 Mexico.
December	9 Message to Congress. 27 Personal.
1914	
January	3 Trusts. 6 Trust Message. [Telegram.] 9 Federal Reserve Board appointments. 28 Panama Canal Zone. 30 Personal. [Telegram.]
February	16 Federal Reserve Board appointments. 18 Federal Reserve Board appointments. 25 Federal Reserve Board appointments. Mexican situation.
March	7 Federal Reserve Board appointments. 30 Federal Reserve Board appointments.
April	2 Federal Reserve Board appointments.
May	2 Federal Reserve Board appointments. 15 Departure of House for Europe.
June	16 House's mission in Europe. 22 French proposal for revision of commercial treaty between France and the United States. Mediation between the United States and Mexico. 26 House's mission in Europe.
July	9 Endorsement of House's mission.
August	3 Situation in Europe. 4 Mediation in European War. [Telegram.] 5 Mediation in European War. 6 Mediation in European War. Shipping Bill. 6 Mrs. Wilson's death. [Telegram.] 17 Personal. 18 Personal. 25 Attitude toward European War. 27 Personal. [Telegram.]
September	8 Approval of House's letters to Zimmermann and Ambassador W. H. Page. 16 Approval of House's suggestion on taxes. 17 Appointments. 19 Approval of House's negotiations with Bernstorff. [Telegram.]

LETTERS FROM WILSON TO HOUSE

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DATE	SUBJECT
1914	
October	10 Negotiations for purchase of cotton.
	16 Negotiations for purchase of cotton.
	19 Appointments.
	22 Personal.
	23 Attitude of Ambassador W. H. Page.
	29 Attitude of Ambassador W. H. Page.
November	2 Personal. [Telegram.]
December	1 Presidential Message. Belgian relief.
	2 Foreign relations.
	9 Presidential Message.
	14 Personal.
	16 Personal. [Telegram.]
	22 Personal. [Telegram.]
	25 Personal.
	26 Industrial relations. [Telegram.]
	26 Trade Commission.
	28 Personal.
	28 Personal. [Telegram.]
	31 Personal. [Telegram.]
1915	
January	5 Approval of House's letter to Zimmermann.
	6 Appointments.
	7 Federal employment bureau.
	11 Personal.
	16 Mediation in European War.
	17 Personal. [Telegram.]
	28 Situation in Germany.
	29 Personal. [Telegram.]
	29 Purpose of House's European mission.
February	13 House's negotiations in England. Note to the Allies. [Cablegram.]
	15 Gerard's information on situation in Germany. [Cable- gram.]
	20 Relations with Great Britain. [Cablegram.]
	25 House's negotiations. [Cablegram.]
March	1 Conditions in Germany. [Cablegram.]
	8 House's negotiations. [Cablegram.]
	23 British Order in Council. [Cablegram.]
April	2 Approval of House's negotiations. [Cablegram.]
	15 Messages to President and Foreign Minister of France. [Cablegram.]
	22 Pan-American Pact. [Cablegram.]
May	— British blockade. [Cablegram.]
	4 Sinking of <i>Gulflight</i> . [Cablegram.]
	5 British blockade. [Cablegram.]

xvi LETTERS FROM WILSON TO HOUSE

DATE	SUBJECT
1915	
May	16 Possible compromise between British blockade and German submarine warfare. [Cablegram.]
	18 British blockade. [Cablegram.]
	20 Possible compromise between British blockade and German submarine warfare. [Cablegram.]
	23 British blockade. [Cablegram.]
	26 British blockade. [Cablegram.]
June	1 House's return. [Cablegram.]
	20 Personal. Wilson planning visit to House. [Telegram.]
	22 Wilson's visit to House. [Telegram.]
July	3 Mexico. [Telegram.]
	3 Mexico.
	7 Mexico.
	12 Counsellorship of State Department. Note to Germany.
	14 Strained relations with Germany.
	19 Contraband and cotton.
	20 British blockade.
	22 Contraband and cotton.
	27 Counsellorship of State Department. British blockade.
	29 British blockade. Bernstorff.
August	4 Appointments.
	4 Mexico.
	4 German plots.
	5 Contraband and cotton.
	7 Contraband and cotton.
	21 Asking for advice on <i>Arabic</i> case. Attitude of Ambassador W. H. Page.
	25 Bernstorff. German plots.
	31 Personal.
	31 <i>Arabic</i> crisis. Federal Reserve Board.
September	7 Austrian plots. Sinking of <i>Hesperian</i> .
	20 Bernstorff. <i>Arabic</i> crisis.
	27 Bernstorff. <i>Arabic</i> crisis.
	29 Personal.
October	4 Personal.
	4 Armed merchantmen controversy.
	18 Possible offer of help to Allies.
	18 Attitude of Ambassador W. H. Page.
	29 Personal.
November	10 Possibilities of peace. Domestic politics.
	11 House's messages to Grey. [Telegram.]
	12 Conditions in Germany. Sinking of <i>Ancona</i> .
	17 House's mission to Europe.
	24 British and German Ambassadors in Washington. House's mission to Europe.

LETTERS FROM WILSON TO HOUSE xvii

DATE	SUBJECT
1916	
January	9 Assurance of American coöperation in policy seeking to bring about and maintain permanent peace. [Cablegram.]
	12 The Senate and British blockade. [Cablegram.]
	13 Approval of House's negotiations. [Cablegram.]
February	16 Armed merchantmen. [Cablegram.]
March	3 Personal. [Telegram.]
	20 Gerard's report from Germany.
April	15 Appointments. [Telegram.]
	21 <i>Sussex</i> crisis.
	22 <i>Sussex</i> crisis. Domestic politics.
	29 <i>Sussex</i> crisis. [Telegram.]
May	5 <i>Sussex</i> crisis. [Telegram.]
	8 Relations with Great Britain.
	9 Possibility of peace.
	16 Offer of help to Allies. British blockade.
	17 Attitude of Ambassador W. H. Page.
	17 Chairmanship of Democratic National Committee.
	18 Offer of help to Allies. Relations with Great Britain.
	18 Request for advice on speech before League to Enforce Peace.
	22 Relations with Allies. Request for material for speech. Chairmanship of Democratic National Committee.
	29 Chairmanship of Democratic National Committee.
June	6 Chairmanship of Democratic National Committee.
	10 Chairmanship of Democratic National Committee.
	11 Chairmanship of Democratic National Committee. [Telegram.]
	22 European situation. Mexico. Plan for electoral campaign.
July	2 Relations with England. Appointments. Electoral campaign.
	23 British Blacklist.
	27 Relations with Great Britain.
September	20 Personal.
	29 Electoral campaign.
October	10 Relations with Great Britain.
	24 Electoral campaign.
	30 Madison Square rally.
November	6 Personal.
	21 Drafting of note calling on belligerents to state terms of peace.
	24 Relations with Germany. Attitude of Ambassador W. H. Page.
	25 Peace note.
December	3 Peace note.

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DATE	SUBJECT
1916	
December	4 Personal.
	8 House's information from England.
	19 Peace note.
	27 Attempt to secure confidential peace terms from Germany.
1917	
January	16 Drafting of speech on peace terms before the Senate.
	17 House's negotiations with Bernstorff.
	19 House's negotiations with Bernstorff. Speech before the Senate.
	24 House's negotiations with Bernstorff.
February	12 Refusal to consider coalition government.

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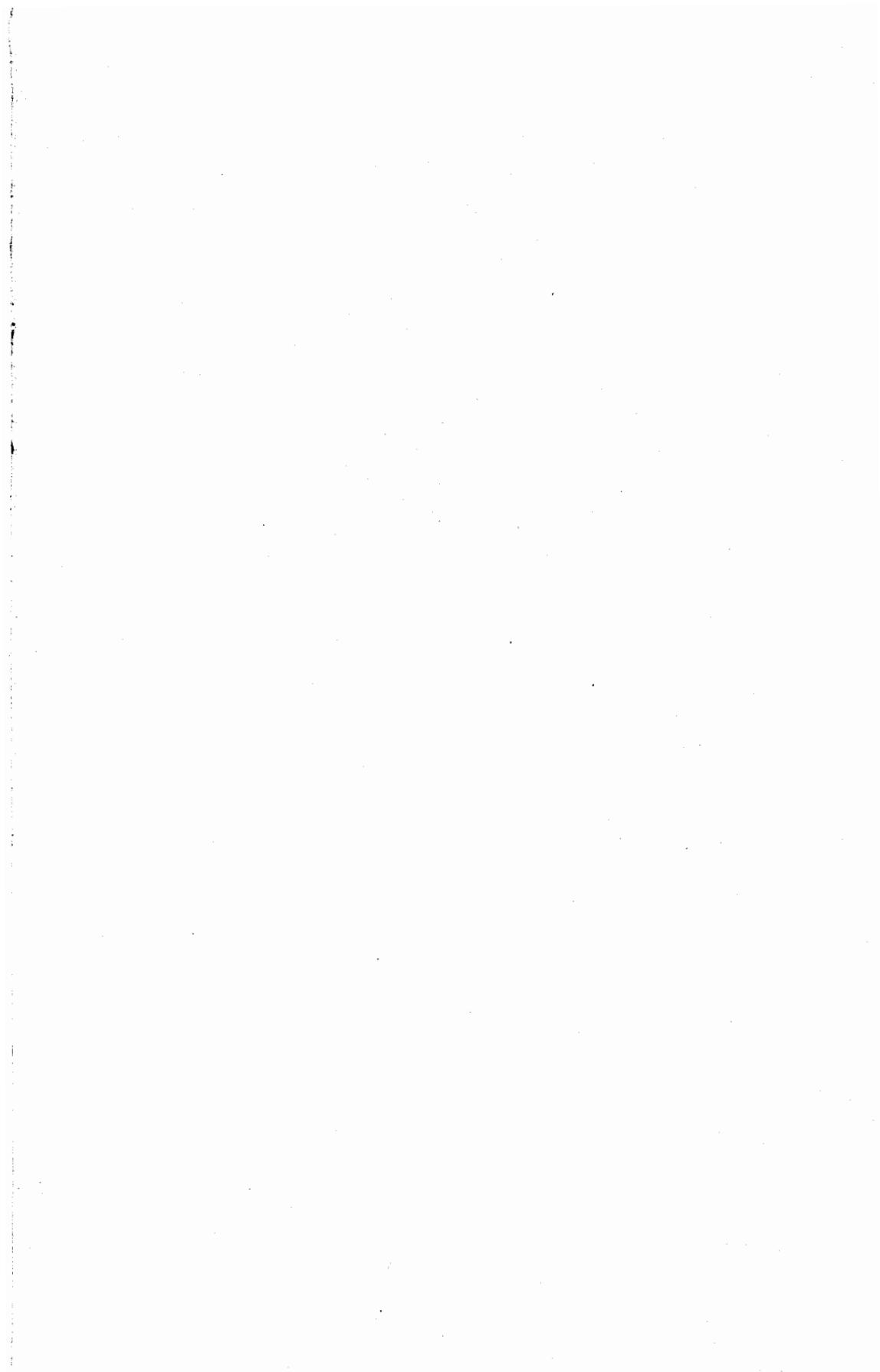
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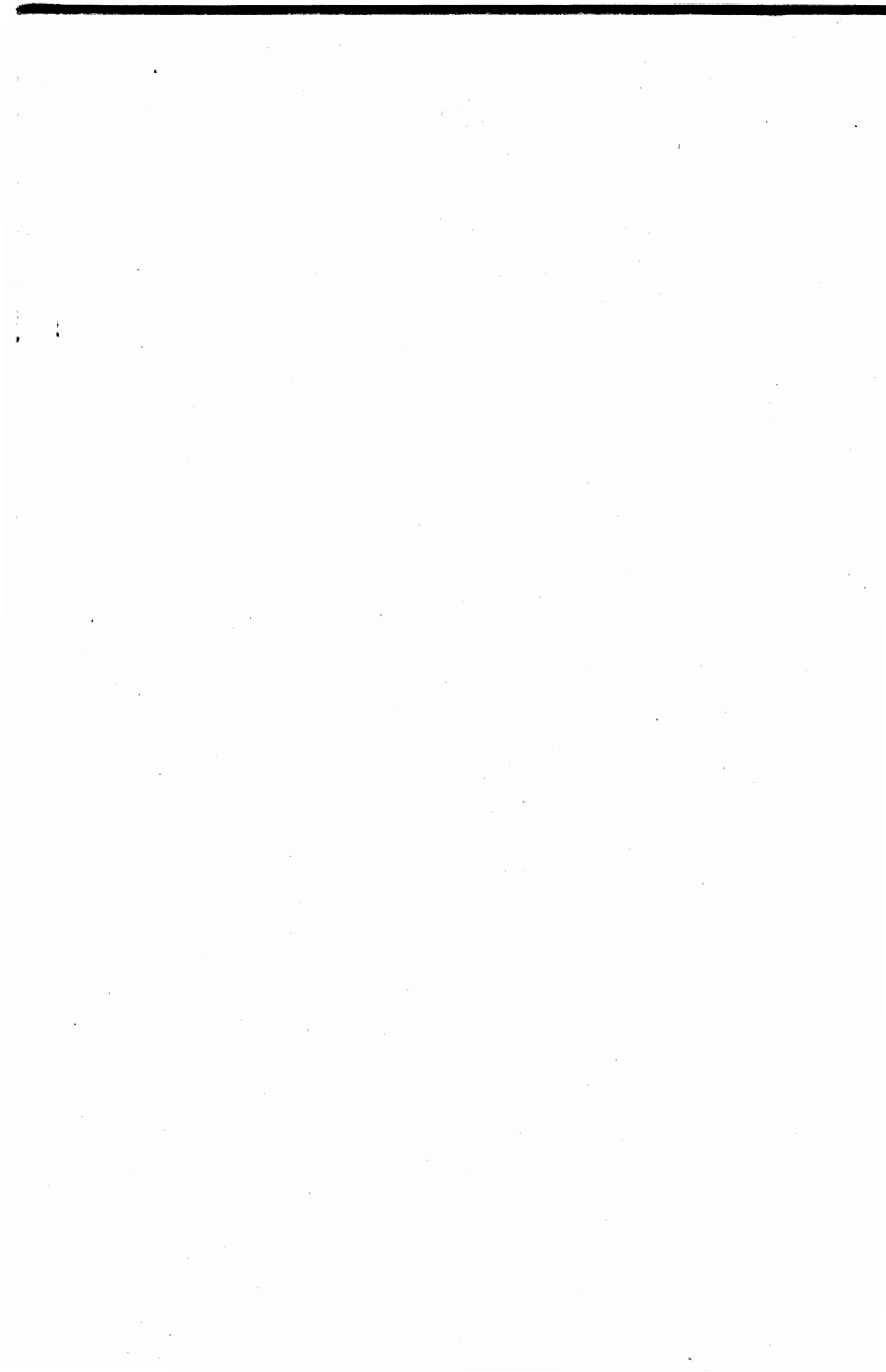
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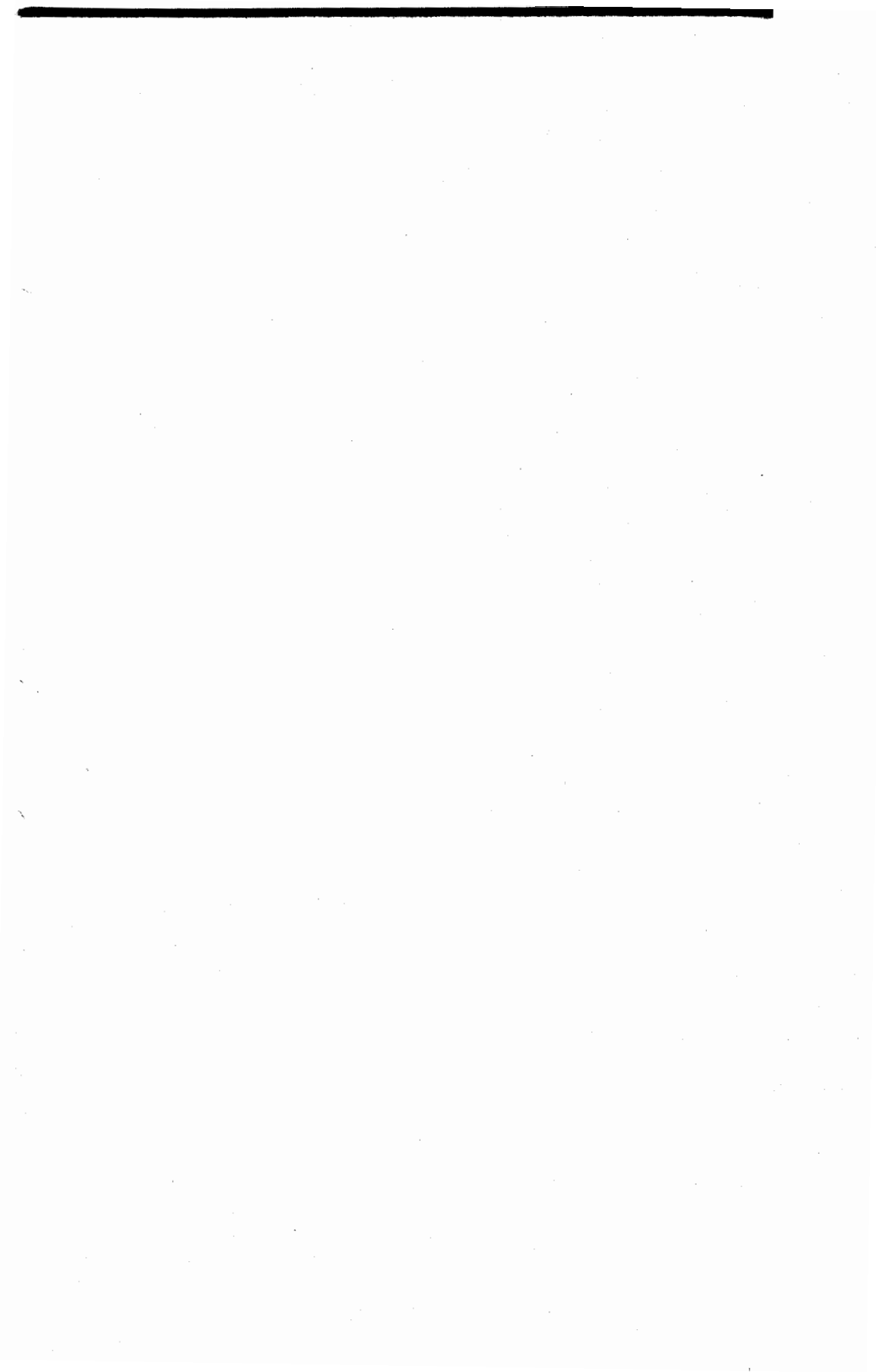


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THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE



THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

I look forward now to your book. It is, I hope, books like yours and mine that will bring people to reflect soberly upon the war. If so we shall be helping to form a public opinion that will make for peace.

Viscount Grey of Fallodon to House, October 16, 1925

THE practice of interring historical documents in securely locked archives, where they may lie forgotten until popular interest in the period evaporates, has much to be said for it. It prevents their use for partisan political purposes; it protects the sensibilities of those political leaders whose rôle, viewed at close range, may have been less heroic than the public imagined; it guarantees, through the lapse of time, the growth of that magical touchstone, 'historical perspective,' which supposedly eliminates bias and ensures the truth.

Unfortunately, if the materials of real history are absent those of legend replace them. 'History,' said Voltaire, 'is a fable which men have agreed upon.' And one may ask whether it is not the duty of the historian to establish the facts before the fable has crystallized, and the duty of whoever possesses the documents to make them available to the historian at the earliest possible moment. The argument is the stronger if we accept the view that mankind learns from its past. Granting that a lesson of value is to be secured from history, surely our own generation has a right to insist that its benefits ought not be reserved for the unborn of the future. If the inner history of the decade which saw Europe caught in the horror of war and its aftermath can help us to avoid another such disaster, the disadvantages of keeping

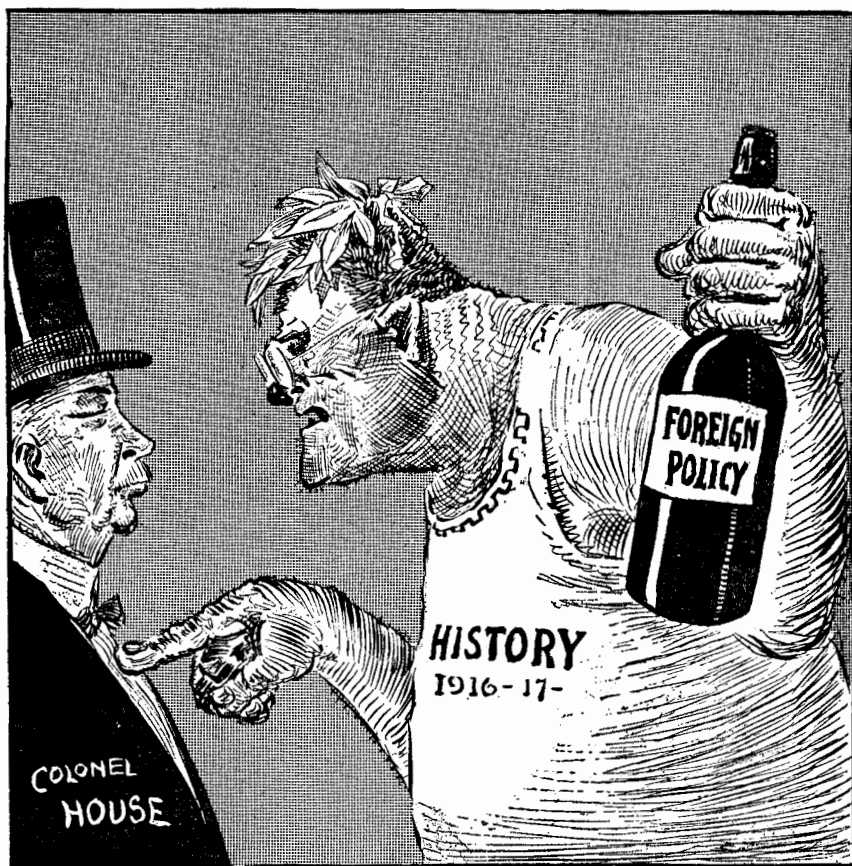
2 INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

that history in cold storage until the twenty-first century are apparent.

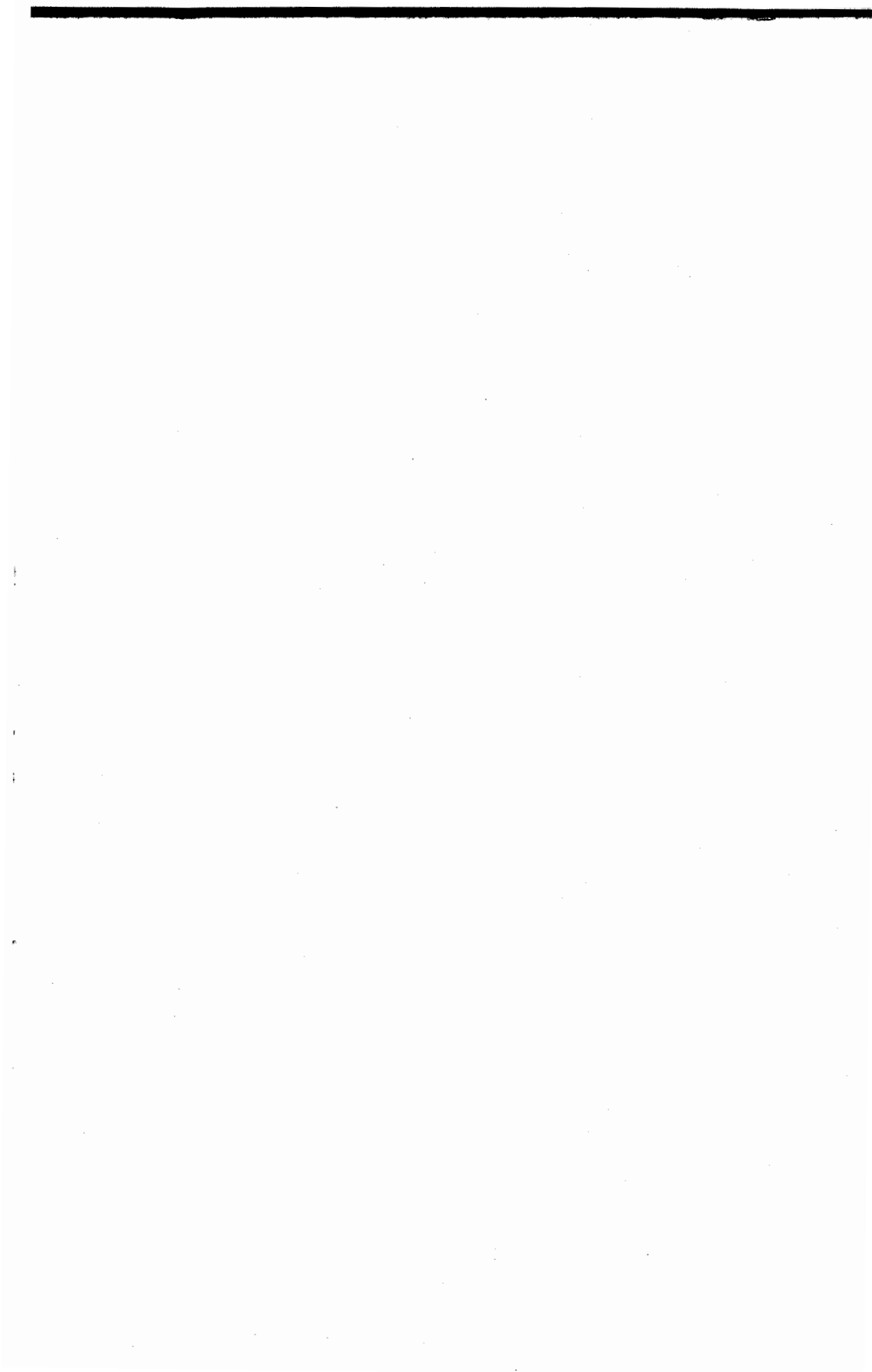
Such thoughts may have crossed the mind of Colonel House when he determined to have published sufficient of his papers to elucidate what he regarded as the true story of the decisive years in which he played a rôle of major political importance. A newspaper cartoon of 1916 represents the Muse of History (rather a frowsy Clio, to be sure, bespectacled and distraught) presenting a tightly corked bottle labelled *Foreign Policy* to a silent and impassive Colonel House, and in desperation demanding the opener. After the lapse of a decade, the Colonel has produced it.

The anxiety of the Historical Muse is comprehensible as the student pores over the pile of papers which indicate the extent and variety of the personal and political contacts that House established. Here are great sheaves of letters from the European statesmen of the war period — Grey, Balfour, Bryce, Lloyd George, Plunkett, Reading, Briand, Clemenceau, Zimmermann, Bernstorff, Spring-Rice — with the Colonel's replies; yet more extensive files of his correspondence with the American Ambassadors in the capitals of Europe — the Pages, Gerard, Sharp, Penfield, Whitlock, Willard; letters to and from the members of Mr. Wilson's Cabinet, covering the details of appointments and departmental policy; and finally the eight years' series of correspondence with the President himself, intimate and affectionate, which explains the origin and development of Wilsonian policies, domestic and foreign, from the beginning of Wilson's race for the Presidency in 1911 until the Peace Conference of Paris in 1919.

As he sorts the dusty files, the curious investigator finds himself introduced into the very *penetralia* of politics — the making of a Cabinet, the origins of currency reform, the American attempt to prevent the World War, American offers to help the Allies made and refused, the intimate



'COME ON, NOW! GIMME THE OPENER!'
From the Montgomery (Ala.) *Advertiser*, April 14, 1916



details of American coöperation in the war, in the Armistice and in the Peace Conference; he sees at close range, the President himself, Bernstorff and the Kaiser, the European Premiers and Foreign Ministers, American Ambassadors and Cabinet members.

If it had not been for an aid of exceptional character, the preservation of these papers would have been difficult or impossible. Fortunately House possessed in Miss Frances B. Denton, the daughter of an old friend, an assistant who was more collaborator than confidential secretary, and one whose rôle proved to be of increasing importance. In the midst of the negotiations which Colonel House carried on with Cabinets and potentates, she found time to gather and file the material without which the story could never have been told. She combined the discretion and tact demanded by House's diplomatic activities with an instinct for the preservation of documents that will always endear her to historians. 'She has not only kept the record,' wrote House in 1916, 'but has kept the faith and with an enduring loyalty and self-abnegation.'

Through Miss Denton was made possible the diary which forms the heart of the entire collection of papers. Every evening, with rare exceptions and during eight years, Colonel House dictated to her his résumé of the events of the day. Definitely and objectively he related his conversations with, often the very words of, his political associates, and he was associated with the men who made the history of the decade. The result is a journal of more than two thousand pages, a record drafted at the moment and with a frankness which suggests that it was not designed for publication. It has the Colonel's comments on men and events, opinions which he sometimes changed, prophecies which upon occasion were fulfilled and again remained unfulfilled, a personal document such as the biographer dreams of and seldom discovers.

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Upon the basis of such papers and his recollections, Colonel House might have written the conventional 'Memoirs,' which too often confuse the after-impression with the event itself, but which, through the possession of hindsight, preserve the author from ever having committed an error. Instead, he chose to let the papers tell their own story and permit the reader to decide whether or not the Colonel was right in this incident and in that. If there is prejudice in the pages that follow — and what historical narrative is innocent of prejudice? — it is that of the man who, after many months of arranging the papers so as to let them make a story, came to see events through the eyes of Colonel House himself. But at no time was a chapter begun under the influence of a preconceived thesis, and nothing could have been more exciting than to watch the behavior of the chief figures as each chapter took form; in this they did well, in that they were disappointing.

An objective narrative, such as the documents themselves recount, was the more necessary in view of the paucity of published information touching the career and accomplishments of Colonel House. There are few, if any, instances of men exercising so much political influence about whom so little was known. The personal story of a man holding public office must needs become public property. A searchlight is immediately turned upon his past career. The press will have it so and, if skilfully utilized, political propaganda of value may conceivably be developed from it. Since we demand of our public personages a certain blameless rectitude of conduct, without which one is ill-advised to seek office, the subject of inquiry, even though he may never have accomplished anything of note, is generally well pleased with the conventions of political advertising designed to engage the interest of the voters.

With Colonel House it was bound to be otherwise. He sought no office for himself — in itself a peculiarity and one

that would naturally puzzle opinion — nor did he seek office for his friends. His methods and purposes were quite different from those of the party boss, for he never worked through a 'machine'; he disliked the details of party politics, and in later years he generally managed to evade them. He aimed certainly at influencing political events, as the sequel will show, but he accomplished his aim through personal influence very different from that of the orthodox politician. The story of how he acquired such influence is the explanation of his success, and to understand it we must read his political papers. But it is easy to comprehend at first glance that to him conventional political advertisement could bring no profit and might bring much harm. He strove constantly to stifle the public adulation that zealous press agents sought to inspire, and he was careful to bring it about that credit for this or that measure in which he was interested should go to the political office-holders. House's papers are filled with references to the efforts he made to obliterate the intimate personal sketch, so familiar in American politics; and when finally a brief biography appeared which gave him full credit for his influence in the Wilson administration, at his special request the edition was withdrawn by the publisher.

The desire to escape publicity was largely a matter of common sense, for in this way only could he hope to avoid political enmities and jealousies: President, Cabinet members, Ambassadors, all knew that he stood ready to help them and yet would seek no public recognition. It was also instinctive, springing not from undue modesty, for Colonel House was as coldly objective in judging himself as another, but rather from a philosophic pleasure in accomplishment rather than reward, and perhaps in part from a sardonic sense of humor which was tickled by the thought that he, unseen and often unsuspected, without great wealth or office, merely through the power of personality and good

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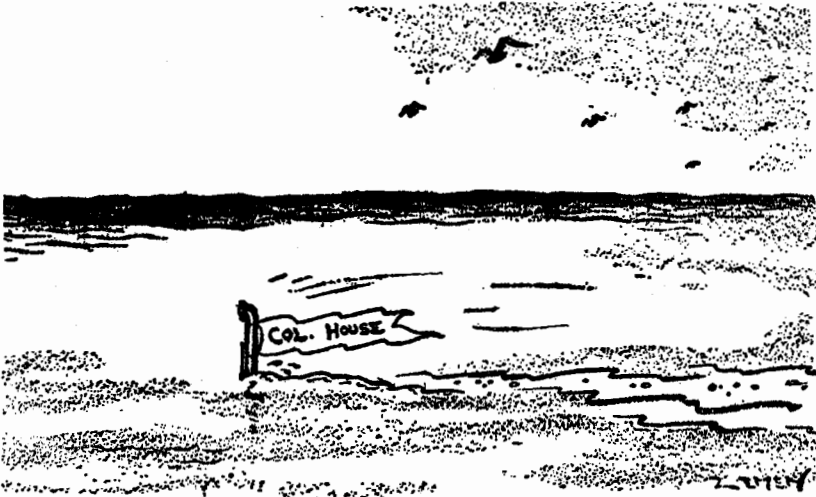
sense, was actually deflecting the currents of history. Whether this supposition is borne out by the intimate papers of the Colonel, the reader must judge.

The path which House laid out for himself was entirely untrodden, and it is fruitless to seek an historical parallel. Monarchs had shared their secrets with father confessors and extracted wisdom from their advice; Presidents had created their kitchen-cabinets. But neither the one nor the other suggests the unofficial functions which House exercised. He was a combination of Richelieu's Father Joseph and Thurlow Weed, but he was very much more. At the same time that he played the part of adviser to the President, of buffer between office-seekers and Cabinet, of emissary to foreign courts, he indulged in a complex of activities which kept him in close touch with business men, local politicians, artists, and journalists, lawyers and college professors. His intimacy with European statesmen was as close and his friendship as warm as the personal associations he created at home. Long after the war, when their political relations had become ancient history, he visited Grey and Plunkett, Clemenceau and Paderewski. Long after the Democrats lost power in the United States, the officials of Great Britain, France, and Germany sought his advice. His range of contacts was so great that he became a sort of clearing-house for all who desired to accomplish something. He avoided high office, which comes to many men, but he reserved for himself a niche which is unique in history.

Inevitably, the public was mystified, especially during the early years of the Wilson administration. The circle widened that recognized in him a powerful factor in national and international politics, and yet few could answer the simplest questions about him. Who and what was he? Many replies were given, but, as Colonel House refused to say which were true and which false, no one was the wiser. He became the Man of Mystery and, since facts were lacking, fiction sup-

plied their place. Myths of the most varied sort developed about this 'Texas Talleyrand,' this 'backwoods politician.' He was represented as a lover of devious methods, reticent as the Sphinx, emotionless as a red-skin. Such tales must be strung with the other mock-pearls of history. And the interesting point to note is that the public, deprived of facts, none the less refused to accept the legends fed to them which, had they been true, would have disqualified House utterly for the work that he undertook. Puzzled but untroubled, they accepted him finally as 'the President's adviser.' Here and there were to be heard grumbles at this strange departure in American politics; but in general, knowing little of his activities and nothing of his advice, the people came to look upon him as a wise institution.

Thus Colonel House disdained fame and achieved it. His fame, however, rested primarily upon the fact of his relations with Wilson and not upon what he was or what he did. Of that the Colonel and those close to him alone could tell, and they told nothing. It is, therefore, with the greater interest that the historian turns over the mass of papers from which the story of his dramatic career may be disengaged.



SH!

From the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUNDS

Your success has been without a parallel in Texas politics.
Governor-elect Sayers to House, May 17, 1898

I

'WE originally came from Holland and the name was Huis, which finally fell into House. Father ran away from home and went to sea when a child, and did not return to his home until he had become a man of property and distinction. He came to Texas when it belonged to Mexico. He joined the revolution, fought under General Burleson, and helped make Texas a republic. For his services in this war he received a grant of land in Coryell County. He lived to see Texas come into the Union, secede, and return to the Union. He lived in Texas under four flags.'

Thus wrote Colonel House in the summer of 1916, when a brief lull in his political activities gave opportunity for him to reconstruct on paper something of the background that lay behind his rapid rise to national and international eminence. Although the family was in its origin Dutch, his forbears were for some three hundred years English, and it was from England that his father ran away. House himself, a seventh son, was born in 1858, at Houston, Texas, and this State he has always regarded as his home. Even more than those of Wilson or Walter Page, with whom he later was so closely associated, his first years were touched by the excitement and turmoil of the events of the time.

'Some of my earliest recollections are of the Civil War. I began to remember, I think, in '62 and '63, when our soldiers were coming and going to and from the front. I remember

quite distinctly when Lincoln was assassinated. Father came home to luncheon, and I recall where Mother was standing when he told her that the President had been shot. I remember, too, that he said that it was the worst thing that had so far happened to the South. He saw farther than most men, and he knew from the beginning of the war that it must end disastrously for the South. He knew the Northern States possessed the resources which are potential in war, and that the Southern States, lacking them, would lose. The blockade which the Federal Government was able to throw around the Southern coast, while not absolute, was rigid enough to make it difficult to break through and obtain from the outside what was needed within.

'During the war he sent many ships out from Galveston with cotton, to run the blockade to the near-by ports, such as Havana and Belize Honduras. At that time we had a house in Galveston as well as in Houston. The Galveston home covered an entire block. The house was a large red brick Colonial one, with white pillars, and an orange grove took up most of the grounds, and oleanders encircled them.

'In determining when to send his ships out, Father was governed largely by the weather. Dark, stormy nights were the ones chosen. In the afternoon he would go up to the cupola of our house, and with his glasses he would scan the horizon to see how many Federal gunboats were patrolling the coast. Then his ship would go out in the early part of the night. In the morning, at daylight, he would be again on the lookout to count the Federal gunboats, to see if any were missing. If they were all there, he felt reasonably sure his ship with her cargo had gotten through the blockade.

'It would be months before he knew definitely whether his ships had come safely to port or whether they had been captured. When he lost one, the loss was complete; but when one got through, the gain was large. He had a working arrangement with the Confederate Government by which the

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return voyage brought them clothing, arms, and munitions of war of all kinds.

'The terrible days between Lee's surrender and the bringing of some sort of order out of the chaos in the South made a lasting impression on my mind. I cannot recall just now how long the interim was, but it must have been a full year or more.

'There was one regiment of Texas soldiers that came to Houston and disbanded there. They looted the town. They attempted to break into Father's storehouse, but he stood at the doors with a shotgun. . . . Murder was rife everywhere; there was no law, there was no order. It was unsafe to go at night to your next-door neighbor's. When Father had this to do, he always reached for his shotgun or six-shooter and held it ready to shoot while both going and coming.'

Those who later were to accuse Colonel House of ill-considered pacifism, would doubtless have been surprised to learn of the atmosphere in which he was reared. In later life he was often asked whether he considered himself a pacifist. 'Yes,' he replied, 'so far as international affairs are concerned. War is too costly and ineffective a method of settling disputes between nations. But as an individual I have not been able to escape the conviction that there are occasions in life when a man must be prepared to fight.'

As a boy and later in early manhood, he learned from personal experience the meaning of lawlessness and bloodshed. Because of this, perhaps, he was brought to perceive not merely the horror but the stupidity of war; and it was easier for him, when he attained an influential position, to utilize it to bring peace, in that his personal courage was beyond question. It may have been from these early experiences also that he learned the value of audacity. In the days of his great political influence, Colonel House was

frequently pictured as a man dominated by the spirit of caution. Nothing could be further from the truth. He believed always in careful preparation and foresight whenever possible; as an English statesman once said, 'House always sees three months ahead.' But he believed more fervently yet that nothing worth while could be accomplished without a daring that might wisely be allowed to approach recklessness. Like Cavour, whom he admired, he knew how to wait for the supreme moment and then risk everything.

'Even the children of the town [he wrote] caught the spirit of recklessness and disorder, and there were constant feuds and broils amongst us. My brother James, six years older than I, was the leader of our "gang." We all had guns and pistols. We had "nigger shooters" (small catapults), and there were no childish games excepting those connected with war. We lived and breathed in the atmosphere of strife and destruction.

'In the evening, around the fireside, there were told tales of daring deeds, and it was the leader of such deeds that we strove to emulate. Often the firebells would ring as a signal that a riot was imminent, and the citizens would flock together at some given point, all armed to the teeth. These disturbances were, as a rule, between the old-time citizens and the negroes and carpetbaggers.

'I cannot remember the time when I began to ride and to shoot. Why I did not kill myself, one can never know, for accidents were common. My eldest brother had the side of his face shot off and has been disfigured by it all his life. He hung between life and death for weeks, but finally came through with one side of his face gone.

'I had many narrow escapes. Twice I came near killing one of my playmates in the reckless use of firearms. They were our toys and, as a matter of fact, death was our playmate.'

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The young House was taken to England as a boy and went to school at Bath. His experiences with his schoolmates by no means presaged the cordial relations which he was later to establish with British diplomats:

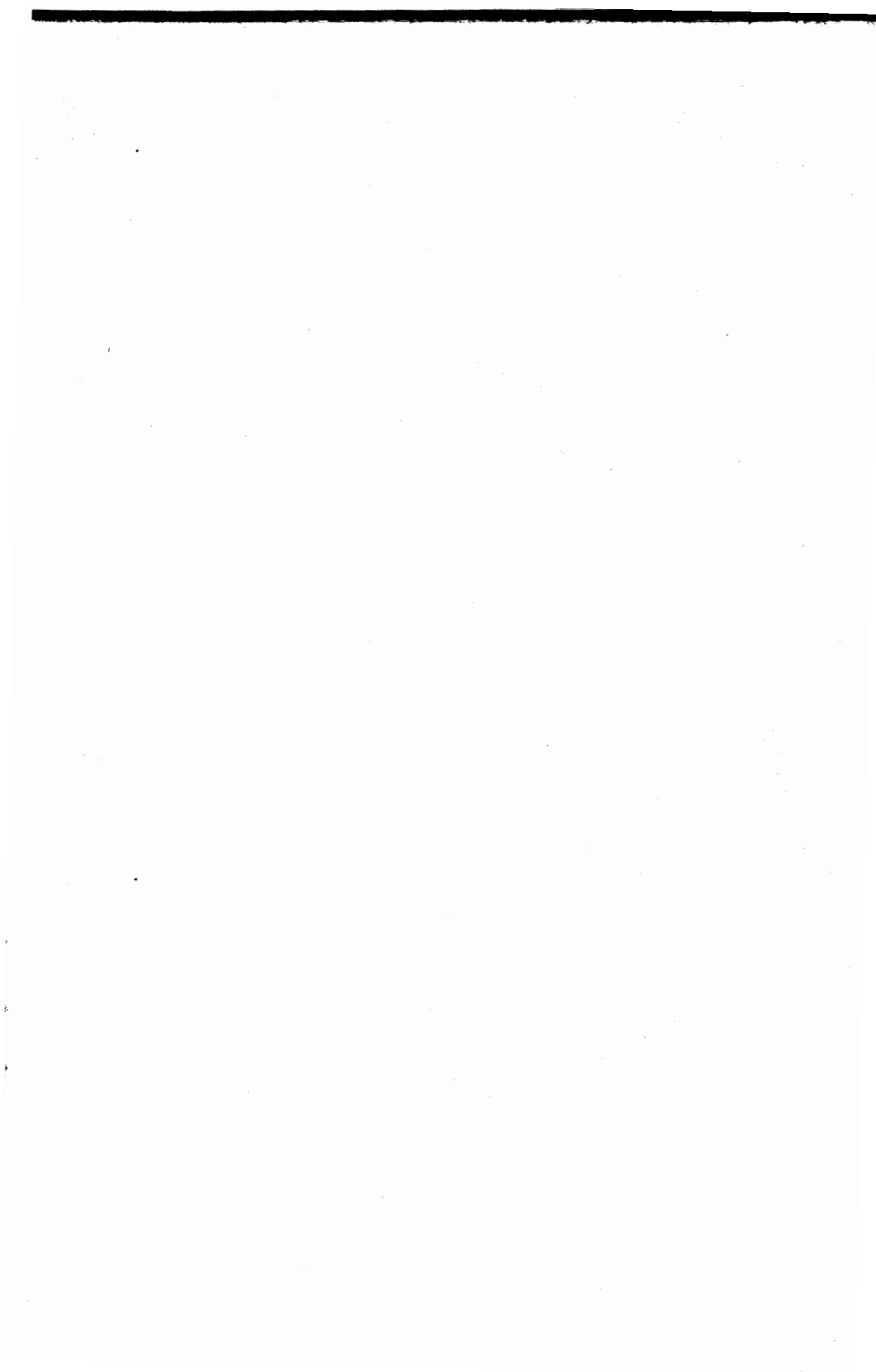
‘James attempted the same sort of rough play we had been accustomed to in Texas, and we were constantly in broils with the young English lads, who were not familiar with such lawlessness. My old darkey nurse used to tell me that if I had not been the seventh son of a seventh son, I would never have survived.’

At the age of fourteen, after the death of his mother, he was sent to school first in Virginia and then in Connecticut. House’s recollections of the former are not pleasant: ‘I shall never forget my depression when we arrived. . . . The nearest town to us was thirty miles away, and a more desolate, lonely spot no homesick boy ever saw.’ Scholastic pursuits evidently made less impression on his mind than the cruelty of the older boys, which soon furnished an opportunity for House to display his mettle. He says little of the particular incident which evidently gave him a preferred place among the boys, but that little indicates something of the determined temper which was to appear on various occasions during his political career.

‘I made up my mind at the second attempt to haze me that I would not permit it. I not only had a pistol but a large knife, and with these I held the larger, rougher boys at bay. There was no limit to the lengths they would go in hazing those who would allow it. One form I recall was that of going through the pretense of hanging. They would tie a boy’s hands behind him and string him up by the neck over a limb until he grew purple in the face. . . . None of it, however, fell to me. What was done to those who permitted it, is almost



E. M. H. AND MAMMY ELIZA
Taken in Bath, England



beyond belief. . . . The only thing that reconciled me to my lot was the near-by mountains, where I could shoot and enjoy out-of-door life.'

Clearly a change, even to a Yankee atmosphere, was an improvement; and House hailed with relief, if not enthusiasm, the plan which at the age of seventeen sent him to New Haven, Connecticut.

'I had expected to be able to enter Yale, but I found myself wholly unprepared and reluctantly entered the Hopkins Grammar School of the Class of '77. . . . What I had been taught was of but little use, and I would have been better off as far as Latin and Greek were concerned if I had known nothing and had started from the beginning. I studied but little, and I soon found I would have difficulty in joining the Class of '81 in Yale. Meanwhile, Oliver T. Morton, a son of Senator Oliver P. Morton of Indiana, and I had become fast friends and we agreed to tutor together and go to Cornell instead of Yale. Both Morton and I were more bent on mischief than upon books and, while the mischief was innocent, it made us poor students.'

It was less mischief, however, than budding enthusiasm for his lifelong interest that kept House and Morton from their books. Already the young Southerner was intoxicated by a passion for politics and public affairs; he read politics, talked politics, and in his first year at the Grammar School, a boy of seventeen, he brought himself into close contact with the mechanism of politics. It was the year of the famous Hayes-Tilden campaign.

'Every near-by political meeting I attended, and there was no one more interested in the nomination and election of the presidential candidates of 1876 than I. At every opportunity

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I would go to New York and hang about Democratic Headquarters which, I remember, were at the Everett House in Union Square. I used to see Mr. Tilden go in and out, and wondered then how so frail a looking man could make a campaign for President.

'Bayard, Blaine, and others I heard speak whenever the opportunity occurred, and I believe that I was as nearly engrossed in politics as I have ever been since.

'Before the nominations were made, I was, of course, hoping to see young Morton's father nominated for President, and it was a bitter disappointment to us both when the telegraph operator handed us out the first slip giving news that the Republicans had compromised upon Rutherford B. Hayes. The operator knew us, for we were continually hanging about the office instead of attending to our studies. Morton's father was such a power at that time that there was no difficulty in his having access to any information that was to be had.

'Ardent Democrat that I was, and ardent Republican that he was, young Morton and I had no unpleasant discussions. After the election and during the contest that followed, it was utterly impossible for me to bring myself to think of desk or books. I was constantly going to Washington with Morton, in order to be near the centre of things. I was usually the guest of the Mortons, who lived at that time at the Ebbitt House. I knew much of everything that was going on. Republican leaders would come in day and night to consult the distinguished invalid who was directing the fight for Hayes. In this way, directly and indirectly, I saw and met many well-known Republicans in public life at that time.'

No clearer proof is necessary that the child is father to the man, for, as his papers will show, the mature Colonel House displayed an invincible obstinacy in making personal friends of his political opponents. The characteristic proceeded, per-

haps, from a natural inability to remain on anything but good terms with those whom he met, whether in conflict or cooperation; it resulted in giving him an insight into the motives that actuated his opponents which was of no small political value.

The election of 1876, we may remind ourselves, was disputed and was ultimately settled by an Electoral Commission which, despite the protests of Democrats at the moment and heedless of the criticism of later historians, awarded the Presidency to Hayes. Such a conflict formed an incomparable opportunity for the young House to study political operations, and one which he did not fail to utilize, regardless of the fact that school was in session.

‘When the Electoral Commission was organized and began to hold its sittings in the Supreme Court Room at the Capitol, young Morton and I were permitted to slip in and out at will, although the demand for admission could only be met in a very small way. I heard Evarts speak, but the speech that impressed me most was that of Senator Carpenter who, although a Republican, pleaded for Tilden.

‘In those days, too, I had the entrée to the White House. I remember General Grant and Mrs. Grant and several members of his Cabinet. All this was educational in its way, but not the education I was placed in the Hopkins Grammar School to get, and it is no wonder that I lagged at the end of my class. I had no interest in my desk tasks, but I read much and was learning in a larger and more interesting school.

‘When I entered Cornell, it was the same story. . . . I was constantly reading, constantly absorbing, constantly in touch with, public affairs. I knew the name of every United States Senator, of practically every Representative, the Governors of all the important States, and had some knowledge of the chief measures before the people.

‘I had found that I could neglect my studies up to the last

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minute and then, by a few days of vigorous effort, pass my examinations by a scratch, nothing more. I cannot remember getting a condition, nor can I remember getting much more than a passing mark.

'My Washington experience perhaps changed my entire career. Fortunately or unfortunately for me, I saw that two or three men in the Senate and two or three in the House and the President himself, ran the Government. The others were merely figureheads. I saw Senators and Representatives speak to empty benches and for the purpose of getting their remarks in the *Congressional Record* sent to their admiring constituents. I saw, too, how few public men could really speak well. I can count on the fingers of one hand all the speakers that I thought worth while. In some the manner was good, in others the substance was good, but in nearly all there was lacking one or the other. Therefore I had no ambition to hold office, nor had I any ambition to speak, because I felt in both instances that I would fall short of the first place, and nothing less than that would satisfy me.

'Yet I have been thought without ambition. That, I think, is not quite true. My ambition has been so great that it has never seemed to me worth while to strive to satisfy it.'

Matters might have been different had it not been for the delicacy of House's health. 'Up to the time I was eleven or twelve years old,' he wrote, 'I was a robust youngster. One day while I was swinging high, a rope broke and I was thrown on my head. Brain fever ensued, and for a long time I hovered between life and death. Upon my recovery, malaria fastened upon me, and I have never been strong since.' The confining routine of office was impossible for him. Especially did he suffer from the heat, which put residence in Washington during the summer months out of the question.

Thus early and for various reasons he set aside the thought of a conventional political career; but his ambition, although

unorthodox, was, as he admits, very real, and, even though he does not admit it, we shall see that he did much to satisfy it. He longed to play an influential if not a decisive rôle in politics, and from the beginning seems to have been inspired by the desire to improve political conditions. Through all his correspondence and papers runs this idealistic strain: to make of government a more efficient instrument for effecting the desires of the people; to inspire in the people a more sensible view of their welfare; to take a few feathers out of the wings of enthusiasm and insert them in the tail of judgment; above all, to hasten the advent of a system which would protect the weak, whether in the political or economic sphere, from exploitation by the strong. Even as a boy there was in him something of Louis Blanc and Mazzini, strictly controlled, however, by an acute sense of the practical that recalls Benjamin Franklin.

His ambition, furthermore, was determined by an ever-lively sense of proportion, which means sense of humor, that continually manifests itself in his papers. It led him to seek accomplishment rather than notoriety.

Careless of title or office, even had his health permitted him to seek them, yet determined to make of politics his real career, House faced the problem that confronts so many young idealists leaving college and anxious to serve their country and mankind. How to begin?

II

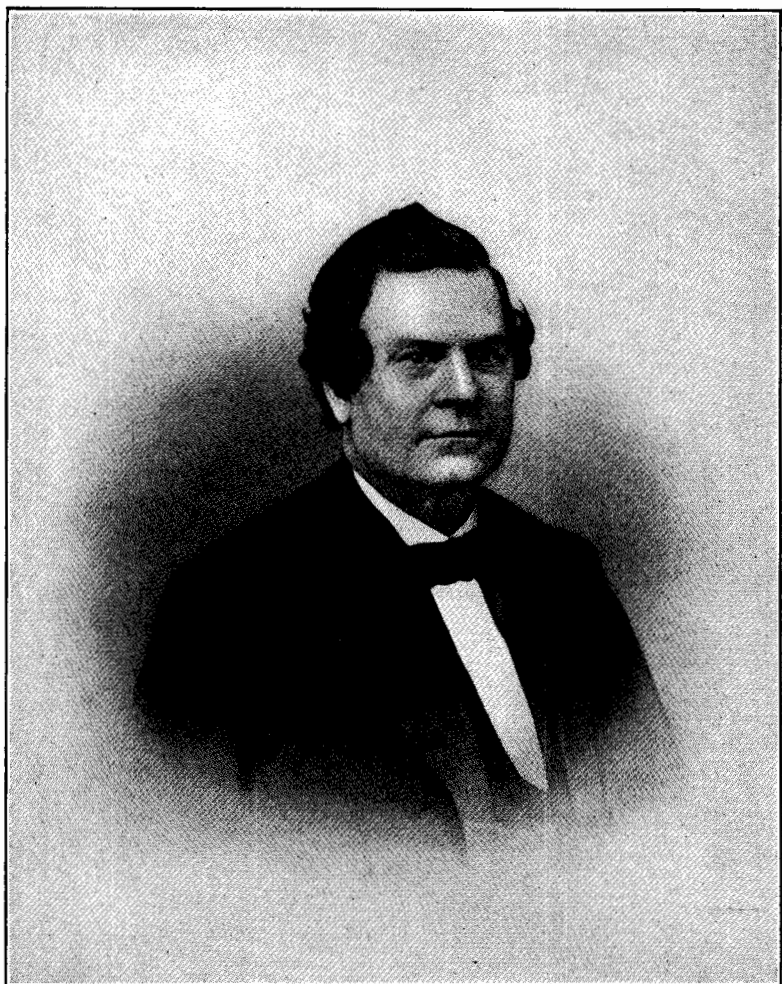
Mischance cut short the college career of House, for after two years at Cornell he was called back to Texas by the illness of his father, who died in 1880. The two had been close companions, and the younger man's sense of loss was acute and the deprivation of his father's aid and experienced counsel was a serious blow. 'My affection may blind me,' he wrote, 'and my judgment may have been immature, but he seemed to me then, as he seems to me now, among the ablest

men I have ever known. . . . I owe more to my father than to any person, living or dead. He not only made it possible for me to pursue the bent of my inclinations by leaving me a fortune sufficient for all moderate wants, but he gave me an insight into the philosophy of life that has been of incalculable value. . . . While he devoted his life largely to commerce in various forms and while he acquired what seemed to Texas a large fortune, he taught me not to place a fictitious value on wealth. It was with him merely a means to an end.'

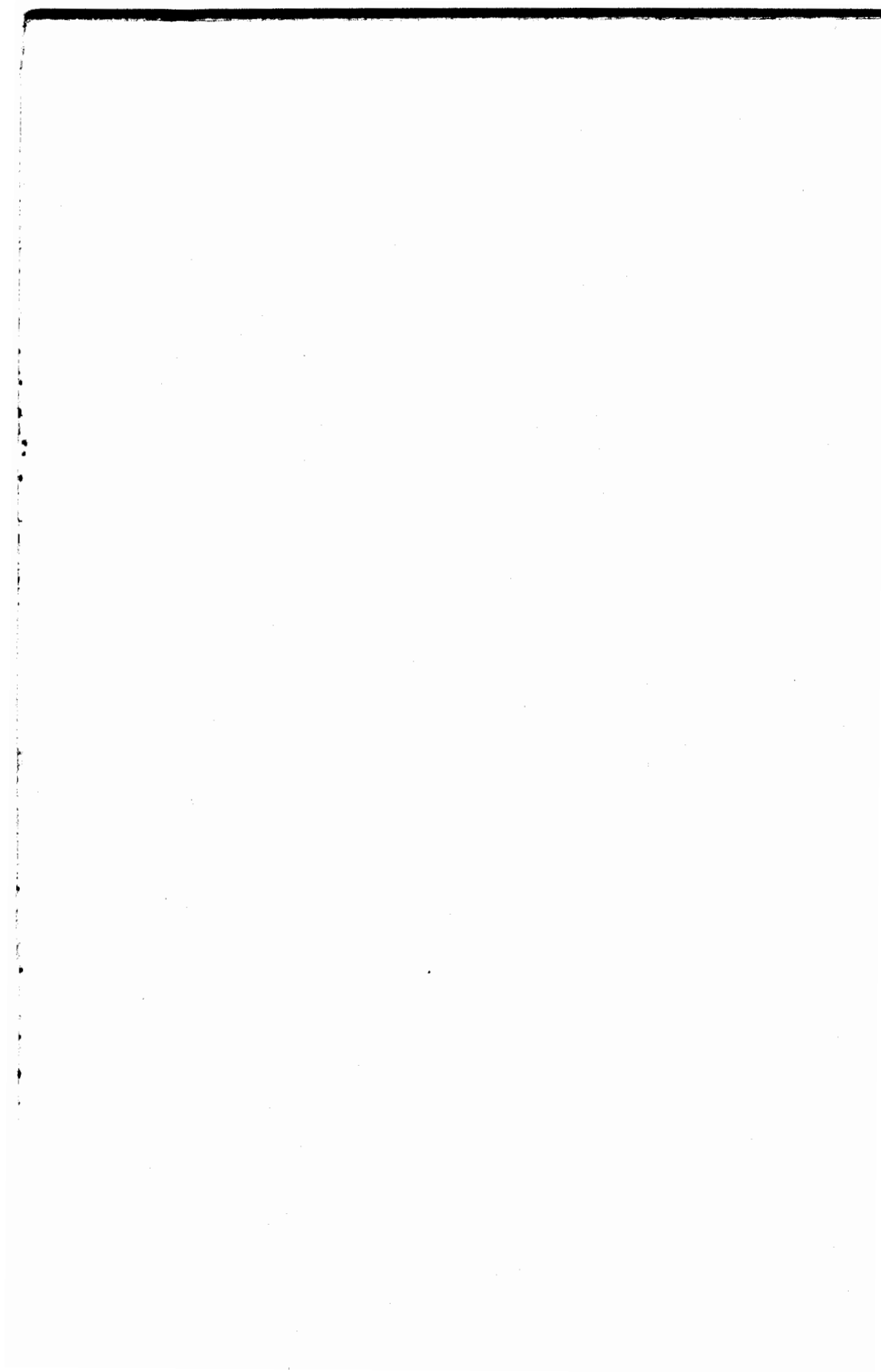
The year after leaving college, House married Miss Loulie Hunter, of Hunter, Texas, and after travelling in Europe for a twelvemonth, returned to make his home first in Houston and then in Austin, Texas. Cotton-farming and commercial enterprises kept him busy, but more and more he began to steal time from business to indulge his vital interest in public affairs. During what he calls 'the twilight years,' after he had achieved political success in Texas and before the opportunity for national service had opened, he indulged his taste for adventure by embarking upon various industrial schemes, some of which were obviously calculated to produce pleasure rather than profit for himself.

'In this connection I undertook the building of the Trinity and Brazos Valley Railway. The capital was raised by my friend, Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, Jr., of the Old Colony Trust Company of Boston, who occasionally visited me in Texas. I outlined the route and he accepted my judgment as to its feasibility.

'For two or three years, this gave me much pleasure and absorbed my entire interest. There was not a man connected with the building of this road, except the engineer, that had ever had the slightest experience with railroad building. I wonder now at the temerity of those Boston capitalists. My one thought was to have around me men capable and *honest*, and to this I attribute our success. My secretary, Edward



T. W. HOUSE
Father of Edward M. House



Sammons, than whom there is no better accountant, looked after the accounts; and William Malone, the manager of my farms, saw to it that we got such material as was paid for. I put but little money in the project, for I had but little; therefore I made but a small sum from it, successful as it was — some thirty thousand dollars. A larger share of the profits had been allotted me by the syndicate managers who had put up the money necessary to build the road, but I divided it with those friends in Texas, poorer than I, who aided in the actual work of building the road.

‘It was a pleasure, though, to undertake to build a railroad honestly, without a dollar’s profit to any one excepting to those who placed their money in the venture. The money was raised in advance and everything was paid for in cash, and no bonds were sold until after the road was a going concern and sold to another system.

‘We undertook to lay down one cardinal principle which no road in Texas, up to that time, had deigned to do; and that was, to treat the public in such a way that they became friends of the road instead of enemies. If a farmer or any citizen along the route had a claim against the company, it was promptly and fairly adjusted. Notices were put up and circulars sent out that there would be no need to hire damage claim lawyers, when there was a claim against the T. and B. V. Railroad; that all honest claims would be adjusted immediately.

‘The result was magical, and it was not long before the patrons of the road understood that we were acting in their interest as well as our own, and any attempt — and there were many — to blackmail us in the usual way that railroad corporations have been blackmailed, found no sympathy with any jury along the line of the road.’

During the eighties, Texas was just passing from the condition of a frontier where law was frequently enforced by the

individual, according as his hand was quick and his eye true, and where order was a variable quantity. House speaks admiringly of 'those citizens of Texas who died with their boots on — a death which every citizen of Texas of those days coveted.'

We must picture him, accordingly, as a man who spent his early years not merely in Eastern colleges and schools, in cotton-farming, and politics, but as the companion and friend of the older generation — 'that intrepid band,' he calls them, 'that made Texas what she is to-day. I make obeisance to them! Nothing daunted them. They tore a principality from a sovereign state and moulded a trackless wilderness into a great commonwealth. These men were the heroes of my childhood; and now when I am growing old and have seen many men and many lands, I go back to them and salute them, for I find they are my heroes still.'

With the younger generation of frontiersmen, House was on close personal terms and for a while, after returning from college and beginning his business as planter, he lived their life. One of the oldest and perhaps the best of these friends was the noted and picturesque Ranger, Captain Bill McDonald, whose career House felt to be so typical of the Texas of those days that he could not rest until it was put into a book.

'I wanted to have Sidney Porter (O. Henry) do it. I had it in mind that he should write twelve stories, each representing some incident in Bill's life. I wrote to Porter, whom I had known while he lived in Texas; but the letter was held back by his mother-in-law until a few weeks afterwards, when she visited him at his summer home at New Ground, Long Island. In the meantime, not having heard from Porter, I got in touch with Albert Bigelow Paine through James Creelman, whom I knew, and he undertook the work. . . . I received a letter from Porter after Paine had undertaken the

task, in which he said he would have liked to have done it, for it would have been a "labor of love."

'I was amused at Paine when Captain Bill arrived in New York. Paine and I were waiting for him at the New Amsterdam Hotel, at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-First Street, which was convenient to the Players' Club where Paine intended to stay while writing the memoirs. It was a cold, wet night, and Bill came in with his "slicker" and big Stetson hat. We went upstairs with him. He took off his coat, pulled from one side his .45 and from the other his automatic. He did this just as an ordinary man takes out his keys and knife. I explained to Paine that Bill had to carry his artillery in this way in order to be thoroughly ballasted — that he would have difficulty in walking without it.

'At this time, Paine was writing the life of Mark Twain and was living most of the time at Mark Twain's home, which was then in lower Fifth Avenue. Mr. Clemens invited us to dinner one evening. I could not go because of a previous engagement, but dropped in later. When I arrived, Mark and Bill were playing billiards and it was amusing to see Bill sight his cue just as if it were a rifle and, three times out of four, send his ball off the table. It entertained Mr. Clemens immensely. When we went upstairs Clemens ran and Bill ran after, as if to catch him, but did not do so. Bill winked at me and said, "I believe the old man really thinks I could not catch him." Bill is as lean and as agile as a panther.

'Another time Paine invited Bill and me to take dinner with him at the Players'. I found Bill in the lobby of the hotel without a collar. I said, "Bill, you have no collar on." He reached up his hand and replied, "That's so; I forgot it." However, he made no move to get one. Paine came in a few minutes later and asked if he were ready to go to dinner. Bill replied that he was. Paine then said, "Captain, you have no collar on." Bill remarked, "My God Almighty,

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can't a man go to dinner in New York without a collar?" Paine did not press the matter further and Captain Bill went to the Club just as he was, much to the amusement of everybody there.

'In my early boyhood I knew many of the Bill McDonald type, although he was perhaps the flower of them all. I knew personally many of the famous desperadoes, men who had killed so many that they had almost ceased to count their victims. . . .

'There were two types of so-called "killers" — one that murdered simply for the pure love of it, and others that killed because it was in their way of duty. Bill McDonald belonged to this latter class. So also did Blue-eyed Captain McKinney of the Rangers, whom I knew in my ranching days in southwest Texas.

'McKinney was finally ambushed and killed, as almost every sheriff of La Salle County was killed during that particular period. Whenever I went to our ranch, I was never certain that I would return home alive. Feuds were always going on, and in some of these our ranch was more or less involved.'

Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties, where the elder House's plantation lay, seemed to be the breeding-place for bad men.

'They were different from the ordinary desperado, and only killed upon insult or fancied insult. Duels were frequently fought on the plantation and were always deadly. I recall two in particular. George Tarver's brother and his room-mate had some slight quarrel concerning the bed they occupied in common. I think the room-mate put his muddy boots on the bedspread. "Here, you can't put those boots on the bed," said George's brother. "I can if I choose," was the reply. There was only one possible outcome to the debate. They went out, stood back to back, counted aloud, walking

ten paces, wheeled, fired, and advanced upon one another. They fell dead almost in each other's arms, both having several mortal wounds. They were good friends a quarter of an hour before the duel.

'Another incident I remember. Jim Thompson fancied that some man, whose name I have forgotten, was making fun of him. He demanded that the man get his shotgun. The man hesitated and made a faint apology, which Thompson would not accept. The man then got his shotgun, stepped out of the house, both fired, and Thompson killed him instantly. Thompson was missed by a few inches. They were so close together when they fired that the buckshot went almost like a rifle ball, having no time to scatter.

'I asked Thompson why he was so insistent upon fighting. He said he knew that if he had not called the man to account, he would not have been able to live at Arcola and would have been branded as a coward. It was necessary, he thought, either to kill or be killed, and without further argument. . . .

'I can hardly realize that so short a while ago we lived in an atmosphere where such things seemed proper and even a matter of course. I was often with men whom I knew would surely be killed soon, and perhaps at a time I was with them.

'Governor Hogg¹ did more than any executive in Texas to break up this habit of public killing. . . . He also broke up strikes during his administration. Captain Bill McDonald, of the Ranger Service, was the instrument he used. Hogg sent word to the leaders that if they continued to uncouple cars, or to do anything that might interfere with the movement of trains, he would shoot holes through them big enough to see through. When Bill conveyed this to the ring-leaders and presented himself as the instrument through which it was to be done, lawlessness ceased.

'The nearest I ever came to killing a man was in Breckenridge, Colorado. It was in 1879, when the town was merely a

¹ Governor of Texas from 1890 to 1894.

mining camp. I had gone to Colorado at the request of Whitney Newton, a college friend who was in Breckenridge at that time buying gold dust and sending it to the Denver Mint by special messengers, the express companies refusing to carry it because of the danger of robbery.

'In going to Breckenridge in those days, one left the main line of the railway at the little station of Como, which at that time had but one house. A so-called stage carried one from there to the mining camp. There is no need to describe it, for it was like all other camps of that sort — rough men, and rougher women, gambling, drinking, and killing. I was in a saloon, talking to a man whom I had known in Texas, when the incident I speak of occurred. A big, brawny individual came into the room and began to abuse me in violent terms. I had never seen the man before and could not imagine why he was doing this. I retreated, and he followed. I had my overcoat on at the time and had my hand on my six-shooter in my pocket and cocked it. The owner of the saloon jumped over the bar between us. In five seconds more, I would have killed him. An explanation followed which cleared up the mystery. He had taken me for some one else against whom he had a grudge, and whom he had seen but once. I learned later that he was a popular ex-sheriff of Summit County and that if I had killed him I should have been lynched within the hour.

'It always amuses me when I see the bad men in plays depicted as big, rough fellows with their trousers in their boots and six-shooters buckled around their waists. As a matter of fact, the bad men I have been used to in southern Texas were as unlike this as daylight from dark. They were usually gentle, mild-mannered, mild-spoken, and often delicate-looking men. They were invariably polite, and one not knowing the species would be apt to misjudge them to such an extent that a rough word or an insult would sometimes be offered. This mistake of judgment was one that

could never be remedied, for a second opportunity was never given.'

In later years House expressed intense amusement at the oaths and objurgations of Parisian taxi-drivers, which however violent never seemed to result in physical encounter. 'In Texas,' he said, 'it was the reverse. No words were wasted. Frequently the first symptom of mild disapproval would be a blow or revolver-shot. People praise us Southerners for our courteous demeanor; we learned it in a school of necessity.'

III

It would be a mistake to picture House's early life as merely that of the frontiersman. Quiet and unobtrusive as one of the mild-mannered desperadoes he describes, and as courageous, he loved to meet every variety of individual and he had a gift for bringing himself into touch with the Rangers and men of the back districts.¹ He loved the open country, the smell of the camp-fire, and the meal cooked over its embers. But his time was spent mostly in the towns and especially in the capital. He knew the business men of Texas, the editors, lawyers, and educators; later they tried to make him a trustee of the University of Texas. The Mayor of Houston writes to him as 'My dear Ed,' and the Governor signs himself 'Your friend.'

His father had bequeathed to him a social position in the State which he enjoyed maintaining and developing, so that, apart from the frequent journeys that he made to Europe, he came constantly in contact with persons of interest. The home in Houston was the place where nearly every distinguished visitor that came to Texas was entertained, Jeffer-

¹ S. V. Edwards, Captain of Rangers, wrote House, May 24, 1902: 'If you want anything in this new district all you have to do is indicate it. . . . I am with you to a finish in any old thing.'

son Davis among the rest. 'Father counted among his friends,' wrote House, 'the rich and the poor, the humble and the great.'

The younger House followed in his footsteps. After moving to Austin, he built a large house which became the focus of the social and political life of the region.

'The large veranda to the south [wrote House] was the scene, perhaps, of more political conferences than any similar place in Texas. It was there that the clans congregated. I had long made it a rule not to visit, and it was understood that if any one desired to see me, it must be at my home. I did this not only to conserve my strength, but because it enabled me to work under more favorable conditions. I had an office which I was seldom in, and latterly I refused to make any appointments there whatsoever. This necessarily led to much entertaining, and our house was constantly filled with guests. Those days and guests are among the pleasantest recollections of my life.

'Many distinguished people, passing through Austin, from time to time were our guests. Among those that I admired most was Dr. Charles W. Eliot of Harvard. His life and devotion to public service were a revelation to me. He seemed to regulate his life in a way to get the maximum of service for the public good.

'Baron d'Estournelles de Constant of France was another guest whose society I enjoyed while he was in Texas. I remember when leaving me at the station he remarked: "My friends in Paris would be amazed if they could hear me say I was leaving Austin, Texas, with keen regret."'

Apart from the interest which he took in men and in their activities, a further characteristic should be noted: constant and omnivorous reading. This fact is to be deduced less from his correspondence and papers than from the existence of a

private library which he developed and enlarged without cessation. It is an illuminating instance of the man's real tastes that when, after the Paris Peace Conference, he had a book-plate made, he omitted in its composition all references to his diplomatic or political career; he chose as salient features above the horse, dog, and camp-fire, the gun and powder-flask, reminders of his early life — an open hearth and books. The books which he read were of all sorts, poetry and essays, but chiefly biography, history, and political science. The main strength of Colonel House in his later political career was, of course, his understanding of human nature, his ability to enter into friendly relations with all types; but it would be a mistake to overlook the strength he derived from books.

In such an atmosphere House began the career in politics which soon became his real vocation, and it was during those years that he underwent the political schooling that prepared him to assume a guiding rôle in national and international affairs. With all the cosmopolitan tastes which he developed by constant travel, and with every intention of entering the arena of national politics, he regarded his life in Texas as a necessary and delightful prologue. Before he could acquire national influence, he must win prestige in his own State. An ardent Democrat, he saw in Texas, with its tremendous influence in the party, an ideal spring-board. A liberal and progressive, he could throw himself into the fight for liberal and progressive legislation which Governor Hogg — 'the inimitable Hogg,' House calls him — was directing. He was ready for the opportunity, which was not slow to knock upon the door.

IV

The year 1892 was one of politico-social ferment in Europe and the United States; the forces of liberal progressivism were everywhere arrayed against reaction. In Texas the

struggle was sharp. Governor Hogg, whose courage and force had made him a dominating influence in the State, was the centre of the storm; and because of his advanced ideas, many of which found incorporation in sweeping legislative reforms, he had aroused against himself a powerful group which protested against his nomination for a second term. The fight offered to the young House the opportunity for which he had been waiting. 'House was not nominally manager of the Hogg campaign,' writes T. W. Gregory, later Attorney-General, who was then active in Texas politics, 'but was chiefly responsible for the organization, and to him Hogg owed a large share of his victory.'¹ For ten years House had watched the mechanics of State politics, pondered the mistakes of politicians, developed personal contacts. Already he possessed the technique necessary for the conduct of a campaign, and it was infused with an enthusiasm for reform.

'When I found that the railroads and the entire corporate interests of Texas were combining to defeat Hogg [wrote House], I enlisted actively in his behalf. Although he had known me but a short time, we had many times discussed political ways and means, and he asked me and the then State Health Officer to take charge of his campaign. Later the burden of it fell on me. We selected a committee and got my good friend, General W. R. Hamby, to act as chairman. That campaign was a battle royal. We had no money, and every daily paper in Texas was against us. Hogg's opponent was Judge George Clark, of Waco. When the Clarkites found we had sufficient votes to nominate Hogg, they bolted the convention and nominated Clark. The Republicans endorsed him and we had another hard fight at the election, but Hogg won by a decisive majority. It was a bitter fight and

¹ Manuscript memorandum communicated to the author, August, 1924.

the wounds lasted many years. It was the first firm stand the people of any American State had taken against the privileged classes, and it attracted attention throughout the Union. ✓

'I felt that Governor Hogg's confidence in me was a great compliment, because of my youth and, as far as any one knew, because of my lack of political experience.

'So in politics I began at the top rather than at the bottom, and I have been doing since that day pretty much what I am doing now; that is, advising and helping wherever I might.'

With the success of the Hogg campaign, the political position of House in Texas evidently became assured.

'From 1892 to 1902 [Mr. Gregory writes] House took continual interest in the elections and the administration of Texas. . . . From the first he displayed that quality which made him of such value to the successive Governors and to President Wilson, an almost uncanny ability to foretell the effects which any measure would have upon public opinion. He was offered by them and declined many positions of honor and power, and he might have been Governor himself. . . .

'In 1894 he managed Culberson's successful campaign. He was again in charge when Culberson was reelected in 1896. In 1898 and 1900 he directed the successful campaigns of Major Joseph D. Sayers. He was active in the Lanham campaigns of 1902 and 1904.'

Apart from the fact that House himself consistently refused office, one notes especially, in the first place, that he was invariably successful in his political ventures, and in the second place, that he did not rely upon a 'machine,' for House's candidate for Governor was almost invariably op-

posed by his predecessor. It was a curious manifestation of electoral skill, political judgment, or good luck, according as the reader may choose. Thus in 1894 Governor Hogg and House disagreed upon his successor. The Governor supported the veteran Senator Reagan, who had served in Jefferson Davis's Cabinet; House was behind the State's Attorney-General, Charles A. Culberson. Both were liberals. As always in Texas, the real struggle was at the Democratic Convention, where in addition to Reagan and Culberson two other candidates appeared — one of them as leader of the reactionary forces in the party which had been suppressed by Hogg. House pointed out the danger of division in the liberal camp. All the reform legislation of the past four years was threatened, and it could be saved only if one of the two liberals withdrew.

The final interview between the Governor and his recalcitrant adviser must have been picturesque. Hogg was immense, loud, commanding, with his 'Young man, you'll do as I tell you, if you know what's good for you.' House, of slight build and quiet manner, speaking almost in a monotone, was inflexible in his argument that liberalism in Texas depended upon the union of the progressive forces and that to secure it Reagan must withdraw. It ended with Hogg going to Reagan, who magnanimously agreed to retire in order to avoid the split in the liberal group. 'Texas never produced a nobler citizen than Judge John H. Reagan,' wrote House. 'He was honest, he was able, and he was fearless.'

Doubtless it was easier for House to pass this high estimate upon his erstwhile opponent, in that his retirement paved the way for the nomination of Culberson. Great was the astonishment of the convention when the man chosen to nominate Reagan, after beginning with the conventional eulogy of his subject, proceeded in the peroration to announce his withdrawal and to second Culberson himself. House stayed in the convention until his man had received a majority, then

walked over to the club to congratulate him. It was characteristic of his foresight that he had by him the expert accountant, Major Edward Sammons, who could add fractions in his head, so that in the convention (where fractional votes of delegations are common) he knew the result some minutes before the clerks themselves. 'The truth is, as I told you,' wrote Culberson to House, August 17, 1894, 'I could not have won except through your splendid management.'

'This is the only time in my political career [wrote House] that I openly assumed the chairmanship of a campaign. It has been my habit to put some one else nominally at the head, so that I could do the real work undisturbed by the demands which are made upon a chairman.

'The public is almost childish in its acceptance of the shadow for the substance. Each chairman of the campaigns which I directed received the publicity and the applause of both the press and the people during and after the campaign had been brought to a successful conclusion. They passed out of public notice within a few months, or at most within a year; and yet when the next campaign came around, the public and the press as eagerly accepted another figure-head. . . .

'In every campaign I have insisted that the candidate whose fortunes I directed should in no instance make any preëlection promises, either directly, indirectly, or otherwise. I pointed out that it was bad morals and worse politics. The opposition usually promised everything, and it was not infrequent that two men would meet that had been promised the same office.'

Four years later, a similar situation developed when Governor Culberson, after a second term, supported his Attorney-General, M. M. Crane, while House opposed him — largely

on the ground that the Attorney-Generalship was becoming a stepping-stone to the Governorship. 'I did not believe it was a good precedent to follow,' he wrote, 'because it would cause an Attorney-General to become something of a demagogue, perhaps unconsciously but nevertheless surely.' He agreed, therefore, to direct the political fortunes of a Texas Congressman who during the entire campaign remained in Washington, Major Joseph Sayers.

'Culberson urged me not to do this [wrote House], declaring that defeat was certain. . . . I did not heed his advice. It looked as if it would be necessary to do what was done in the Culberson-Reagan fight four years before, and that was, to break down the organization which had been built up during the previous administration. This was not disagreeable to me, for I was never a believer in political machines.

'In the Culberson race I had to overcome the Hogg organization which I had helped to build up. In the Sayers-Crane campaign it was necessary to defeat the Culberson organization. . . . In justice to that organization, it pleases me to say that most of them came to offer their services in behalf of Sayers if I demanded it. This I did in no instance, advising them to go where their sympathies and interests lay.

'The two other candidates in this campaign were Lieutenant-Governor Jester and Colonel Wynne of Fort Worth. At the start I assumed that Crane had eighty per cent of the chances for success. However, there were no single counties in Texas he could call clearly his own, while there were many counties that could not be taken from Sayers.

'We had our friends in these Sayers counties call their primaries early. The Crane forces saw what we were doing, but were unable to respond in kind because they had no counties which they were absolutely certain of carrying. The result was that when county after county declared for Sayers

and we had practically reached the end of our strength, Crane in a fit of depression withdrew from the race.

'The Dallas *News* called me over the telephone at twelve o'clock at night and said that Crane had sent in his written withdrawal. They asked me if I had any statement to make. I replied I would make one in the morning. I lay awake for nearly an hour, enjoying the victory, and then went back to sleep. In the morning before I arose I reached for one of my pockets, secured an old envelope, and wrote in pencil our opinion of Crane's withdrawal. I took occasion to compliment Crane upon his great patriotism in bowing to the will of the people, and I declared that it was certain that Mr. Jester and Colonel Wynne would not be lacking in as high patriotic motives and that the electorate of Texas could look forward with certainty to their early withdrawal. The result was that both Jester and Wynne began to deny they had any intention of withdrawing. But the deed was done, and Jester actually withdrew within a few weeks and Wynne did not stand the pressure much longer.'

Major Sayers displayed at the moment a gratitude and modesty which the elect of the people are not always prone to manifest.

'Your success in the management of my canvass [he wrote House, May 17, 1898] has been unprecedented in the history of political campaigns. You have taken a disorganized and probably a minority force at the outset and driven from the field the candidate of an organized majority. You have not only done this, but you have also held in line the lukewarm and trivial of our own party and have made them brave, vigorous, confident, and aggressive. Your generalship has indeed been superb, and considering that your own candidate was absent from the State and has not made a political speech outside of his own district in more than twenty years...

your success has been without a parallel in Texas politics. . . . I have felt that it would be wise in me to leave the entire matter to yourself.'

The situation was not less piquant in that Culberson, who opposed House's candidate for Governor, was himself running for the United States Senate and asked House to direct his campaign. The latter acceded, and the election of Culberson proved to be the beginning of a senatorial career that lasted a quarter of a century.

v

House's political activities in Texas were by no means confined to elections. Under both Hogg and Culberson he took a constant interest in legislation and gradually came to occupy the same position in the State as he was later to assume in national affairs. He believed first in the necessity of reform, and next in an intelligent and reasoned foundation for reform measures, and he spared no study or effort in the preparation of bills. His pride in the accomplishment of the Texas Governors was great, and perhaps not unjustified.

✓ 'House was always a progressive [writes Gregory], and in many respects a pronounced radical, almost invariably being more advanced in his ideas than the persons he was working with. This genuine interest in progressive legislation accounts to a large degree for his interest in politics. He wanted to see advanced ideas placed upon the statute books. It is interesting to note that, although rated as one of the wealthy men of Texas, he was invariably aligned politically on the side of the plain people and against most of those with whom he was socially intimate.'

'In Texas I worked, I think [wrote House], not only for Texas itself, but also in the hope that the things we worked

for there would be taken up by the country at large; and in this I was gratified. The great measures which Governor Hogg advocated, like the Railroad Commission, the Stock and Bond law, were largely written into national law later. Texas was the pioneer of successful progressive legislation, and it was all started during Hogg's administrations. . . . I see it stated from time to time that California, Wisconsin, and other States were the first to impress the progressive movement upon the nation. This is not true; Texas was the first in the field, and the others followed.

'Even in municipal reform, Texas led the way. Galveston initiated the commission form of government, and nearly all the other Texas cities of importance followed. It was then taken up in Iowa and I often hear of the "Dubuque idea." As a matter of fact, they took over the idea from Texas.

'Governor Hogg, I think, we will have to place as the foremost Texan, giving Sam Houston the second place. He did not have the fine, analytical mind that Culberson has, but he possessed a force, vision, and courage to carry out, that few men I have known possess. With Hogg it was always a pleasure to enter a fight, for it was certain that there would be no compromise until victory crowned the effort. He was afraid of nothing and gloried in a conflict.

'It is a great pity that he did not go into national life when he left the gubernatorial chair. His proper place would have been in the House of Representatives, although he might have gone to the Senate had he so desired.'

House's relations with Governor Culberson were even closer than with Hogg. Many people have wondered how it was possible for the Colonel later to find a way to make himself indispensable to President Wilson and by what magic he maintained himself as the President's unofficial adviser. There was less of magic than of experience, for during his

Texas days he had been doing exactly the same sort of thing for the Governors.

‘During Culberson’s terms as Governor [he recorded] I devoted myself as constantly to his administration of public affairs as I have since to Woodrow Wilson’s as President. I went to his office at the Capitol nearly every day, and sometimes continued my work there until nightfall.’

House’s files are filled with letters like the following: ‘Knowing that you have a great deal more influence with the Governor-elect than any one else, and as I ask nothing for myself, I venture to write you in behalf of a friend of mine. Etc.’ And from the holder of an appointive office: ‘I presume the crisis will approach very soon in matters political. When it comes, please remember me in your prayers.’

The Governor evidently relied upon House both as political confidant and personal friend. So much is made clear by the numerous letters that passed between them.

‘You must take charge of things here [wrote Culberson] and organize the work. My room will be open to you at all hours.’

And at the opening of a legislative session:

‘It is impossible for me to be in Austin prior to the organization of the legislature, and in fact I do not know when I can get there. This busy time I wish you would seek the Speaker, whoever he may be, and talk with him about the committees on taxation and revenue, finance and contingent expenses.’

‘In my day [ran a letter from Culberson, dated February 1, 1895] I have had many friends, but you have been more



Joseph D. Sayers Charles A. Culberson James S. Hogg
THREE TEXAS GOVERNORS

than any to me. . . . There is nothing in the way of happiness and prosperity and honor good enough for you in my view, yet I hope for you all that is attainable.'

After Culberson entered the Senate, the friendship evidently persisted, for he writes to House: 'I wish I could see you to-day and have a long talk. I feel that way often these days. . . . Take a pencil and write me confidentially how I stand with the Democrats in the State now. Give me the thing straight, no matter how the chips may fall.' And when a certain bill came up in the Senate: 'What do you think of it? Write me fully and at your earliest convenience, because I want to study it.'

It was Governor Hogg who provided House with the title of 'Colonel,' by appointing him, entirely without the recipient's suspicion, to his staff. The staff officer's uniform could be, and was, bestowed upon an ancient and grateful darkey, but the title proved to be adhesive. There is a certain poetic justice, almost classical in character, to be seen in the punishment thus laid upon House, who spent his life in avoiding office and titles, and during the World War exercised as much ingenuity in escaping European Orders as in his diplomatic negotiations: henceforth, despite his protests, he became and remained 'Colonel House,' or even 'The Colonel.'

With the succeeding Governors, House's relations were not so close, but it is obvious that in 1902 his influence in Texas affairs still dominated. He was the directing spirit in the election of Lanham in that year, who wrote to him in gratitude for 'your discreet advice and promptness to suggest to me. Always say just what you think, for it will be received in the spirit tendered.' And again: 'The fact that your influence was for me has been of incalculable benefit to me. . . . The knowledge of your friendship for me will also deter other

entries into the field. . . . I need and appreciate your counsel.' At the same period a letter from Congressman, later Postmaster-General, Burleson indicates that it had become a state tradition for House to draw up the party platform.

'I tender my congratulations upon the skill you have displayed in drafting the platform. . . . It is such a great improvement, from the standpoint of brevity, over those you have given us in the past, that I think the State is to be felicitated upon the prospects of its adoption.'

But the end of this phase of House's career was approaching. 'When another election drew near,' he wrote, 'I refused to interest myself in any way.' We find him asked by both candidates for his advice, which 'I gave to each of them — advice which in no way conflicted.' Apparently the one heeded the advice, while the other 'was so certain of success that he left his campaign to be run in the old slipshod way, to find himself defeated.'

VI

'I had grown thoroughly tired of the position I occupied in Texas,' wrote House. He had, it is true, the satisfaction of participating in the administration of a great commonwealth; ten years of Texas success had been admirable preparation. They gave him the political experience and prestige he needed. But now he felt equipped for a broader field. 'Go to the front where you belong,' wrote Governor Hogg in 1900.

'During all these years [recorded House] I had never for a moment overlooked the national situation, and it was there that my real interest lay. In 1896 I was ready to take part in national affairs. My power in Texas was sufficient to have given me the place I desired in the national councils of the party.'

'The nomination of Bryan in 1896 and the free silver issue made me feel the unwisdom of entering national party politics under such conditions. I therefore bided my time.'

He proved that he knew how to wait. Three national campaigns followed in which the Democratic Party was dominated by Mr. Bryan or by Eastern conservatives, and House stood aloof. In each campaign overtures were made with the purpose of giving him a responsible share in its management, but on each occasion he evaded them. The Democrats must embrace the liberal creed, he insisted, but it must be cleansed of the Bryan financial heresies. None the less, House came more and more into touch with the national Democratic leaders and with Bryan himself, and established a close personal friendship.

'Mr. Bryan's daughter, Grace, had not been well and he wished to spend a winter south. Governor Hogg and I undertook to arrange a home for the Bryans practically within the same grounds as ours. . . . So he, Mrs. Bryan, and the children lived there next to us during the winter, and I had many opportunities to discuss with him national affairs and the coming campaign. It was the winter, I think, of 1898 and 1899.

'I found Mrs. Bryan very amenable to advice and suggestion, but Mr. Bryan was as wildly impracticable as ever. I do not believe that any one ever succeeded in changing his mind upon any subject that he had determined upon. . . . I believe he feels that his ideas are God-given and are not susceptible to the mutability of those of the ordinary human being.

'He often told me that a man that did not believe in "the free and unlimited coinage of silver at 16-1 was either a fool or a knave." He was so convinced of this that he was not susceptible to argument.'

In 1900 Bryan went down to defeat for the second time. In 1904 the quarrels of the Eastern and Western Democrats would have ensured disaster even in the face of a weaker candidate than Roosevelt. 'I returned to Texas,' wrote House, 'discouraged over the prospects of the Democratic Party ever being able to rehabilitate itself.' In 1908 came the third Bryan candidacy and defeat.

But already the Democratic sun was about to rise. The difficulties in the Republican Party, which threatened under Roosevelt, became more obvious in the succeeding administration. They were intensified after Roosevelt's return from travel abroad by his own outburst of discontent at the policies adopted by Mr. Taft, whose selection as President he had himself demanded. The apparent control of the Republican Party by the Old Guard, alleged to be tied up to the 'interests,' the unsatisfied demand for measures of social reform, the threat of the new Progressive movement in the heart of the party itself, pointing to a possible split — all gave hope to the Democrats. That this hope was not entirely illusory seemed indicated by the state and congressional elections of 1910, when the political pendulum swung far in their direction.

Colonel House was watching the opportunity. The great problem was to find a leader. In 1910 he came East from Texas and, like Diogenes, sought a man.

'I began now to look about [he wrote] for a proper candidate for the Democratic nomination for President. In talking with Mr. Bryan, he had mentioned Mayor Gaynor of New York as the only man in the East whom he thought measured up to the requirements.

'I felt sure the nomination should go to the East, and I also felt it was practically impossible to nominate or elect a man that Mr. Bryan opposed. I therefore determined to look Mr. Gaynor over with the thought of him as a possibility.

'I used my good friend, James Creelman, to bring us together. Creelman was nearer to Gaynor than any other man. He arranged a dinner at the Lotus Club, at which only the three of us were present, and it was a delightful affair. The food and the wine were of the best, for Creelman was a connoisseur in this line. The dinner lasted until after twelve o'clock. I had been told that Gaynor was brusque even to rudeness, but I did not find him so in the slightest. He knew perfectly well what the dinner was for, and he seemed to try to put his best side to the front. . . . He showed a knowledge of public affairs altogether beyond my expectations and greater, indeed, than that of any public man that I at that time knew personally who was a possibility.

'I proceeded to follow up this dinner by bringing such friends as I thought advisable in touch with him.

'One day Creelman and I went to the Mayor's office by appointment, to introduce Senator Culberson and Senator R. M. Johnson, editor of the *Houston Post* and Democratic National Committeeman from Texas. . . . I got Culberson and Johnson to second my invitation to Gaynor to go to Texas during the winter and address the Texas legislature. Gaynor consented. When I went to Texas I asked some members of the legislature to introduce a resolution inviting him to address them. This was done and the invitation telegraphed to him. A newspaper reporter of one of the small Texas dailies sent Gaynor a telegram asking him about it. Gaynor telegraphed back something to the effect that he had no notion of coming to Texas to address the legislature and had never heard of any such proposal.'

Reasonable explanation of this surprising *volte-face* on the part of Mayor Gaynor has never been advanced. It may have been that he failed to appreciate the value of the support of Texas — a vital misjudgment, as the Baltimore Convention of 1912 proved. Or it may have been merely another

example of the erratic and whimsical nature of the Mayor which did so much to vitiate his undeniably statesmanlike qualities. Colonel House felt certain, in any case, that Gaynor's blindness to the opportunity he had created, indicated a lack of political sagacity.

'I wiped Gaynor from my political slate [he wrote], for I saw he was impossible. I was confirmed in this resolution when Dix was nominated for Governor of New York, which I wanted Gaynor to accept. Some of the Mayor's other friends thought that it would be a mistake to accept the nomination, that to be Mayor of New York meant greater honor and more power than to be Governor of the State. I contended that the people would hesitate to nominate or elect a mayor of a city to the Presidency, but if he were elected Governor he would become the logical candidate.'

House continued his search. He had carefully considered Senator Culberson, and frequently discussed with him the possibility of the presidential nomination. But Culberson's health was poor. Furthermore, House believed that he was too purely a Southerner to make a successful race. The candidate must come, if possible, from the East; he must attract the West by his liberalism.

'I now turned to Woodrow Wilson [House wrote], then Governor of New Jersey, as being the only man in the East who in every way measured up to the office for which he was a candidate.'

House had never met Wilson, but his attention had been called to him by Wilson's ambitious reform programme in New Jersey and the success with which he was driving it through the legislature. He studied his background, which was admirable in that he had no political record and thus

started with no political enemies, while his troubled career at Princeton seemed to label him as an opponent of aristocratic privilege. He studied his speeches, which he believed should be classed with the finest political rhetoric extant. There was obviously in him the capacity for moral leadership. Late in the year, House returned to Texas convinced that he had found his man, although as yet he had never met him. 'I decided to do what I could,' he writes, 'to further Governor Wilson's fortunes. I spoke to all my political friends and following, and lined them up one after another. This was in the winter of 1910-1911.'

Thereafter we find House making arrangements to bring the Governor to Texas, in clearing up doubts of his party regularity, in securing the aid of Culberson and striving for that of Bryan. A letter to E. S. Martin, editor of *Life*, makes it plain that House's support of Wilson as yet rested less upon his personal admiration for him than upon the conviction of Wilson's availability.

'The trouble with getting a candidate for President [he wrote, August 30, 1911] is that the man that is best fitted for the place cannot be nominated and, if nominated, could probably not be elected. The people seldom take the man best fitted for the job; therefore it is necessary to work for the best man who can be nominated and elected, and just now Wilson seems to be that man.'

why EMH
picked
W. W.

Thus in his work for Wilson, House was serving the Democratic cause rather than the man, whom he had never seen.

One afternoon late in November, Governor Wilson called alone on Colonel House at the Hotel Gotham, where the latter was staying. From that moment began the personal friendship which was so powerfully to affect the events of the following years.

CHAPTER III BEGINNINGS OF A FRIENDSHIP

It looks to me as if they depended too much upon speech-making and noisy demonstrations, and not enough upon organization.

House to Wilson, August 28, 1912

WOODROW WILSON and Colonel House first met on November 24, 1911, a year before the presidential election. Already House had decided definitely that circumstances made of Wilson the most available candidate, one who could arouse the enthusiasm of the voters in the electoral campaign, and one who, if elected, possessed the courage and the imagination to lead a vigorous reform administration. For these were the two qualities which the Colonel believed essential to a successful President.

→ Governor Wilson, in his turn, must have found his curiosity piqued by the friendly efforts of the unseen House, word of which had been brought to him during the summer. Without experience in national politics, he knew little or nothing of the career of House in Texas, nor of his relations there with the successive Governors and with Bryan. But he appreciated the skill with which House, working through Senator Culberson, had disposed of the attacks on Wilson's party regularity that threatened to destroy his candidacy even while in the embryonic stage; and he was impressed by the success of his address in Texas which House and Gregory had arranged.

This beginning of what Sir Horace Plunkett later called 'the strangest and most fruitful personal alliance in human history,' should properly have taken place under more dramatic auspices. The small hotel room where they met did not add glamour to the occasion and neither could guess what the political future held in store for them. But each evi-

dently experienced an instinctive personal liking for the other which ripened immediately into genuine friendship. The first impressions of Wilson can only be deduced from the almost affectionate tone of the letters that he wrote to House after the interview. Those of the Colonel have been preserved in more definite form.

'He came alone to the Gotham quite promptly at four [recorded House], and we talked for an hour. He had an engagement to meet Phelan, afterward Senator from California, at five o'clock, and expressed much regret that he could not continue our conversation. We arranged, however, to meet again within a few days, when at my invitation he came to dine with me.

'Each time after that we met at the Gotham, as long as I remained in New York that autumn and winter and whenever he came to the city.

'From that first meeting and up to to-day [1916], I have been in as close touch with Woodrow Wilson as with any man I have ever known. The first hour we spent together proved to each of us that there was a sound basis for a fast friendship. We found ourselves in such complete sympathy, in so many ways, that we soon learned to know what each was thinking without either having expressed himself.

'A few weeks after we met and after we had exchanged confidences which men usually do not exchange except after years of friendship, I asked him if he realized that we had only known one another for so short a time. He replied, "My dear friend, we have known one another always." And I think this is true.'

It is curious to note that it was the personal amiability of Mr. Wilson, rather than his intellectual qualities or political ideas, which impressed House at the outset. He thus reported this first interview to his brother-in-law:

*Colonel House to Dr. S. E. Mezes*¹

NEW YORK, November 25, 1911

DEAR SIDNEY:

I had a delightful visit from Woodrow Wilson yesterday afternoon, and he is to dine with me alone next Wednesday. . . .

I am glad that he has arrived, and we had a perfectly bully time. He came alone, so that we had an opportunity to try one another out.

He is not the biggest man I have ever met, but he is one of the pleasantest and I would rather play with him than any prospective candidate I have seen.

From what I had heard, I was afraid that he had to have his hats made to order; but I saw not the slightest evidence of it. . . .

Never before have I found both the man and the opportunity.

Fraternally yours

E. M. H.

Writing in November to Senator Culberson, House expressed his thorough satisfaction with Wilson as a candidate and solidified the support which the influential Texan Senator was already prepared to offer. 'The more I see of Governor Wilson the better I like him,' said House, 'and I think he is going to be a man one can advise with some degree of satisfaction. This, you know, you could never do with Mr. Bryan.'

Wilson's amenability to advice at this period permitted an important development which House suggested and carried through. The Governor had taken as his chief text for campaign speeches the political control of privileged interests under Republican Administrations. He had not, however,

¹ Then President of the University of Texas, later President of the College of the City of New York.

emphasized the importance of the real stronghold of privilege and the means by which it might be attacked. If Wilson were to pose as the champion of the 'common man,' he must not overlook the tariff.

W.W. to
pose as
champion

'In reading the speeches he was making in 1911 [recorded Colonel House], I noticed he was not stressing the tariff. I called his attention to this and thought it was a mistake. Underwood and Champ Clark were making this a feature. I was sure Wilson could do it better than they, and, since it was becoming a prominent issue of the campaign, I advised striking a strong note on the subject in order at once to call attention to himself as a fit champion of the Democratic cause. I suggested that he let me invite D. F. Houston,¹ who had made a lifelong study of the question, to come to New York for consultation.

'The Governor agreed to the advisability of this move, and Houston came. I gave a dinner at the Gotham [December 7]. The others present besides Governor Wilson were Houston, Walter Page, McCombs, and Edward S. Martin. I seated Houston by Wilson and arranged it so they could talk afterwards. Before dinner I went over the data which Houston had prepared, and added to it and eliminated from it whatever seemed necessary. This data was afterwards given to Governor Wilson, who based his tariff speeches largely on it.'

The effect of Wilson's tariff speeches was destined to put him in the popular mind as the chief antagonist of Republican policies and therefore the natural representative of the Democratic point of view. The dinner at the Gotham also assured the enthusiastic support of Mr. Houston.

¹ Formerly President of the University of Texas; at this time Chancellor of Washington University, and later a member of Wilson's Cabinet.

Dr. D. F. Houston to Dr. S. E. Mezes

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
ST. LOUIS, December 11, 1911

MY DEAR MEZES:

. . . I have just returned from New York, where I saw a great deal of Mr. House and something of some other people. I will tell you all about it, including the Wilson part of it. Wilson is the straightest thinking man in public life, and can say what he thinks better than any other man. He may not be a great executive officer, but neither was Lincoln, and I am for him. Wilson is clean, courageous, and disinterested. It will be a liberal education to the community to have Wilson do the talking, such of it as he ought to do and will have to do.

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed my visit with Mr. House, especially on the train. He has a vision. I should like to make him Dictator for a while. . . .

Cordially yours

D. F. HOUSTON

II

The various booms for candidates were now beginning to assume definite form. The Wilson movement was regarded more seriously by the practical machine politicians than hitherto, but wisecracs believed that the final struggle would be between Underwood of Alabama and Harmon of Ohio. Both were regarded as representing conservative interests. / Champ Clark of Missouri, esteemed a radical, was mentioned by those who realized the difficulty of success with a conservative standard-bearer and who feared that Wilson, after his fight with the New Jersey bosses, would not be inclined to accept the orders of any machine.

Both House and Governor Wilson understood that the approval of Bryan would be a factor essential to the success of Wilson's candidacy, and from the autumn until the time

of the nominating convention, House worked ceaselessly to secure it. The intimacy with Mr. Bryan which he had developed in Texas now proved of inestimable value, for he knew exactly which of Wilson's qualities would attract Bryan and therefore deserved emphasis; he laid especial weight upon the fact that the reactionary forces in the Democratic Party were fighting both Bryan and Wilson.

'Before I left for Texas, in December, 1911 [wrote House], it was understood that I should nurse Bryan and bring him around to our way of thinking, if possible. Before Mr. Bryan left New York for Jamaica, he asked me to keep him informed concerning political conditions and to send him such clippings as I thought would be of interest. He said he was taking but few papers: the *World*, the *Washington Post*, I think he mentioned, because I wondered why he took either of them, since they were both so antagonistic to him.

'However, his request gave me an opportunity to send him such clippings as I thought would influence him most in our direction.'

As early as November, we find House writing to Senator Culberson: 'I saw Mr. Bryan just before he sailed for Jamaica and I think I removed several obstacles that were in his mind, and I got him in almost as good an attitude as one could desire.' Thereafter House called Bryan's attention to all the Wilson characteristics likely to attract his approval.

Colonel House to Mr. W. J. Bryan

NEW YORK, November 25, 1911

DEAR MR. BRYAN:

... Governor Wilson called yesterday afternoon and was with me for an hour and a half.

I am pleased to tell you that when I asked him what he

thought of the Supreme Court ruling about which we talked when you were here, he replied in almost the exact terms you used to me. As far as I can see, your positions are identical.

He is also opposed to the Aldrich plan,¹ but I think you are both wrong there. You will have to convert me the next time I see you.

I am inclined to think that Aldrich is trying to give the country a more reasonable and stable system. It seems to me a long way in advance of the money trust which now dominates the credit of the nation.

There is some evidence that Mr. Underwood and his friends intend to make a direct issue with you for control of the next convention, and it looks a little as if they were receiving some aid from Champ Clark and his friends.

My feeling is that we can lay them low, but we must not lag in the doing of it. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, December 6, 1911

DEAR MR. BRYAN:

. . . I was called over the telephone last week by a friend of Mr. Hearst, who made an appointment to see me. He said that Mr. Hearst had been out to his country place on Sunday and they had talked about enlisting me in his behalf for the presidential nomination.

I told him that I was thoroughly committed to Governor Wilson and that, even if I were not, I would advise Mr. Hearst to submerge himself for a while and work within the party for a season. After further conversation it developed that he was grooming himself for a dark horse.

¹ For a central bank. Wilson ultimately accepted House's arguments for centralized control of banking which materialized in the Federal Reserve Act. See Chapter VI.

FED
plans
→

I do not know what effect my talk had, but as yet he has made no formal announcement.

I learned, too, that he was favorable to Underwood or Champ Clark and was against Governor Wilson.

I took lunch with Colonel Harvey yesterday. It is the first time I have met him. I wanted to determine what his real attitude was towards Governor Wilson, but I think I left as much in the dark as ever.

He told me that everybody south of Canal Street was in a frenzy against Governor Wilson and said they were bringing all sorts of pressure upon him to oppose him. He said he told them he had an open mind, and that if they could convince him he was a dangerous man he would do so.

He said that Morgan was particularly virulent in his opposition to Governor Wilson. I asked him what this was based upon, and he said upon some remark Governor Wilson had made in Morgan's presence concerning the methods of bankers and which Morgan took as a personal reference.

He told me that he believed that any amount of money that was needed to defeat Governor Wilson could be readily obtained. He said he would be surprised if they did not put \$250,000 in New Jersey alone in order to defeat delegates favorable to his nomination.

We are going to try to devise some plan by which we can use this Wall Street opposition to Governor Wilson to his advantage. If the country knows of their determination to defeat him by the free use of money, I am sure it will do the rest. . . .

If you can make any suggestions regarding the best way to meet the Wall Street attack, I would greatly appreciate it.

From now, letters will reach me at Austin, Texas.

With kind regards and best wishes for all of you, I am

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

There was in the foregoing letter a cleverness which might escape the too casual reader. In the form of simple narrative Colonel House underlined the activities of Hearst, who was anathema to Bryan, and emphasized Hearst's preference for Clark over Wilson; he then indicated the interest Wall Street exhibited in the defeat of Wilson; and he concluded by an assumption that Bryan would naturally align himself with the forces that stimulated the enmity of Hearst and Wall Street. Mr. Bryan evidently wavered. He had opposed Harmon from the first, as a rank reactionary, and he refused to consider Underwood. If Clark were to have the support of the New York group, Bryan might be drawn to Wilson.

Mr. W. J. Bryan to Colonel House

KINGSTON, JAMAICA
December 28, 1911

MY DEAR MR. HOUSE:

... Am anxious to get back and find out more of the political situation. I shall attend the Washington banquet on the 8th of January and will have a chance to learn how things are shaping up.

I am glad Governor Wilson recognizes that he has the opposition of Morgan and the rest of Wall Street. If he is nominated it must be by the Progressive Democrats, and the more progressive he is the better.

The Washington banquet will give him a good chance to speak out against the trusts and the Aldrich currency scheme.

Yours very truly

W. J. BRYAN

The Washington banquet, to which he referred, gave a good chance to Bryan himself to exhibit his personal generosity, for just before it Wilson's opponents published a letter which, while President of Princeton, he had written to

Mr. Adrian Joline, some five years previous. In the letter appeared this unfortunate sentence: 'Would that we could do something at once dignified and effective to knock Mr. Bryan once for all into a cocked hat.' It would have been only human nature if the Commoner had then and there forsworn Mr. Wilson and all his works. Instead, he did not permit himself to show any pique and at the dinner manifested the utmost cordiality to the Governor, who himself in a speech of rare discretion emphasized the admiration that all good Democrats felt towards Mr. Bryan.

It is possible that his friendliness towards Wilson was enhanced by the controversy between the Governor and Colonel George Harvey, which received much publicity as the result of a spirited exchange of letters between Mr. McCombs and Colonel Watterson. For Bryan distrusted Harvey as a representative of New York interests.

House appreciated keenly the part which Colonel Harvey had played in setting Governor Wilson on the road to political fortune. Harvey had encouraged him to give up his academic career and try the luck of politics; he had influenced the New Jersey machine to give him the nomination for Governor. From the first he had worked with the possibility of the presidential nomination in mind. But the fervor with which he supported Wilson in *Harper's Weekly* raised suspicions in the Middle West that the Governor, through Harvey, was putting himself under obligations to New York financial interests. This was so obvious that House had discussed with his friend E. S. Martin, editor of *Life* and also an associate editor of *Harper's Weekly*, the desirability of a less enthusiastic support of Wilson by the *Weekly*. After House left New York, Colonel Harvey put the question direct to Wilson, as to whether the Governor felt this support to be injurious; the reply of the latter was perhaps too brusque an affirmative. The affair might have passed as a minor incident, had it not been for the emotion displayed in the press

by McCombs on the one side and Watterson on the other. It was a moment when the conciliatory influence of House, then absent in Texas, would have proved valuable.

Colonel House to Mr. E. S. Martin

AUSTIN, TEXAS, *January 18, 1912*

DEAR MARTIN:

What a mess we have made with the *Harper's Weekly-Harvey-Wilson* matter. I feel it is largely my fault, and yet I had no thought of it taking any such direction. I would rather be defeated for the Presidency than even be under the suspicion of ingratitude, and, according to Colonel Watterson, Governor Wilson was almost brutal. I hope this is exaggerated.

All I had in mind was for *Harper's* not to be so strenuous, but I never remotely considered wounding Colonel Harvey's feelings nor the breaking of the friendship between Governor Wilson and himself. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Both the Harvey episode and the publication of the Joline letter ultimately worked in favor of Mr. Wilson. In the Middle West and the South the impression became current that the Governor had braved the New York interests in refusing Harvey's support and had displayed honesty in telling Harvey that he did not want it. In Texas Mr. Gregory skilfully utilized a remark of Colonel Watterson, who had taken up the cudgels in favor of Harvey. Watterson spoke rather sneeringly of the 'austere truthfulness of the schoolmaster.' There was in Texas, a rural community, a great free school system and some forty thousand school teachers. Mr. Gregory at once gave full publicity to the phrase, asking whether Wilson should have lied in answer to Harvey's question and

whether this was not a time when austere truthfulness was desirable even from a schoolmaster. The next day forty thousand Texan school teachers were behind Wilson.

Bryan, reassured by Wilson's quarrel with Harvey, obviously felt kindly toward him after his own magnanimous treatment of the 'cocked hat' incident. While still warm with the sense of having acted in a rather large way, he continued to receive the commendatory letters of Colonel House that always emphasized, directly or indirectly, the progressiveness of Wilson and the opposition of Wall Street to him.

Colonel House to Mr. W. J. Bryan

AUSTIN, TEXAS, *January 27, 1912*

DEAR MR. BRYAN:

. . . Another thing that has pleased me beyond measure is your treatment of the Joline-Wilson incident. Your friends all knew your bigness of mind and heart, but it was an object lesson to those who thought of you differently.

I am glad that you have taken the position that you have regarding the Wilson-Harvey controversy. I know a great deal about it, perhaps as much as any one, and I hope that I may have the pleasure of discussing it with you when you come to Texas. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Governor Wilson

AUSTIN, TEXAS, *February 2, 1912*

MY DEAR GOVERNOR WILSON:

. . . Mr. Bryan is now on his Rio Grande farm, and I have asked him here before he leaves. In the meantime I will continue to keep in touch with him by correspondence.

Please let me know if there is anything you would like to

have suggested to him, for there can be no better place to do this than by the quiet fireside.

I am, my dear Governor,

Your very sincere

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Mr. W. F. McCombs

AUSTIN, TEXAS, *February 10, 1912*

DEAR MR. MCCOMBS:

... Mr. Bryan has gone to Tucson to see his son, but he promises to stop over and see me at the first opportunity.

He says he did not stop in going through, on account of reaching Austin at four o'clock in the morning, which he thought a little early for me.

I sent him some clippings favorable to Governor Wilson, which he promises to use and asks for more. If you could think to have sent me things that you would like to have used in the *Commoner*, I am sure that I could arrange it.

I agree with you that Mr. Bryan's support is absolutely essential, not only for nomination but for election afterward; and I shall make it my particular province to keep in touch with him and endeavor to influence him along the lines desired.

He has evolved considerably in our direction, for when I first talked to him in October he did not have Governor Wilson much in mind.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Apart from his interest in winning Bryan to the Wilson cause, House directed his energies to the organization of Texas, the forty votes of which were bound to exercise a powerful influence at the Democratic Nominating Convention. As one looks back, it is easy to see that without Bryan and without the steadfast loyalty and enthusiasm of the

Texas delegates, Wilson could not have been nominated. That Colonel House realized this so long before the convention is an indication of the degree to which foresight affected his plans.

When he arrived in Texas, in December, 1911, he found that, despite the success of Wilson's Dallas speech, sentiment had not crystallized in his favor. An energetic campaign would have to be developed if Wilson delegates were to be chosen. 'That campaign,' writes Mr. Gregory, who played an important rôle in it, 'was the greatest work of organization that I remember. Colonel House had various pieces of his old political machinery lying around, which he soon brought together; but we had against us the political forces of the state. The Chairman and thirty of the thirty-one members of the State Executive Committee were opposed to Wilson, the Governor did not favor him, and Senator Joseph W. Bailey stumped the state against him. Only four of the Texas Congressmen favored him.'¹

House mobilized his friends, who for three months stimulated Wilson sentiment in critical districts, without a blare of trumpets but none the less effectively, it would appear, for by the beginning of March the Colonel was willing to express the expectation of a solid Wilson delegation from Texas. He was the more optimistic in that the Harmon supporters devoted themselves to speeches rather than personal canvassing, a sure method, according to House, of making a noise and losing the fight.

Colonel House to Mr. W. F. McCombs

AUSTIN, TEXAS, March 4, 1912

DEAR MR. MCCOMBS:

... Confidentially, I have not been at all satisfied with

¹ Memorandum of T. W. Gregory. Subsequently Governor Campbell, a friend of Colonel House and later a member of the Texas delegation at Baltimore, supported Wilson vigorously in the National Convention.

our organization in this State; but I am glad to tell you that it is now getting in such shape that I feel I can say that you need have no further concern about Texas.

I will not go into details now, further than to let you know that it is in process of complete organization and that we find the sentiment largely for Governor Wilson.

Strangely enough, the opposition are doing practically nothing in an effective way, except to blow in the newspapers. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Governor Wilson

AUSTIN, TEXAS, March 6, 1912

MY DEAR GOVERNOR WILSON:

I am pleased to tell you that we now have everything in good shape in Texas and that you may confidently rely upon the delegates from this State.

We may or may not have a presidential primary, but the result will not be changed.

In two or three weeks our organization will be perfected, and then I shall leave for the East where I shall have the pleasure of seeing you.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Mr. Wilson replied that House's news brought great cheer when he most needed it. The Governor had been discouraged by the news from Kansas and Michigan, where he felt the Wilsonian forces ought to have won, and he declared that the Colonel's success in Texas and the knowledge that he would soon be East to offer his counsel put him in heart again. Wilson was troubled by the suspicion of a combination against himself of Clark, Underwood, and Harmon, with a division of territory, and by what he regarded as evidence

of its being financed from Wall Street. And he expressed the fear that the 'dear old party' might become the tool of reactionaries.

III

In April Colonel House returned to New York, satisfied that Texas was safe for Wilson, but disturbed by the failure of the Wilson forces to make the progress elsewhere that had been expected. For the political situation had changed since autumn. The conservative leaders, who favored Harmon or Underwood, appreciated the strength of liberal feeling in the party and realized that Wilson by assuming the leadership of the liberals might run away with the nomination. To defeat him the Harmon, Underwood, and Clark supporters combined to concentrate in each State upon the strongest candidate opposed to Wilson. The result was that the threat of Champ Clark, in particular, began to appear dangerous. Bryan had endorsed him as a liberal and the conservatives preferred him to Wilson, for he was a 'practical politician' with whom they could negotiate. At least he would serve to deadlock the convention against Wilson. 'Nobody regards Clark seriously,' wrote House to Gregory, 'except as a means to defeat Wilson.'

After a few days in the East, House recognized the strength of the combination that was putting Clark forward. Pennsylvania went for Wilson, but the South and the Middle West were cold. 'Illinois hit us a pretty bad jolt,' wrote House to Burleson on April 11. 'It was not that we expected to carry it, but we did not expect to lose by so heavy a vote.' A few days later, Nebraska declared for Champ Clark. The Colonel recorded that at the end of May it looked as if the anti-Wilson forces would triumph. Bryan remained neutral as between Clark and Wilson.

'I had seen Mr. Bryan in New York [wrote Colonel House]

almost immediately upon arrival in April, and had persuaded him to declare his belief that either Clark or Wilson would be an acceptable candidate. I could not get him to go further than this, although I pointed out that all his enemies were in the combination to defeat Wilson.

'Mrs. Bryan helped me in getting a favorable decision for Woodrow Wilson. I remember I breakfasted with the Bryans at the Holland House, and every argument I made in behalf of Wilson was supplemented by Mrs. Bryan.'

The Commoner refused as yet, however, definitely to commit himself, and Colonel House could not avoid the suspicion that Mr. Bryan regarded it as a good Democratic year and would not scorn the nomination.

Colonel House to Senator C. A. Culberson

NEW YORK, *May 1, 1912*

DEAR SENATOR:

... It looks to me as if the opposing candidates might again be Bryan and Roosevelt. In that event, I think Roosevelt would beat him. He would get his share of the progressive vote and most of the conservative vote. Bryan thinks he could beat Roosevelt, but in my opinion, he could beat Taft more easily.

Wilson's best chance now, I think, is the fear of many people that Bryan will be nominated and the further fear that Hearst may succeed in landing Champ Clark and then dominate the Administration.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

As May passed, prospects appeared brighter; and the result of the Texas convention, which, as House had predicted, was wholly in Wilson's favor, gave impetus to the cause. The Colonel relied upon the forty delegates from Texas to

stand firm, and his confidence was justified. He told them to consider no second choice. Mr. Gregory records that shortly before the convention, 'Tammany made an offer to the Texas delegation that, if they would drop Wilson, Tammany would support Culberson; but the delegation, which included Culberson himself, simply laughed at them.'

House also relied upon the fact that many delegates instructed for Clark or Underwood approved Wilson in their hearts and would vote for him as soon as it became obvious that their candidates could not be chosen and they were released from their pledges. He now advised Wilson to proceed carefully, for he felt that Bryan, influenced by his wife, was more favorable, and he feared the tactical mistake which at the last moment so frequently spoils a candidate's chances.

Colonel House to Governor Wilson

BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS
June 7, 1912

DEAR GOVERNOR WILSON:

I have a letter from Mr. — this morning, telling me that he has suggested some things to you, which I hope you will not consider. . . .

In my opinion, everything is being done that should be towards influencing the delegates in your behalf. Plans for organizing them into an efficient and effective force at Baltimore are already under way, and will be much more potent than anything Mr. — has suggested.

If I see the situation rightly, there has never been a time when your nomination seemed so probable as now, and if I were you I would move cautiously and do nothing further for the present.

I do not doubt but that a large part of your time has been taken up, as indeed has Mr. McCombs' and mine, by people giving advice which, if acted upon, would defeat our ends.

Do you recall what I told you concerning the conversation I had with Mrs. B.? I have a letter this morning from her containing this most significant sentence: 'I found Mr. B. well and quite in accord with the talk we had.'¹

It encourages me to believe that Mr. Clark will never receive that influence and that you will. It also means that he [Bryan] will not want the nomination unless two Republican tickets are in the field.

If your engagements will permit, I hope that we may have the pleasure of seeing you here before the 25th.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Governor Wilson replied in a manner that would have surprised some of his later critics. He not merely thanked House for his advice, but confessed that he stood in need of it, for at first he had been inclined to follow Mr. ——'s suggestion. Not only did he admit he was wrong, but he promised not to act independently in the future.

IV

Colonel House was not at the Baltimore Convention which nominated Wilson. Because of his health he was accustomed to flee American summer heat, and even the importance of this particular crisis did not prevent him from following his regular habit, which was to spend the summer in Europe. When the convention met, he was on the ocean.

This absence did not eliminate his influence. In Texas he had been present at only three of the nominating conventions that chose the candidates he had supported; he was accustomed to lay his plans so carefully that they could be clearly understood and definitely executed by his lieutenants. Thus we find him, during the weeks that immediately preceded the convention, in close consultation with Mr.

¹ Evidently suggesting that Bryan was veering away from Clark.

McCombs and spending long hours with the leaders of the Texas delegation, which was promised the rôle of Old Guard in the approaching battle.

‘On June 1 [the Colonel recorded] McCombs and I went to Beverly, Massachusetts, where we had taken a house for the summer. McCombs was so run down in health that I did not think he would be able to go to the Baltimore Convention on June 25. Governor Wilson thought I was mistaken about this and that he was tougher than his appearance indicated. I was sure, however, he needed the rest; and I was also sure he needed what suggestions and coaching I might be able to give him in regard to handling conventions, because he had never had any experience in such matters.’

In these consultations Mr. T. W. Gregory and Mr. T. A. Thomson of the Texas delegation played a prominent part. They were to hold the fort against Clark, who had already secured a majority of the delegates and who, if his strength did not weaken on the early ballots, threatened to gather enough more to obtain the necessary two thirds. Underwood was strong in the South, but among the Southern delegations there was bitter opposition to Clark which the Texans were able to capitalize.

‘It looked to me [recorded House] as if Wilson had a good chance, but nothing more. I urged both Gregory and Thomson to use their influence with the Texas delegation to hold it as a unit and to stay in the fight in the same way we had been accustomed to do in Texas. The history of the Convention records the work of those forty delegates from Texas, without whose loyalty and intelligent support the President could never have been nominated.’

What House advised was to assign to each influential

member of the Texas delegation the task of working upon some other delegation with whom he had personal relations, and to secure mutual understanding that in no contingency would either yield to pressure from the Clark forces. This plan had evidently long been in Colonel House's mind, for as far back as December, 1911, he had written to a Southern friend, William Garrott Brown: 'It goes without saying that we will make no move adverse to Mr. Underwood in his own State, but we will expect our friends to see that delegates are selected there not unfriendly to Governor Wilson for second choice.' Mr. Gregory thus describes his own activities:

'Champ Clark had by far the largest convention vote of any of the candidates, and it was evident that he must first be disposed of before any of the other candidates would have a chance. In these circumstances the Wilson people made airtight agreements with a sufficient number of delegates instructed for candidates other than Clark, to the effect that under no conditions would any parties to the agreement vote for Clark; there was no agreement as to what would be done after Clark had been eliminated. The delegates involved in this agreement constituted more than one third of the convention vote, and against this stone wall the forces of Champ Clark battered in vain.'

Colonel House to Governor Wilson

BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS
June 20, 1912

DEAR GOVERNOR WILSON:

I am sorry beyond measure that it is my fate not to be able to be at the Baltimore Convention. Both my inclination and my deep interest in your success call me there, but I am physically unequal to the effort.

However, I have done everything that I could do up to

now to advise and to anticipate every contingency. I have had interviews with many delegates, and some of my warm personal friends on the Texas delegation will be here to-morrow in order to have a final word.

Colonel Ball, who is perhaps the most forceful man on the Texas delegation and the one best equipped for floor tactics, has wired me that he will be in Baltimore to-day.

I have told Mr. McCombs of those upon whose advice and loyalty he can lean most heavily, and now I feel that I can do nothing further excepting to send my good wishes.

If Mr. Clark's strength crumbles on the second and third ballot — which I hope may be the case — then I believe that you will be nominated forthwith; but if, on the other hand, his vote clings to him and he begins to get the uninstructed vote, he may be nominated.

We are sailing for England on the Cunard S.S. *Laconia* on the 25th at six o'clock, but Mr. McCombs has promised to tell me of the result by wireless; and if you are nominated I shall return almost immediately.

I shall at least have the benefit of the trip over and back, and that is one of the reasons I am going on the 25th rather than waiting until after I know the result. . . .

If you will permit me to act as your friend in an advisory capacity, it will give me pleasure to use my every effort in your behalf.

With kind regards and best wishes, I am
Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS
June 23, 1912

DEAR GOVERNOR WILSON:

T. W. Gregory and T. A. Thomson, two of the delegates from Texas, have just left me.

I have never known two better organizers than they are,

and I have outlined to them in detail what to do at Baltimore with Mr. McCombs' approval.

I am afraid that if thorough organization is not had, we will find fifty of our friends working upon one delegation and perhaps no one attending to another delegation of equal importance.

I have suggested that the forty men from Texas be divided into four units of ten, and each given one of the doubtful Southern States. The same methods should be pursued with New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and other loyal delegations. In this way the work becomes effective and good results follow.

I have urged them to make friends with the delegations to which they are assigned, to influence and entertain them in one way and another until the convention is ended. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

On June 25 Colonel House sailed, and on the same day the Democratic Convention met at Baltimore. Its history has been told many times and we may merely remind ourselves of the bitter struggle between the liberal and conservative forces, and of how Clark, originally put forward to break the Wilson movement, soon threatened to run away with the convention. His strength did not crumble, as House had hoped, after the first few ballots and, if we may believe Wilson's secretary, Joseph P. Tumulty, even McCombs despaired. At this juncture appeared the value of the plans made by House during the winter and spring. The Wilson delegates, at first in a small minority, stood firm, led by the band of forty from Texas. Gradually, as the cause of Underwood appeared hopeless, Wilson began to pick up votes from the delegations of which he was second choice; the Clark forces weakened. And at the critical moment the arguments that House had so constantly pressed upon

Bryan, during the winter and spring, bore fruit. The New York delegation, dominated by Tammany, attacked Wilson and supported Clark with such vigor that Bryan was finally convinced that Wilson must be the right man. His intervention proved decisive, and on the forty-sixth ballot Wilson received the nomination.

Colonel House had not yet reached England when the issue was determined.

'I received the notification of the nomination of Wilson by wireless, one day out from Liverpool. It was from H. H. Childers and read, "Wilson wins." It came at ten o'clock at night. Dr. Arthur Hadley of Yale and some others were playing cards at the time. I told Hadley that perhaps he would be glad to know that Woodrow Wilson had been nominated at Baltimore. I was sadly mistaken in my supposition that the knowledge of this would give him pleasure, for I never saw a man who evinced less enthusiasm.'

v

The real struggle of 1912 was for the nomination. It would have been far otherwise had the Republican Party remained united and presented its normal strength at the polls; in such a case the election of Wilson would have been difficult, if not impossible. But the dissensions which during the spring had already threatened Republican solidarity culminated in Republican disaster at the Chicago Convention, where Taft was nominated; for the adherents of Roosevelt bolted, organized the Progressive Party, and in August nominated their hero.

Most well-informed observers, while they conceded the personal popularity of Roosevelt, believed that the lack of an established organization would certainly prevent his election; nor did they believe that Taft, now deprived of the support of the most vigorous elements in the party, would

prove a dangerous candidate. Wilson might count upon the approval of many regular Republicans who detested Roosevelt and who realized that the surest means of defeating him would be to elect Wilson. The issue proved the accuracy of such prognostications. Generalizations are usually misleading, but in this case the historian may venture the assertion that in 1912 Roosevelt put Wilson in the White House.

Colonel House was among those who believed that the result of the split in the Republican Party would be certain Democratic victory. Hence he did not cut short the travels that he had planned for the summer of 1912, which included Sweden, Finland, Russia as far east as Moscow, Germany, France, and England. In August, however, he returned ready to throw himself into the campaign, which soon captured all his time and energy. He was delighted with the liberalism and eloquence displayed in Wilson's speeches, which gained in effectiveness as the campaign progressed; and he found a double assurance of success in the vehemence with which Roosevelt emphasized the differences between Republicans and Progressives, in his virulent attacks upon Taft.

'In my opinion [he wrote Wilson, soon after his return] the greatest asset that we have is the scare that Roosevelt is giving the conservative Republicans, and I have found that my efforts in proselyting prominent Taft adherents have been successful whenever I have been able to show that a vote for Taft is a half-vote for Roosevelt.'

Colonel House to Governor Wilson

BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS
August 28, 1912

DEAR GOVERNOR WILSON:

... I am trying to get our friends to organize properly in Vermont and Maine. It looks to me as if they depended too

much upon speech-making and noisy demonstrations, and not enough upon organization.

I have suggested that they get a committee in every precinct, whose business it shall be to get out the Democratic vote and influence as many of the Republican votes as possible.

Upon these committees I have suggested placing a Taft Republican who is supporting you for one reason or another, a progressive Republican who does not want to vote for Roosevelt and cannot vote for Taft, and the best Democratic organizer that can be obtained.

If this method is followed, not only in Vermont and Maine, but in every State in the Union, there will be nothing left of your opponents that will be worth while.

Your very sincere

E. M. HOUSE

What interested House chiefly was not so much the election of Wilson, which he regarded as certain, as the question of harmony between the Democratic leaders. Fortunately, the influence of Mr. Bryan was not among the disturbing elements. He was naturally satisfied with the part he played at Baltimore, where he had abdicated his own pretensions, and his attitude toward the candidate whose success he had done so much to assure was one of benevolence. Obviously he was not inclined to interfere with the management of the campaign.

Mrs. W. J. Bryan to Colonel House

FAIRVIEW, July 27, 1912

MY DEAR MR. HOUSE:

Have been in a mad struggle with mail lately — my desk is cleared and I celebrate by writing a line to you. Your letter was faithfully delivered by Mr. Thomson, and the correctness of your diagnosis was even then proven. I thought

of you and Mrs. House several times while the fight was on. I knew how anxiously you were awaiting bulletins on ship-board.

Just between us three, it was a remarkable fight. I was never so proud of Mr. Bryan — he managed so well. He threw the opponents into confusion; they could not keep from blundering and he outgeneralled them at every point. After all their careful planning, he wrested the power from their hands. Under the circumstances I am sure the nomination went to the best place and am entirely satisfied with the result. Will said all the time he did not think it was his time, and when we found the way things were set up we were *sure* of it.

The people through the country regard him as a hero — he is filling Chautauqua dates in larger crowds than he has ever had, and is perfectly well. The mail! The secretary told me yesterday there are several thousand Baltimore letters still unopened, and it is almost impossible to handle the daily increase. I am not telling you these things to boast, but because I know you are interested to know how he is getting on since he has been 'buried' again.

As to the possibilities in case of Democratic success: I am not sure what he would do. I know he dislikes routine work exceedingly, but believe he would do anything to help the cause. . . .

Did you read the platform? Will got in a provision on national committeemen that will eliminate the whole ring four years from now. — This letter seems full of politics, but we are all interested. My best wishes for a safe return and kindest regards to Janet, Mrs. H. and yourself.

Sincerely yours

MARY B. BRYAN

Reassured by the friendly attitude of Mr. Bryan, Colonel House was none the less disturbed by the lack of organiza-

TROUBLE BETWEEN McCOMBS AND McADOO 71

tion in the Democratic campaign and the contentions that had arisen among the campaign leaders. 'They are making the usual campaign of speeches, publicity, and noisy demonstrations,' he wrote Mr. Houston, 'and if it were not for the split in the Republican Party the result would be fatal.' It was true that the Republicans and Progressives firmly refused to permit the Democrats to defeat themselves. But if the latter were so torn by discord at the moment of victory as to find it impossible to organize a harmonious administration, there would be small profit in victory.

Much of the difficulty resulted from the illness of Mr. McCombs, who had been chosen Chairman of the National Committee and who during the summer found himself unable to stay at Headquarters. Mr. McAdoo, Vice-Chairman, took active control of affairs. Feeling between the two men and their adherents became scarcely short of envenomed. It was the first news that reached House upon his arrival from Europe.

'We landed at Boston [he recorded] and motored to Beverly, where messengers began to come telling of discord and demoralization at Democratic Headquarters. Those that brought their tales first were adherents of McCombs, and my sympathy was largely with him.

'McCombs himself came from the Adirondacks to Boston for a conference with me. He told a story of perfidy that was hardly believable. McAdoo was the ringleader and he, McCombs, was the victim.'

For Colonel House the important matter was party harmony. Unable to decide exactly where the trouble lay, although to begin with he sympathized with McCombs, he was determined that the first Democratic Administration in twenty years should not be ruined at the outset by the scandal of a public quarrel. The initial step was to prevent

the resignation of McCombs, which he threatened at regular intervals. The next was to come into touch with McAdoo.

Colonel House to Governor Wilson

BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS
September 2, 1912

DEAR GOVERNOR:

McCombs is seriously thinking of resigning, and may do so to-morrow.

There are reasons why his resignation at this time would be a serious blow to the cause. I cannot go into an explanation here, but you would readily understand the reason if all the facts were before you. . . .

Mr. McAdoo has asked me to go to Maine, which I shall do to-morrow night or Wednesday morning; and when I return I should be glad to come to New York if you will let me know when you will be there.

Your very sincere

E. M. HOUSE

'I returned to New York [wrote Colonel House] as soon as the weather would permit, and had a conference with Woodrow Wilson. I asked if he knew of the feud that was going on between McAdoo and McCombs, and I indicated my sympathy for McCombs. At that time I knew McAdoo but slightly, having met him but twice. Wilson asked me not to make up my mind about the matter until I had learned the ins and outs of it by personal contact at Headquarters.

'I afterwards learned the wisdom of this advice, for I had not been in New York more than two weeks before I knew that there was another side. Later I found that it was almost wholly McCombs' fault and that McAdoo was scarcely to blame at all. McCombs was jealous, was dictatorial. . . . He was not well enough to attend to the campaign himself, and he could not sit by and allow McAdoo to carry on the

work and get a certain amount of newspaper publicity. This latter was particularly galling to McCombs.'

At this moment (September 25, 1912), Colonel House began to make those detailed daily memoranda which, taken together, form a diary the historical importance of which can hardly be overstated. Every night, with rare exceptions, during the following seven years, he dictated his record of the events of the day, while his recollection was fresh and definite and with an astounding frankness of expression.

From the first of these memoranda it appears clear that during these weeks his main task was always the composing of quarrels. It was a function to which he had become accustomed from his days at school, where, according to a youthful friend, he loved to incite disputes between his schoolmates in order to have an opportunity to settle them.

In September and October there were not merely the difficulties between the leaders at National Headquarters which must be alleviated, but also the customary disagreement between the National Committee and Tammany Hall. The New York organization had fought the nomination of Wilson at Baltimore and would evidently not 'tote fair' in the election unless Wilson agreed actively to support the New York State ticket; and this Wilson would not do if it meant endorsing the Tammany boss, Charles F. Murphy. As always, there was the danger that Tammany would trade its support of the presidential candidate against Republican willingness to permit the election of the Democratic candidate for Mayor of New York City the year following. And this danger was increased by Wilson's attack upon the bosses and his refusal to approve the renomination of Governor Dix, which Murphy demanded.

At National Headquarters there were divided counsels. McAdoo, who may have himself hoped to be nominated for Governor, was willing to fight the bosses; McCombs, both

because of his feud with McAdoo and his political affiliations, was willing to endorse them heartily. House disliked the bosses and wrote on September 28, 'I believe McAdoo would be good material for the Governorship.' But he held that an open breach with Tammany must be avoided at all costs.

'The New York situation is acute [wrote House, on September 25], and it is necessary for some definite policy to be decided upon. The break between Murphy and National Headquarters is becoming wider each day, and the newspapers are printing numerous false interviews which make it yet wider. I am anxious to hold the party together, so that every available means may be used for the common good. My dislike of Tammany and its leaders is perhaps stronger than that of Governor Wilson; yet, having had more political experience, I am always ready to work with the best material at hand. My idea is to have them decide upon some unobjectionable Tammany man for Governor of New York who would not bring discredit upon the party. . . .

'There is much jealousy and back-biting at Headquarters, and tales are fetched and carried without number until all harmony is lost. McAdoo and others are anxious to give me a room for my personal use. I do not desire a room. They want to give me half of O'Gorman's.¹ Every one offers me some one else's room. McAdoo continues most cordial and belies the charges of his accusers. . . .'

Wilson, fulminating against the bosses, was on the point of attacking Murphy and Dix by name and insisting that the New York nominating convention formally repudiate the control of Tammany Hall. It would have meant an open conflict between the National and the City and State organizations.

¹ United States Senator from New York.

'Governor Wilson [House wrote, September 28] came in last night from New England, leaving at twelve. He asked me to take him out in our motor for a conference. He was particularly anxious to discuss the State situation before making his speech at McCombs' dinner. McAdoo is urging him to come out actively against Dix and Murphy. I urged him not to do this. McCombs is the only link between the bosses and Wilson. The Governor's inclination is to go after them. He finally agreed to give out a letter Monday without mentioning either by name. . . .

'October 2: The New York situation is still in a muddle. . . .'

The solution finally discovered by Colonel House was not without its elements of humor. At least it prevented an open rupture between the National Democratic organization and the New York organization. Mr. Murphy, leader of Tammany, agreed to the demand of Wilson, edited by House, that no man should dictate to the nominating convention what it must do. Quietly he permitted the impression to percolate that Governor Dix need not be renominated. At the convention, he (according to a New York correspondent) 'once Boss Murphy, now metamorphosized by the talisman of college men's ideals into Leader Murphy, said nothing, gave no orders — when nominations for Governor were called reported himself "present, not voting!"' The convention, thus freed from the despotism of the bosses, repudiating Dix, proceeded to nominate the Honorable William Sulzer, the purest product of the New York City organization. 'The advocates of the bossless convention had won and nominated a Tammany brave.'

Thus House saved Wilson from the tactical mistake of a quarrel with Tammany, which would at this moment certainly have failed to dislodge the bosses and must have produced merely disorganization; at the same time he persuaded Murphy ostensibly to yield to Wilson's leadership.

Press reports gave him full credit: 'Just what the wise Texan whispered into the Princeton ears no man may know. But the club did not fall on the Tammany head. . . . The good ship is sailing strong and no breakers ahead. Without Tammany New York was gone. With Tammany New York City will give Wilson the largest vote ever recorded for a Democratic candidate. . . . The story of Democratic success is almost ready to be told. Only one thing can prevent — Wilson himself. If he makes no blunder! He almost did in the matter of New York — but Ed House is still here.'¹

Later, when the leadership of Wilson in the party had been assured, House urged a vigorous assault upon Tammany; but a less propitious moment than the autumn of 1912 could not have been selected.

More difficult, however, was the situation caused by the physical and nervous condition of the Democratic Chairman. Much of House's time and energy was consumed in quieting the suspicions of Mr. McCombs, in persuading him to avoid indiscretions, and to forget enmities. It was not the first or the last occasion upon which Colonel House served the cause of harmony by assuming the ungrateful rôle of buffer.

'*October 3*: McCombs and McAdoo had an interview, and I hope that a more amicable relation will follow. The Governor was particularly anxious to have this brought about, and said he knew that I could do it if it could be done at all.

'*October 8*: I went to see McCombs. I do not like his affiliations or methods. He is very secretive and will only interview one person at a time, although he seems to have no secrets from me. He suggested getting rid of McAdoo by giving him the presidency of some railroad out West, which he said he could secure for him. . . .

'*October 13*: McCombs is very emphatic that no campaign promises, either direct or indirect, have been made.

¹ Press despatch by Pat Lay, New York, October 4, 1912.

I talked to Governor Wilson, urging him also not to make any promises. He says he has not, but he does not altogether trust McCombs in this direction. . . .

'October 24: McCombs is in a panic, and believes there is a chance of losing New York, Illinois, and Wisconsin. . . .

'October 25: I went to Headquarters at eleven and met McCombs as I was leaving. . . . He was countermanding everybody's orders, without regard to authority. . . . McAdoo tells me that the Governor thinks it best not to address him [McAdoo] in future, and McAdoo asked him not to consider him in any way. He said he would do the best he could until the campaign was over, and then he wished to be forgotten. I did not tell McAdoo that the Governor was doing this at my suggestion and because I am afraid of an open scandal between McCombs and himself. . . .

'October 26: Very little is being done at Headquarters excepting routine work. I went over each department, after seeing McAdoo at nine at his hotel. McCombs is in conference most of the time with old-style politicians. The whole character of the callers has changed since he took charge, and for the worse. I fear Governor Wilson will have trouble on account of connections made at this time. . . .

'October 31: McAdoo is not in evidence at all, and has almost effaced himself to secure harmony. . . .'

VI

At the height of the campaign the country was shocked by the news that a fanatic had shot Mr. Roosevelt, who was on a speaking tour, and that, while he would recover from the wound, his personal campaign was at an end.¹ Colonel House, in opposition to the members of the Democratic

¹ Mr. Roosevelt, whose life was saved by the manuscript of his speech and his glasses' case in his breast pocket, recovered so rapidly that he was able to address an enthusiastic rally in Madison Square Garden just before the election.

Campaign Committee, insisted that Mr. Wilson should cancel his speaking engagements, for it did not seem quite sporting for him to continue his vigorous campaign so long as his most redoubtable adversary was laid low.

'October 18: Everything is upset to-day over the attempted assassination of Theodore Roosevelt. . . .

'I telephoned Governor Wilson at Princeton while Burleson was here, urging him to cancel all engagements until Roosevelt was able to get out again. Wilson was at first doubtful, but wrote out a statement, which he read to me over the telephone, following my suggestions as to what to say. All of the Campaign Committee were against me in this. They wanted the Governor to continue speech-making, and so advised him. My thought was that if he continued to speak after T. R. had been shot, it would create sympathy for T. R. and would do Wilson infinite harm. The situation is a dangerous one and needs to be handled with care. The generous, the chivalrous, and the wise thing to do, so it seems to me, is to discontinue speaking until his antagonist is also able to speak. I am glad Wilson sees it as I do. He suggested that we might delay a decision until to-morrow and get the opinion of the full Committee, but I disagreed with this and said that the delay would be disadvantageous. Then, too, it would make it embarrassing if the Committee differed from him, as they certainly would, for their individual opinions have already been expressed. Burleson thinks I took too much responsibility in advising contrary to the rest of the Committee. . . .'

The Colonel's opinion carried the day, and Wilson's speaking tour was abandoned. The effect of this gesture, combined with the exchange of cordial telegrams of sympathy and appreciation between Wilson and Roosevelt, was certainly not disadvantageous to Wilson's campaign.

'The best politics,' House used to say, 'is to do the right thing.'

The attack upon Roosevelt immediately drew House's attention to the danger of a similar attempt upon Wilson's life, and he bethought himself of his old Texas friend the Ranger, McDonald. Captain Bill would furnish complete protection and ideal company for the Governor. There was also the advantage that McDonald, as House well knew, would waste no time in discussion as to whether the trip from Texas were worth while or what preparations he ought to make.

Colonel House to Captain McDonald

[Telegram]

NEW YORK, October 15, 1912

Come immediately. Important. Bring your artillery.

E. M. HOUSE

Captain McDonald to Colonel House

[Telegram]

QUANAH, TEXAS, October 16, 1912

Coming.

McDONALD

Colonel House to Dr. D. F. Houston

NEW YORK, October 22, 1912

DEAR DOCTOR HOUSTON:

. . . I got the Governor to let me send for Bill McDonald after the T. R. assault. I merely wired Bill to come at once. . . He thought I was in trouble, so he borrowed a shirt from one of his friends, boarded the train without money (which he borrowed on the way), and landed here in a little over two days after leaving Quanah.

I took him from the station to Headquarters, and it hap-

pened that Judge Parker and Norman Mack were in McCombs' rooms when I brought Bill in. He had on his big white Stetson and a four days' growth of beard, and I need not tell you he created a sensation. . . .

Mrs. Wilson told me on Sunday that she had slept better Saturday night than at any time since T. R. was shot. They all seem pleased with Bill.

I arranged to keep him out of the papers, and he has refused to open his mouth to any one about anything. I told him when he came not to say a word to anybody, and he is carrying it out literally. I heard a reporter ask him who I was, and that is the only time I have heard him speak. He told the fellow that he was a stranger in New York and did not know.

The mayor and police of one town that I know tried to disarm Bill after he was out of the Ranger Service and had no right to carry arms, but they were unable to accomplish their purpose. I would like to see the New York police try it.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson and his protector became fast friends. A fortnight after McDonald's arrival, House noted:

'I arose at seven and went over to see Governor Wilson and Captain Bill at the Hotel Collingwood. They were just leaving for the train, but we had a few minutes' conversation. Bill said the Governor was the finest fellow in the world, and the Governor seemed equally pleased with Bill and said he was taking good care of him.'

After the election McDonald returned to Texas, with keen appreciation of his Eastern experiences, but without reluctance to leave the hard city pavements. He once complained to Colonel House: 'Ed, I get awful tired of walking

on these rocks.' He was not entirely uncritical of the protection provided eminent public servants by the Government.

'November 8: Old Bill arrived [recorded House], and after talking with him I think it is best for him to return home for the present. The Wilsons were sorry to see him leave. He looked over the secret service men to see if he thought them fit. He told me that they did well enough, but he did not like their carrying .38's. When he said this to the secret service men, they did not like it and replied: "A .38 will kill a man all right." "Yes," said Bill, "if you give him a week to die in." I find that he has talked much of me and my political work in Texas to Wilson. The Governor wanted to know whether I had been successful in all my political campaigns and what kind of men I had chosen.'

VII

The last days of the campaign were not marked by the customary excitement, for the result of the election had become a foregone conclusion. The contest between Roosevelt and Taft had split the anti-Wilson vote so effectively that a Democratic landslide in the electoral college appeared certain.

As election returns came in on November 5, it soon became clear that Democratic confidence in overwhelming victory was fully justified. Mr. Taft carried only two states, Roosevelt only 88 electoral votes. It is true that Wilson's popular vote was less than a majority, but his plurality in the electoral college was the greatest ever received by a presidential candidate, and he carried with him handsome Democratic majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives.

'I went to Headquarters [wrote House on the evening of election day], and saw a few people, but nothing of importance was going on. By half-past six o'clock it was evident

that Wilson had won, so I sent him a telegram of congratulation. By seven o'clock returns were in enough to enable one to see that it was a Wilson landslide.

'I went down to the Waldorf Hotel, where McCombs had invited guests to hear the returns. He had taken nearly one side of the hotel, and there were about twenty-five people there. . . .'

It was a season of triumph for McCombs, who as Chairman of the Committee received fervid praise. It was one of equal although less obvious triumph for Colonel House, whose share in the campaign only a few of the more keen-sighted realized. He held no office in the party organization, his goings and comings at Headquarters were unostentatious. But there was no thread in the campaign pattern which he had not touched, no symptom of party discord which had not evoked his genius for pacification.¹ The new Wilson Administration might have been wrecked at the moment of victory. This the President-elect understood and his gratitude to House was unfeigned.

Two days after the election, replying to House's note of congratulation, he declared that no small part of Democratic success must be ascribed to the counsels of the Colonel.

Whether or not the victory at the polls could be capitalized to ensure a positive programme of reform legislation, was the question of the future and to it Colonel House had already turned his attention.

¹ "He would come into an office," explained a Democratic Committeeman, "and say a few words quietly, and after he had gone you would suddenly become seized with a good idea. You would put that idea forth and receive congratulations for it; it would work out first rate. Long after, if you thought the thing over, you would suddenly realize that the idea had been oozed into your brain by Col. House during a few minutes' quiet conversation. You did not know it and the Colonel did not want you to know it. As a matter of fact, before the campaign was over in his quiet way Col. House came near being the biggest man about the works, although he did not hold any position and would not take one." — *Current Opinion*, vol. iv, no. 6, June, 1913.

CHAPTER IV

BUILDING A CABINET

You can never build a Cabinet to please everybody. . . . When you have about concluded that you have the proper man, some one will come along and condemn him so vigorously that it will make you doubt. Therefore, in the end, you will have largely to determine their fitness yourself.

House to Wilson, November 22, 1912

I

THE victory of 1912 was the first won by the Democrats in a presidential election since 1892, an even twenty years. This long exclusion from power laid a tremendous handicap upon the party and its leaders when they came to organize an administration; for in the United States the minority suffers as much materially from being the under-dog as the majority suffers morally from an over-long lease of control. The older men of the party which has been in opposition have developed critical rather than constructive faculties, and it is long since they have exercised executive functions; comparatively few younger men of capacity have been attracted to the party, and those few have had no administrative experience. What is worse, long political exile will have sharpened every one's appetite for office, and the first indication of success at the polls will sound like a dinner gong, gathering the ravenous horde of anxious place-hunters, whose ability is apt to be in inverse ratio to their eagerness.

Mr. Wilson did not conceal from himself the particular difficulties which he, as leader of the party and President-elect, must face. He was without political experience except for his brief tenure of the New Jersey governorship. Although he always maintained that a college president found ample opportunity to develop political genius, he did not,

at this time certainly, overestimate his own ability. He was threatened, furthermore, by a flood of enthusiastic and contradictory advice. His two chief campaign leaders, McCombs and McAdoo, were at daggers drawn. The man who exercised strongest influence in the party, Mr. Bryan, Wilson regarded as impractical and notoriously mistaken in his personal judgments. Other leaders, such as Underwood and Champ Clark, he had fought vigorously in the pre-nomination campaign. Still others, in Congress, upon whom he must depend for the success of his legislative programme, were ex-Populists, such as Gore of Oklahoma, or machine politicians, such as Stone of Missouri; both types Wilson had attacked frequently and fearlessly, and their assistance in this juncture was at least questionable.

Each and all of them, furthermore, if not applicants for office themselves, marshalled a solid phalanx of deserving Democrats who had long and faithfully served the cause when there had been no hope of immediate reward and for whom places must be found. As early in the campaign as September 7, House wrote to Walter Hines Page: 'The wise man will not envy Governor Wilson even in success, for, as you say, the office-seekers will sorely beset him. They are cheerfully dividing up the honors now, and the numbers engaged in this pleasant pastime will increase as the campaign grows older.'

It was inevitable that Wilson should turn to Colonel House for assistance. Apart from the warm affection he had conceived for House, he knew the reputation for political sagacity which the Colonel had earned in Texas and he recognized the value of his services in the pre-nomination and electoral campaigns. House and Wilson, furthermore, were in close accord upon all important political issues. Both were ardent liberals, and Wilson's sympathy was not lessened by his realization that the Colonel's idealism was touched by a very real sense of the practicable.

The factor which counted most heavily in stimulating the confidence of Wilson was the obviously disinterested attitude of Colonel House. At the beginning he made it plain that he would ask nothing for his friends and wanted no office for himself. He was too much the philosopher to be attracted by the badge of public position, and he was convinced that he could serve the Administration more effectively out of office. 'I would not exchange the confidence and friendship that Governor Wilson seems to have for me,' he wrote in November, 'for any office in the land.' Nor would he give advice on appointments until the President demanded it.

Colonel House to Dr. S. E. Mezes

NEW YORK, November 4, 1912

DEAR SIDNEY:

... My mail is getting heavy with applications, but I think I know how to handle it. As a matter of fact, I do not care two whoops in Hades who gets the offices, and Governor Wilson knows it. ...

He has the opportunity to become the greatest President we have ever had, and I want him to make good. He can do it if the office-seekers will give him leisure to think, and I am going to try and help him get it. ...

The Governor spent practically all day with me Saturday, most of the time at the apartment. It would have done your heart good to have seen him walk in after we had finished lunch, and Loulie's expression when I asked him to join us. It is true that I took the food from under the servants' noses as they were about to eat it, but the Governor enjoyed what he had nevertheless. ...

Fraternally yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Senator Culberson

NEW YORK, November 5, 1912

DEAR SENATOR:

. . . It is Governor Wilson's intention to leave in ten days for a four weeks' absolute rest, and during that time I suppose the boys will decide definitely upon what offices they will take.

As far as I am concerned, I am not interested in the office end of it. . . . I have urged Governor Wilson to leave these matters largely to his Cabinet, to the Senators and to the Congressmen, and let them be the buffer between himself and the hungry host. I rather think he will do this in his own defence, in order that he may have some leisure to consider the complex problems that will confront him. . . .

It is that end of his Administration in which I am most interested. In other words, I am interested in measures and not in men, and what time I have I shall devote to helping him in that direction. . . .

Your very faithful

E. M. HOUSE

With every one else trying to tell the President-elect what he ought to do and every one advising differently, and with Colonel House refusing to press any claims, Wilson characteristically put full trust in him. House was ready. Long before the election, regarding Wilson's victory as assured, he had prepared to help him in every way that he could; and he knew that the first call for advice would be upon the subject of appointments. However honest he might be in his interest in measures rather than men, the personnel of the new Administration was the first great problem to be faced.

'I am on constant watch for good material [he wrote on October 21] from which to select a Cabinet and other im-

portant places. I wish to be well informed if Governor Wilson should consult me.'

There was no danger that House would not be well informed of those who desired office. The applicants themselves saw to that. Party leaders already recognized the influence he had acquired and guessed that his approval might be the determining factor in an appointment. 'A tremendous mail arrived from all directions,' he wrote immediately after the election. 'Every one wants something.' All attempts to disguise the importance of the position given him by the President-elect proved fruitless, for Mr. Wilson's frequent visits to the small apartment on Thirty-Fifth Street were too well known. From October until the following spring, when in desperation he left for Europe, the assault upon the Colonel continued.

Colonel House to Dr. S. E. Mezes

NEW YORK, October 11, 1912

DEAR SIDNEY:

... It is not a pose with me, this keeping out of the lime-light; but it is my judgment that I can do far more effective work and accomplish the things I have in mind better by the methods I have heretofore followed.

I agree with you that it is going to be difficult to keep out of the papers. . . .

The trouble is, the fact that I am close to Wilson is becoming known; and, since everybody wants something, they are doing their best to please me and this is the way they think to do it.

A magazine is trying now to write me up and wants my photograph, but if they get it it will be when I have lost my head more completely than I think I have as yet.

Fraternally and hastily yours

E. M. H.

Pressure upon House was increased because Wilson had determined to go to Bermuda for a rest and before sailing was slow to confer with the politicians, who one and all feared that they were not going to find a place in the picture. The Colonel reassured them and urged patience, at the same time that he pointed out to Wilson the need of showing consideration for their sensibilities.

'I telephoned to the Governor [he wrote on November 14] and advised him to write a note to Mr. Bryan telling him that he would confer with him after his return from Bermuda. He said he would do so at once. I am to see the Governor Saturday morning and will advise him concerning other matters pending. In my opinion he is making a mistake in not calling for advice from political leaders, as they will become disgruntled.'

Two days later, before Wilson left, he and House drew up a tentative list for Cabinet positions and discussed the best means to satisfy those who, by their work in the campaign, felt that they had earned proper rewards. It was already agreed that Mr. Bryan must be given his choice of positions. As far back as September, House recorded that Wilson had accepted his argument that 'it would be best to make him Secretary of State, in order to have him at Washington and in harmony with the Administration, rather than outside and possibly in a critical attitude. Mrs. Bryan's influence, too, would be valuable.'

Whatever his capacity, Bryan had come to Wilson's rescue at Baltimore and might ask for political recognition. Furthermore, his influence in the party was such that, if hostile, he could effectively block the legislative programme and perhaps wreck the Administration. Nothing illustrates more clearly the exigencies of government under the party system. Mr. Wilson did not want Bryan in his Cabinet and

did not believe him fitted for the Secretaryship of State; but it was undeniable that the new Administration could carry through its reform programme more effectively with Bryan in it. At least there would not be the danger to the public service that threatened in 1897, when McKinley, in order to provide a vacancy in the Senate which Mark Hanna might fill, appointed Senator Sherman Secretary of State.¹

The claims of McCombs and McAdoo were placed in the forefront because of their campaign leadership. Wilson regarded the abilities of the latter highly, but he distrusted the former's capacity, although he had long had for him a personal fondness. McCombs was in ill-health, lacked evenness of temper, and was ready to make alliance with the type of old-fashioned politicians whom Wilson hated. He had done much to stimulate enthusiasm in the pre-nomination campaign, but the experience of the electoral campaign itself seemed to indicate that his appointment to a Cabinet position would not make for harmony, even if he possessed the requisite administrative capacity.

'November 16: Governor Wilson telephoned me early [recorded Colonel House] and asked if it would be convenient for him to come over [to House's apartment] at ten o'clock. He remained for an hour or more and we went over all matters in the most confidential way. Cabinet material was discussed. . . . We discussed what to do with McCombs and McAdoo. He said he would give the former a first-class foreign appointment in order to get rid of him. He said he would be willing to give him the Collectorship of the Port of New York if it were not that he could build up a formidable political machine. I told him McCombs would not

¹ William Roscoe Thayer wrote of this manoeuvre: 'To force the venerable Sherman, whose powers were already failing, into the most important office after that of President himself, showed a disregard of common decency not less than of the safety of the nation.' (*The Life of John Hay*, II, 156.)

think of accepting the Collectorship. I suggested McAdoo as Secretary of the Treasury, Burleson as Postmaster General. He thought Daniels would be better for Postmaster General, but I thought he was not aggressive enough and that the position needed a man who was in touch with Congress. He agreed that this was true.

'We talked again of James C. McReynolds as Attorney-General. We practically eliminated Brandeis for this position. . . . He asked again about offering Mr. Bryan the Secretaryship of State or Ambassadorship to England, and I advised him to do so. He said that he would.'

II

With Wilson's departure for Bermuda, House set seriously to work investigating the claims and the capacities of the applicants for office, from lowest to highest. Much of the work was intensely uncomfortable.

'Visited Headquarters [he noted on November 18] and spent a disagreeable time with X and Y. Suggested to X the secretaryship of the Senate, which pays \$6000 per year, but he scorns a position of this kind and wants something much better. Y is in the same frame of mind. Y abused McAdoo viciously. When I pressed him, he could not verify any of his statements. He says he will depend upon McCombs to look out for his interests. . . .

'I am overwhelmed with office-seekers who have probably seen notices of Governor Wilson having called on me on the 16th. I am busy getting up a list of Cabinet possibilities with data attached, to send the President-elect for his information. . . .'

Colonel House to the President-elect

NEW YORK, November 22, 1912

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... James C. McReynolds, of Tennessee, but more recently of New York, is worthy of consideration. Although a Democrat, Mr. Roosevelt made him special counsel for the Government in the suit against the Tobacco Trust and the Anthracite Coal Trust.

He won the Tobacco suit and he has won the suit against the Coal Trust as far as it has gone. It is now in the Supreme Court.

McReynolds severed his connection with the Government because of his disagreement with Mr. Wickersham regarding the dissolution of the Tobacco Trust. He contended that Wickersham's plan nullified the effects of the victory.

He is about fifty years old. He is considered radical in his views by a large part of the New York Bar.¹ His character and legal attainments are of the highest.

I lunched with Mr. Brandeis yesterday. His mind and mine are in accord concerning most of the questions that are now to the fore. He is more than a lawyer; he is a publicist and he has an unusual facility for lucid expression. . . .

A large number of reputable people distrust him, but I doubt whether the distrust is well founded, and it would perhaps attach itself to any man who held his advanced views.

Norman Hapgood² lunched with us and I found in him an enthusiastic admirer of Brandeis. They are both going to Hot Springs for a few days as guests of Mr. Charles R. Crane.

¹ This reputation doubtless resulted from the vigor with which he had prosecuted the suits against the trusts. As a member of the Cabinet Mr. McReynolds displayed no radical proclivities, and after he assumed his seat on the Supreme Court he was generally regarded as one of the most conservative of the Justices.

² Editor of *Collier's Weekly*, 1903-12; of *Harper's Weekly*, 1913-16; later appointed Minister to Denmark.

Franklin K. Lane, Democratic Interstate Commerce Commissioner from California, was with me a large part of yesterday. Lane is fine material, but he is contented with his present position and would not change it.

You will have some difficulty in selecting your Secretary of the Interior. The West wants him, but it would perhaps be a mistake to select him from there. In the first place, he could not maintain himself with his own people and satisfy the East. If he satisfied the East, the West would rend him.¹ It would also be well not to put an ultra-Eastern man in that position, for the West would resent such action.

As you know, the East is all for conservation and the Far West is for it in a limited way — that is, where it does not conflict with their material interests. The West is anxious to have the forests and mines opened up and used to an extent that would aid them commercially.

They are also largely wedded to the idea of state versus national control, which I think is wrong, but which we need not go into here.

There is one thing I want to say, and that is this: You can never build a Cabinet that will please everybody. When you seek advice you will find but few agreements, even amongst your friends. When you have about concluded that you have the proper man, some one will come along and condemn him so vigorously that it will make you doubt. Therefore, in the end, you will have largely to determine their fitness yourself.

Please do not bother to answer my letters unless there is something you want me to do.

Your very faithful

E. M. HOUSE

¹ Mr. Lane, who was ultimately appointed, belied this prophecy. Although a Westerner and retaining the confidence of the West, he was generally spoken of by the Eastern press as one of the most capable members of Wilson's Cabinet.

Mr. Wilson wrote from Bermuda, thanking House for his suggestions. He addressed him, as he had done since the summer of 1912 and continued to do for five years, as 'My dear Friend,' and signed himself 'Affectionately yours.' He expressed himself as able to rest with an equable mind if the kind American people would not unload their correspondence upon him, and encouraged House in a prospective trip to Washington.

Colonel House's visit to Washington was partly, as he expressed it, 'to find the lay of the land' so that he might wisely advise Governor Wilson upon his return from Bermuda, and partly to discover means to harmonize the discordant factions in the party. The differences that had arisen during the campaign were largely personal; those that now threatened were political and seemed likely to cause more serious difficulties. There was disagreement over the legislative programme, especially in the matter of currency reform; and a storm of greater or less severity seemed likely to arise over the question of the single term for President, which was warmly advocated by Bryan and to which Wilson was strongly opposed. House set himself to persuade the party leaders to take no step which might later bring them into conflict with the President. He worked unobtrusively. Mr. Burleson, a Democratic leader in the House, asked Senator Gore what he thought of the Colonel. 'Take my word for it,' replied Gore, 'he can walk on dead leaves and make no more noise than a tiger.'

His work was none the less effective in that it was quiet, and it does not spoil the story to say that in the end the currency and single-term problems were both settled in accordance with Wilson's wishes.

Colonel House to the President-elect

NEW YORK, November 28, 1912

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I spent two strenuous but interesting days in Washington.

While there I had an hour with Chief Justice White, by appointment, and was with him at dinner later.

Among those that called upon me were Speaker Clark, Hoke Smith, Gore, Culberson, Bob Henry, Burleson, Carter Glass, and many others. I mention these by name, for each of them had something interesting to say.

Mr. Clark has not gotten over his defeat. He is inclined to be friendly with you, but his hatred of Mr. Bryan amounts to an obsession and it is not unlikely that there will be a personal difficulty between them when they meet.

Almost at the beginning, Clark asked me what you intended to do. I replied, 'About what?' He said, 'About anything or everything.' I told him that was a pretty leading question and asked him to be more specific. I finally told him that you intended to carry out the Democratic policies as far as you were able with the aid of such leaders as himself and others. Before he left, he was telling me the story of his life and we were on very cordial terms. I think he would like to be invited to see you when you return, and I believe it would be a wise thing to do. . . .

I had a most interesting hour with Mr. Glass. He candidly confessed that he knew nothing about banking or the framing of a monetary measure. I congratulated him upon this, for I told him that it was much better to know nothing than to know something wrong. He, too, indicated a willingness to do everything in his power to give as speedily as possible a sound economic bill, and upon lines advised by you. . . .

He expressed a desire to see you soon after your return, and I think the quicker you see him the better it will be. You will find him ready to coöperate with you to the fullest extent.

Harvey was there for the purpose of furthering his plan for a single term.

Mr. Taft favors this, and so does Mr. Bryan. Mr. Taft favors a six-year term, and Mr. Bryan leans to four years. Harvey told me that Bob Henry was working with Bryan along this line and that was going to be our first difficulty. He was very pessimistic. He said that no one knew your viewpoint concerning the matter and that your friends were apathetic, and that before they realized it a measure would be passed through both branches of Congress and be ready for submission to the people.

It does not require the signature of the President, but, if it did, Mr. Taft would sign it.

Harvey is mistaken about your friends not being alert in regard to it, because I talked to Burleson and others and told them to watch every move.

Harvey thought it would be a wise thing to compromise on a six-year term which would include you.

In talking with Gore about it afterwards, he said the difficulty there was that the Republican States would hesitate to lengthen the term of a Democratic President two years longer than was necessary. If the Republicans refused to lengthen the term of a Democratic President, then the Democratic States would in turn refuse to lengthen the term of a Republican President. . . .

The general consensus of opinion amongst those with whom I talked and who had met Bryan, was that he would work in harmony with your Administration if he went into the Cabinet, but they all thought that there were two difficulties which should be met at the outset: the question of a second term and the further question of currency reform. . . .

I obtained a great deal of valuable information from the Chief Justice. He talked to me frankly, with the understanding that what he said was to be repeated to no one excepting you.

He cheerfully slaughtered nearly all the gentlemen about whom I wrote to you in my last letter. . . .

Your very faithful

E. M. HOUSE

With the return of Mr. Wilson, conferences multiplied, and the following six weeks House devoted to sifting the claims of importunate applicants and to a search for available but less vociferous candidates. A series of excerpts from his daily memoranda will illustrate the process. No letters were exchanged with Mr. Wilson during this period, since the two were in constant touch through the telephone.

'December 6, 1912: I had a long conversation with McCombs and Vick.¹ I believe if I had been authorized to offer McCombs a foreign embassy to-day, he would have accepted it. Office-seekers are driving him crazy. I suggested a foreign position and he said that he did not have sufficient money; but I told him that it would not take much. He asked where I would suggest his going — Vienna, Italy, or where? . . .

'December 11, 1912: Mr. David F. Houston came to dinner and spent the evening. We discussed the different Cabinet possibilities and other matters. He knows that I have suggested him to the President-elect for Secretary of Agriculture. He thought it would be better to defer legislation on currency and tariff until later, but I convinced him of the importance of passing such measures before all the patronage had been distributed. . . .

'December 18, 1912: Governor Wilson came at half-past one. I talked to him about Morgenthau² and suggested him for Turkey. He replied, "There ain't going to be no Turkey,"³ and I said, "Then let him go look for it." . . .

¹ Walter F. Vick, one of Mr. McCombs' chief lieutenants in the electoral campaign.

² Chairman of the Democratic Finance Committee and later appointed Ambassador to Turkey.

³ Turkey in Europe seemed about to disappear as the result of the defeats administered by the Balkan League.

'I thought if I were in Wilson's place I would take only men I knew, that in making a selection it was like walking in the country — one could always imagine that something better was beyond, but upon reaching the given point the view was still in the distance like the rainbow.

'Bryan was also discussed freely. I advised him to offer Bryan the Secretaryship of State, but afterwards to suggest that it would be of great service if he would go to Russia at this critical time. He thought Bryan would want to discuss with him the personnel of his Cabinet and that they could never agree. I argued that there were many people and things that they could agree upon, as their object was really the same only their ways of getting at it were different. He might, I thought, mention the names of Burleson, Daniels, and others he was considering for the Cabinet who were also friends of Mr. Bryan.

'We discussed again the Attorney-Generalship. . . . We went back to McReynolds and I thought he seemed to understand the different phases of the situation better than any one I had talked to. He asked if I considered McAdoo suited for the Treasury, and I thought he was; under ordinary conditions I should say an Eastern man would be a bad choice, but that in this instance I heartily approved McAdoo.

'*December 19, 1912:* Governor Wilson called me over the telephone and said that McCombs was distinctly disappointed at the ambassadorial offer made him yesterday, and no decision was arrived at. He wanted to know again about Bryan and my advice about it. I advised being cordial in making the offer,¹ and to make it plain afterwards that he would appreciate his taking the foreign post [the Ambassadorship to Russia].

'B. M. Baruch, McCombs' friend, told Wallace that he had advised McCombs not to accept office, but to resign from the National Committee and to go into the practice of law

¹ Of the Secretaryship of State.

as soon as his health permits. McCombs seems terribly "cut up" over the fact that Governor Wilson has not offered him all that he desired and that he tendered him an Ambassadorship instead of a Cabinet place.

'I called up Governor Wilson to talk things over, and he asked if I still held to my advice about Mr. Bryan, and I answered "yes." This is the third or fourth time he has asked me this. It shows how distrustful he is of having Mr. Bryan in his Cabinet. . . .

'December 21, 1912: Tumulty telephoned about the Governor's and Bryan's interview. Bryan was in fine humor and everything was lovely.¹ He asked me to send a further list of men whom I thought it best for the Governor to see. I had already sent in a list several days ago to Trenton.

'McAdoo . . . is now anxious to go to Staunton, where the Governor is to attend some celebration given in his honor on the 28th, and some of McAdoo's friends are urging him to go, telling him he is effacing himself too much and will be forgotten. I advised to the contrary, but wished him to use his own judgment.

'December 23, 1912 [House and Colonel George Harvey taking lunch together]: Martin was also at lunch. Harvey told him that I was the best adviser the President-elect had, and that he thought I should be given the Secretaryship of the Treasury. Martin wanted to know, if my health permitted, would I take it? I replied, "Not if I were as strong as a bull!"; that, as it was, the Governor discussed everything frankly and without fear of misunderstanding, but that if I were an applicant for any position both he and I would feel the restraint. . . .

'The more I see of McAdoo, the better I like him. He is a splendid fellow, whole-souled, and generous, without a tinge of envy, and with it all he is honest and progressive.

¹ At this interview Mr. Bryan was offered the Secretaryship of State and tentatively accepted it.

'December 29, 1912: Tumulty was with me from five until half-past nine in the evening. We went over the situation in detail. He is very desirous of being Secretary to the President.

'I asked Tumulty how many letters of protest the Governor was receiving against himself for that position. He admitted that there had been five or six hundred. I inquired if he showed them to the Governor. He had not shown them all, but had always told him of the number received. He did not show him the letters which came that were favorable to him either. . . .

'January 5, 1913: The Governor has invited Burleson, Palmer, Culberson, Gore, Hoke Smith, and Bob Henry, as I had suggested, to come to Trenton this week. Tumulty said the Governor did not want to invite them much, as he thought there was nothing that he wished to discuss with them. Tumulty explained to him that I thought he should see them in order to compliment them rather than to expect much help from their advice. He then consented to see them.

'January 7, 1913: McAdoo came at five and remained until seven o'clock. We discussed Cabinet possibilities. He wanted to know what my general idea was, and I told him that I thought the Governor had poor material to select from. McAdoo replied, "I believe you are right, and you may include me too." I disclaimed any thought or reference to him, but he cheerfully included himself. I explained that my reason for saying this was that the Democratic Party had been out of power so long that no one had been in training or in process of development for public office.

'X tells me that he understands from Thomas Nelson Page and others that Y is anxious for a reconciliation. Martin says Y has a plan for disposing of Bryan. I answered that a lot of people were busy with such plans, but I thought Governor Wilson and Mr. Bryan would be able to manage the matter themselves. . . .

'*January 8, 1913*: I told him [Wilson] he was now leaving Texas out of the Cabinet. His reply was, "I want you to go in the Cabinet." . . . He urged me not to give a definite answer for the present and said he very much wished me to be a member of his official family, that it seemed to coincide with the fitness of things.

'He generously asked me what place I would like, evidently leaving me to choose. I regard this as a very high compliment, for the reason that he has offered no one a place in the Cabinet up to now excepting Mr. Bryan, whom we agreed upon just after the election . . . as a political necessity. Of course, I shall not take any office, although I would do much to oblige him and to be of service. My reasons are that I am not strong enough to tie myself down to a Cabinet department and, in addition, my general disinclination to hold office. I very much prefer being a free lance, and to advise with him regarding matters in general, and to have a roving commission to serve wherever and whenever possible.'

To such reasons for remaining out of office should be added one which Colonel House may not have definitely formulated, but which must have affected him at least subconsciously. His experience with the Texas Governors had taught him that, however much in sympathy he might be with their general policy, questions of detail must arise on which his opinions would be at variance from theirs. He believed that in essential matters he and Wilson would agree in principle, but they might conceivably disagree as to method. If he were in an official position such disagreement would compel his resignation, unless he were to be placed in the unpleasant position of carrying out a line of action which he disapproved. So long as he remained in a private capacity, he could give what advice he chose; and if the President did not follow it, House could shrug his shoulders and turn his attention to other matters in which Wilson might accept his

guidance. 'Had I gone into the Cabinet,' House once said, 'I could not have lasted eight weeks.' Outside of the Cabinet he lasted for eight years.

III

The serious, although rather unconventional, responsibilities laid upon the shoulders of Colonel House during the process of drafting Cabinet possibilities, were not lightened by the political inexperience of the President-elect and his temperamental inability to develop confidential relations with the party leaders.

'Such men as Speaker Clark [so ran a despatch from Trenton to the New York *Herald*], Representative Oscar W. Underwood, Senator Hoke Smith, Senator Culberson, and many others of importance in the Democracy have journeyed to Princeton and gone away saying they had no more information than when they came. One of them said to me: "I know that Governor Wilson was elected President on November 5. I know that he will be inaugurated on March 4. Further than that I know nothing about what has happened or is going to happen." Several of the leaders frankly say, when asked what will happen after March 4: "You will have to ask either the President-elect or Colonel House."' ¹

As the days passed the politicians took their hopes and their ideas to House, who, somewhat embarrassed by his position, nevertheless worked steadfastly to make them feel less out in the cold. 'Making the suggestion through you,' wrote McCombs to House on January 2, of a proposition for Wilson's decision, 'is the only way I know of handling the matter.'

'February 17, 1913: X called at five o'clock [recorded

¹ *The Herald*, February 19, 1913.

House]. He wished to tell me many things, but particularly how very competent he was to be Secretary of the Treasury. He seemed hurt that Wilson had not called him into consultation, or sent for him, or noticed him in any way since the election. His position, he seemed to think, entitled him to great consideration. I explained that the President-elect had not called his friends into consultation, and those who had been with him had made the appointments themselves and had not come at his invitation. This was invariably the case, as far as I knew, with the exception of Mr. Bryan, Speaker Clark, Mr. Underwood, and some members of the Senate and House. He left in a fine humor, and promised to write me his views if I would convey them to the Governor. . . .

'February 19, 1913: Y came at half-past five. He complained bitterly of the way the Governor was treating him; that he did not consult with him or tell him about any of his plans. I asked if he knew of any one else that he consulted or to whom he told his plans. He confessed he did not, and I told him he had no right to complain. . . . He said there was a bitter feeling among the party leaders that they were not being consulted, and not taken into confidence. Of course he exaggerates this.'

It was all the more important that when it came to the composition of the Cabinet the wishes of the party leaders should be carefully considered; for if, after keeping his own counsel (or that of Colonel House), Mr. Wilson chose a Cabinet of independents, he would soon find a rebellious party in Congress. House was frankly troubled.

'Walter Page lunched with me to-day [the Colonel wrote on January 14]. I found that he had been advising Governor Wilson very much along the lines I have. . . .

'I tried him out as to the department in which he was most interested. If the Governor appoints him, I shall advise that

he be given the Interior. I told Page that I was fearful that the Governor was thinking of appointing too many independents and that he was not looking for rock-ribbed Democrats.'

The Colonel struck the same note on the following day in a talk with Mrs. Wilson, whose influence with her husband he evidently counted upon.

'I told her that the men the Governor had in mind for his Cabinet were nearly all irregular party men and that most of them had voted for Taft four years ago. I cited — as an instance. She spoke up immediately and said, "But you would not keep him out of the Cabinet on that account?" I replied no, not in his case, but I would not put in too many with the same sort of record, for the reason that the moment the Cabinet was announced their political records would be exposed.

'I thought that in twenty years from now no one would know how the different departments of the Government had been run and that the President's fame would rest entirely upon the big constructive measures he was able to get through Congress; and in order to get them through he had to be on more or less good terms with that body. This, I thought, was one of the most important things he had to consider, for his future reputation would rest almost wholly upon it.'

Of all the politicians, the one whose influence during the first legislative session would be most valuable was, of course, Mr. Bryan; and it was natural that House should suggest that he be given a voice in the composition of the Cabinet, or at least an opportunity to comment upon the tentative slate which Wilson had drafted by early January. The Governor agreed, House recorded on January 10, that it

would be well for the Colonel to go to Miami, where Bryan was building a Southern home, and explain Wilson's plans. 'He said I could talk to him freely, but that it was to give him, Bryan, information and not to ask his advice.'

The newspapers of the East had taken unholy pleasure in picturing Mr. Bryan in a truculent frame of mind and inclined to dictate Mr. Wilson's policy and appointments. House discovered the reverse to be true. 'He is in a delightful humor,' the Colonel wrote Wilson on January 29. 'He likes the names suggested for the family gathering.' And as House developed his views he found Bryan careful not to press any specific appointments with undue ardor and surprisingly mild in his criticisms.

Colonel House to the President-elect

MIAMI, FLORIDA, *January 30, 1913*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I had a long conference with our friend last night and again to-day. . . .

He is very earnest in his advice that a Catholic, and perhaps a Jew, be taken into the family. I told him T[umulty]'s appointment as Secretary would cover the one, but he thought not. He suggests Governor Higgins of Rhode Island as a possible choice. He shows a very fine spirit and is exceedingly anxious for your success. He also shows no disposition whatever to interfere, even in his own department. He says he would like to name his first assistant unless you have some one you want to place there.

He knows all the disadvantages to him of accepting place and mentions them in detail, but he says that those things must not be taken into account.

He thinks the Pacific slope should be recognized, but he does not seem to get beyond Phelan and Lane, although I do not think he would seriously object to any one excepting Teal.

For the first time, I think, he is finding out how difficult it is to form this body.

He likes the suggestion you made to me for Germany [Professor Fine of Princeton], but has no one in mind for England. . . .

He has accepted all your conclusions so cordially that it has been a pleasure to me to discuss matters with him.

Your very faithful

E. M. HOUSE

'*January 30, 1913*: Mr. Bryan was as pleased with his new place [recorded Colonel House] as a child with a new toy. He is really a fine man, full of democratic simplicity, earnest, patriotic, and of a fervently religious nature. Mrs. Bryan is the "salt of the earth." She has all the poise and good common sense which is lacking in her distinguished husband. . . .

'*January 31, 1913*: It was so warm that we did not go through the Everglades. Mr. Bryan came over in the evening and we had another political talk. He was much distressed when I told him that Governor Wilson had offered the Chinese mission to Dr. Charles W. Eliot. He thought it the poorest selection that could be made, for the reason that Eliot was a Unitarian and did not believe in the divinity of Christ and the new Chinese civilization was founded upon the Christian movement there. I asked him to state his objections in writing, not only as to Dr. Eliot, but as to any member of the proposed Cabinet. I said as far as Eliot was concerned, it was too late; but I did not believe Dr. Eliot would accept, for he had told the Governor that he would take it only if his wife approved and he was afraid she would not. Mr. Bryan was hopeful she would not.'

'He is only trying to help,' wrote House again to Wilson, 'and does not mean to urge.' 'Everything he said,' the Colonel noted later, 'showed a fine spirit in Mr. Bryan and

seemed to me to be a hopeful sign for future harmony.' It appears from the terms of the following letter that Wilson left these negotiations entirely to House.

Colonel House to the President-elect

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA
February 6, 1913

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Our friend has asked me many times whether I had heard from you in response to his suggestions. He wired me just before he left for Havana, asking the same question.

If I were you, I would send him a line indicating that you appreciated his interest and had found his suggestions helpful. He will be back in Miami next Thursday, and if he found a note from you awaiting him it would please him greatly. . . .

Your very faithful

E. M. HOUSE

IV

Upon Colonel House's return, early in February, Wilson felt himself prepared to make the definite appointments. It was already settled that Bryan should be Secretary of State. McAdoo had accepted the Treasury portfolio, and Burleson was to be offered that of Postmaster-General, two selections urged by House from the beginning. For Agriculture, Wilson had determined upon the distinguished economist, D. F. Houston, Chancellor of Washington University, another close friend of House. Josephus Daniels, a North Carolina editor, and W. B. Wilson, once a miner and an active albeit conservative labor leader, were to be given the portfolios of the Navy and of Labor respectively. There remained those of War, the Interior, Justice, and Commerce.

'February 8, 1913: The President-elect writes that he

needs to see me for a final conference about the official family. He asks me to sound Houston on the Secretaryship of Agriculture. On that case he is clear and his mind made up, but he thinks it best for me to open the matter with him. The Treasury has been offered and accepted as we planned.'

In the conferences between Wilson and House which followed, the latter urged the appointment of J. C. McReynolds and F. K. Lane, the first because of his record as special prosecuting attorney in anti-trust suits, the second because of his record on the Interstate Commerce Commission. Wilson did not know McReynolds, and on February 15 the Colonel recorded that the latter was invited to House's apartment while the President-elect was there, 'ostensibly to discuss the appointment of a District Attorney here. The Governor liked McReynolds.'

On the following day, Mr. Lane came over from Washington, for Wilson had asked House to sound him as he had already sounded the other appointees. The conference crystallized the Colonel's conviction that Wilson would make a mistake if he left Lane out of the Cabinet.

'I informed him of what we had in mind for him. The Interior, in his opinion, was the most difficult post in the Cabinet, but he would take it if we wanted him to do so. He said he would take anything we thought him best suited for, but that he was content to remain where he was as Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

'Feeling responsible for Lane, I drew him out upon all the leading questions, and I found that he has a remarkably strong, virile mind. My opinion of him increased materially, much as I had thought of him before. There will certainly not be a stronger or more dominant force in the Cabinet.

'Norman Hapgood came and I brought them together, and we had a fine hour. After Lane left, Hapgood expressed

his enthusiastic admiration for him and said he thought he would suit the position for which we had him in mind wonderfully well. I asked that he write a letter to this effect, telling him I wanted him to share the responsibility with me because the President-elect had never met Lane and knew him only through me.'

The difficulties and complexities of political Cabinet-making are illustrated by the story of the succeeding days. One after the other, objections cropped up which seemed to destroy the availability of men Wilson wanted. His choice for Attorney-General was A. Mitchell Palmer, whose activity on the floor of the Baltimore Convention had gone far to decide Wilson's nomination. Opposition in certain quarters proved to be so strong that he was instead offered the Secretaryship of War. This, however, he felt he must decline, in deference to his Quaker principles. Inauguration day was approaching, was barely a fortnight away, and Wilson realized that no time could be lost if his Cabinet were to be completed by March 4.

'I asked him not to worry [wrote House], that the getting of Lane in the Cabinet was of much more importance than the losing of Palmer for Attorney-General; that Lane could take that place, if necessary, and fill it with distinction, and that we could keep Baker ¹ for the Interior. . . .

'*February 18, 1913:* Newton Baker [recorded House] rang me up to say that he had arrived. When I was in Princeton, the Governor wrote him a note asking him to come to New York on Tuesday or Wednesday, as was most convenient, and to telephone me and that I would make an appointment for him to meet the Governor at my apartment. I asked Baker to dine with us at seven o'clock and I requested him not to let his presence in New York be known and, above all

¹ Newton D. Baker, reform Mayor of Cleveland.

things, not to let any one know he was coming to my apartment or was having an appointment with the President-elect. . . .

'I met Governor Wilson and brought him to the apartment. We had about forty minutes before Baker came, and we discussed the Cabinet and other appointments. . . .

'Baker came and we had a very delightful dinner; politics were not discussed at all, stories were told, Mark Twain and various other persons and matters were talked of. After dinner I left the Governor and Baker. . . .

'In about a half-hour, I returned. The Governor said he had offered Baker the Secretaryship of the Interior and that he was considering the matter. Baker finally decided he could not take it. He said there was no one to carry on the work in Cleveland which he had begun, and he thought the government of our American cities was the greatest disgrace to our citizenship; that Cleveland was emerging from that state and would soon be an example to her sister cities throughout the land.

'Both the Governor and I urged him to take a broader view of the situation and do the bigger work. He finally decided to take the matter under consideration for the night, and said if he changed his mind he would wire me to-morrow, quoting a line from Shakespeare which I would understand.'

The cryptic line from Shakespeare was never sent, and it was found necessary to look further for a Secretary of the Interior. Baker's refusal led Wilson definitely to decide that he would return to House's original suggestion of McReynolds as Attorney-General. The Colonel pointed out that Walter H. Page might be offered the Interior and Lane be shifted to the War Department. Wilson acceded and authorized House to see whether Page would accept. He at once called him upon the telephone, but learned that he had

left town; he thereupon sent him a telegram asking him to call as soon as he returned.

Chance plays its part in history. Had Mr. Page been in town, he would have been offered and would have accepted the Secretaryship of the Interior, and he would not have gone to London as Ambassador. But before his return, the party leaders in Congress learned of the suggestion and objected strongly. Page, they pointed out, was a Southerner, and no Southerner should be Secretary of the Interior because of his control of pensions. In view of these objections, Wilson decided to keep Lane in the Interior and look for another man for War. House was left to explain his telegram to Page to the best of his ability when the latter returned. He proved equal to the interview, which might conceivably test his tact and powers of invention.

'February 24, 1913: Walter Page arrived in response to my telegram. When I wired him we expected to place him in the Interior and move Lane up to War, but in talking with the Governor last night it was decided best not to put a Southerner in that place.

'I told Page the reason we had summoned him was because there was likely to be a slip-up in some of the Cabinet places, and we wanted to know definitely whether he could be used in case it was necessary. I also told him the Governor wished me to discuss with him the material already gotten together. He suggested, and I advised, his going at once to Trenton to take the matter up with the Governor.'

A few weeks later, House told Page how near he had been to becoming Secretary of the Interior, a story which excited in Mr. Page more amusement than regret.

The final choice for the portfolio of War was delayed until the last moment. Colonel House had strongly recommended Mr. H. C. Wallace, who later became Ambassador

to France. Mr. Wilson approved the selection and offered the post to Wallace. But the latter found it impossible to accept. The ultimate decision was made on the spur of the moment. During the morning of February 24, House recorded: 'Tumulty suggests, and we are going to look up, a New Jersey man, Vice-Chancellor Garrison, and see whether he will fill the bill.' Wilson evidently lost no time, for in the evening:

'Tumulty telephoned while Page was here, saying that the Governor had sent for Vice-Chancellor Garrison and was very much pleased with him, and had offered him the post of Secretary of War.'

The reader can hardly escape a shock of surprise at the apparently nonchalant manner in which the President-elect chose his Cabinet. In reality he had received an immense quantity of carefully sifted information, and the eligibility list of possibilities was drafted with care. But he made his final selection with a suddenness of decision that startled House himself.

'The thing that impresses me most [he recorded] is the casual way in which the President-elect is making up his Cabinet. I can see no end of trouble for him in the future unless he proceeds with more care.'

The Cabinet, as finally selected, was a *mélange* of administrators selected because of personal ability and of political leaders whose influence demanded recognition. The number of purely political appointments was less than is customary, a tribute to Wilson's original determination to consider ability alone in his appointments. Because of this fact and also because of his consistent refusal to discuss the Cabinet intimately with any one but House, the wiseacres were largely

at fault in their prognostications. Ten days before the Inauguration, the New York *Herald* announced 'Rifts in Cabinet Secrecy.' But the list which it published of the probable Cabinet proved to be far from accurate.¹ Of the ten final appointees, only four were recognized beforehand by the *Herald* as possibilities.

The publication of the official family aroused more surprise than enthusiasm. In Republican circles the new Cabinet was naturally regarded as inferior, and by the country as a whole it was looked upon as mediocre. This was inevitable, since Wilson's choice was limited not merely to Democrats but to radicals who would approve of the drastic reforms he contemplated. For half a century the Democratic party had been out of power, except for the two terms of Cleveland's Presidency; and during that period there had been a steady gravitation of men of practical ability into the opposite political camp, which was more and more affiliated with the great money and business interests.

'It has thus come about [a New York paper pointed out] that most of the men eminent in the administration of national affairs have become defenders of existing conditions, in spite of the growing importance of a newly awakened national consciousness of intolerable wrongs in the political and economic life of the country. . . . Such men as seem to give promise of solid ability and administrative success lack importance in the public mind. . . . [Mr. Wilson] expects the country to be surprised by the absence of commanding or distinguished figures in his selection, but feels that the men he is to call into power will in time develop reputations that will justify him.'²

Colonel House himself was satisfied rather than enthusi-

¹ See Appendix to chapter.

² *Evening Mail*, New York, January 17, 1913.

astic, and in meeting the criticism of his friends emphasized the difficulties of the problem more than the innate strength of the Cabinet.

'Walter Page [he noted on February 24] came after dinner and told of his trip to Trenton. He regretted that it was too late to keep Daniels out of the Cabinet. The President-elect had already written him. I knew this, because he told me he intended writing McReynolds, Daniels, and Burleson notes on Sunday. . . . He said to Page, "You do not seem to think that Daniels is Cabinet timber." Page replied, "He is hardly a splinter."

'In discussing the Cabinet, Page thought it distinctly mediocre and thought the country would so regard it. I asked him how he could better it; and when he attempted to do so, like all the rest he failed signally. . . . I think, in all the circumstances, we have done well.'

APPENDIX

	<i>The Herald list of February 22</i>	<i>The Cabinet as appointed</i>
Secretary of State	W. J. Bryan	W. J. Bryan
Secretary of the Treasury	W. G. McAdoo	W. G. McAdoo
Secretary of War	Charles R. Crane	Lindley M. Garrison
Attorney-General	A. Mitchell Palmer	J. C. McReynolds
Postmaster-General	{ Josephus Daniels { Albert S. Burleson	Albert S. Burleson
Secretary of the Navy	Lewis Nixon	Josephus Daniels
Secretary of the Interior	{ Alva Adams { Edward L. Norris	F. K. Lane
Secretary of Agriculture	Obadiah Gardiner	D. F. Houston
Secretary of Commerce and Labor	Louis D. Brandeis	{ W. C. Redfield { W. B. Wilson (Labor)

CHAPTER V

THE SILENT PARTNER

The source of his power was . . . the confidence that men had in his sagacity and unselfishness.

E. S. Martin, in 'Harper's Magazine,' February, 1912

I

'MR. HOUSE is my second personality. He is my independent self. His thoughts and mine are one. If I were in his place I would do just as he suggested. . . . If any one thinks he is reflecting my opinion by whatever action he takes, they are welcome to the conclusion.'

Such was the reply given by President Wilson to a politician who asked whether House represented him accurately in a certain situation. It indicates the degree of confidence which he placed in the Colonel. The President made it clear that, although House had refused official position of any kind, he was determined that the Administration should not lose the political services which House was qualified to perform. On the very day of his inauguration he asked and summarily accepted his recommendations for important appointive posts.

'The President-elect telephoned [Colonel House wrote on March 4] and asked Louie and me to meet his family party at the Shoreham Hotel at 9.45, in order to accompany them to the Capitol for the inauguration ceremonies. I took Louie to the Shoreham and left her with the Wilsons, but I did not go to the Capitol myself. I went instead to the Metropolitan Club and loafed around with Wallace. Functions of this sort do not appeal to me and I never go.

'Mrs. Wilson invited us to the White House to see the

fireworks. When we arrived we found the President was over in his office. I went there and was with him for a few minutes in order to tell him that I had investigated John H. Marble for Interstate Commerce Commissioner, in place of F. K. Lane, and had found him satisfactory. The President had never met Marble and had made no inquiries concerning him further than mine. He said he would send his name in to-morrow, along with the names of his Cabinet. He made the appointment in this way in order to avoid the great pressure which would be made upon him by candidates for this important office. . . .'

'*March 8, 1913:* The President asked me to be at the White House this morning at nine.

'The offices were nearly deserted at so early an hour. The President was dressed in a very becoming sack suit of grey, with a light grey silk tie. It was rather an informal-looking costume, but very attractive. I sat with him for nearly an hour and we had a delightful talk. We discussed the Cabinet mainly, and he laughingly told me his estimate of each one and how they acted at the first meeting. . . . The President spoke finely of Bryan and said their relations were exceedingly cordial. . . .

'The President suggested that we could have a cypher between us, so when we talked over the telephone or wrote we could discuss men without fear of revealing their identity. He took a pencil and started out with Bryan, saying, "Let us call him 'Primus.'" McAdoo is already known as "Pythias," McCombs being "Damon." Garrison he suggested as "Mars," McReynolds "Coke," Burleson "Demosthenes."

Thus began House's career as Silent Partner.¹ It was a relationship which rested chiefly upon the political coöperation of the Colonel in meeting the problems of government.

¹ The appellation was first used by Peter Clark Macfarlane in an article in *Collier's*, and soon became general.

His labors were of the most varied kind, and he sought every opportunity to ease the load that bore upon the President, to bring him information, to work out details of policy. There was, however, an essential personal basis to the relationship, since it would have been impossible for a man of Wilson's temperament to put full political confidence in a man who did not evoke his affection as an individual.

'I have an intimate personal matter to discuss with you [he said to House in the summer of 1915]. You are the only person in the world with whom I can discuss everything.¹ There are some I can tell one thing and others another, but you are the only one to whom I can make an entire clearance of mind.'

The letters of Wilson to House invariably displayed an intensity of personal feeling that would have astounded those who attributed to him about the same degree of warmth as that of a Euclidean proposition and failed to realize the human qualities that lay concealed under his armor of exterior austerity. He wrote him frequently of his desire to talk with him and the need and desire for his advice on many a complicated matter. At the end of the first legislative session, he put his feeling into emphatic language.

'Your letter on the passage of the Tariff Bill [the President said] gave me the kind of pleasure that seldom comes to a man, and it goes so deep that no words are adequate to express it. I think you must know without my putting it into words (for I cannot) how deep such friendship and support goes with me and how large a part it constitutes of such strength as I have in public affairs. I thank you with all my heart and with deep affection.'

¹ This was after Mrs. Wilson's death and before the President's remarriage.

The friendship between the two, however rapidly it bloomed, was progressive. It is not uninteresting and is perhaps significant to trace its development through the forms of salutation used by the President in his letters. They met in November, 1911, and until the following spring Wilson addresses him as 'Dear Mr. House.' But after his nomination, in August, 1912, he begins to address him as 'Dear Friend,' signing himself 'Faithfully yours,' or 'Sincerely yours.' After his election in November, 1912, he signs himself 'Affectionately yours,' and this is constant with the salutation of 'Dear Friend,' for two and a half years. In moments of great emotion, as at the time of Mrs. Wilson's death, he addresses him as 'My dear, dear Friend.' In the summer of 1915, at the period of the *Arabic* crisis when he was torn by doubt and worry, the President begins to address him as 'Dearest Friend,' a salutation which remains invariable until after his reëlection in November, 1916. In January of 1917 the President reverts to the form of address, 'My dear House,' although he continues the conclusion, 'Affectionately yours.' Otherwise it is impossible to detect in Wilson's letters any change of tone. It is certain that the political relationship between the two men remained as close during the two years that followed; but it is possible that their personal friendship was most intense between the years 1912 and 1917.

Close spiritual communion was not dependent upon physical propinquity, for the heat drove Colonel House far from Washington in the spring and frequently several months would pass without their meeting. Separation seems to have made no difference in their understanding. 'I never worry when I do not hear from you,' wrote House. 'No human agency could make me doubt your friendship and affection. . . . I always understand your motives.' At the end of each summer, enterprising and ill-informed newspapermen would regularly feature a 'break.' 'You are a little behind your schedule this year, my friend,' said House to a reporter

one September day, after the publication of the annual story.

During the cool months, however, Wilson and House saw much of each other, for the latter made frequent trips to Washington, and on each of these trips Wilson devoted long hours to intimate discussions with his adviser. The President lacked the capacity and inclination for meeting and entertaining varied types of people which, under the Roosevelt régime, made the White House a magnet for explorers, littérateurs, pugilists, and hunters — every one who had an interesting story to tell. Wilson had the college professor's love of a quiet evening by the fireside with the family, and an early bed, varied by a visit to the theatre, preferably a simple vaudeville.

House was one of the few admitted to the small family circle. 'At night,' said Herbert Corey in the *Commercial Advertiser*, 'after Mr. Wilson had wound the clock, and put out the cats and politicians, House stayed for a little further talk.' To the President's study House brought the impressions he had formed of public opinion, gathered from his numerous contacts with office-holders, business men, and editors, and there Wilson gave free vent to his political theories, his aspirations, and his fears. There, too, the President found relaxation in reading poetry and essays to his friend.

'May 11, 1913: I spoke to the President about conserving his strength, and suggested various means by which it could be done. I thought it was essential. He said it looked as if the people were trying to kill him, and he spoke of the loneliness of his position, in a way that was saddening. . . .

'I spoke of his probable renomination and reëlection. He replied, "Do not let us talk about that now. My dear friend, if I can finish up my legislative programme, I do not desire reëlection." I urged him to keep up his courage, for if he

ever faltered in the slightest he would lose his leadership and influence. He realized this and declared he would maintain his courage to the end.

'October 16, 1913: One thing the President said, which interested me, was that he always lacked any feeling of elation when a particular object was accomplished. When he signed the Tariff Bill he could not feel the joy that was properly his, for it seemed to him that the thing was over and that another great work was calling for his attention, and he thought of this rather than the present victory.

'November 12, 1913: He [Wilson] said he believed in the Executive becoming the leader in putting into law the desires of the people. He thought there was no danger in this course for the reason that unless a President had the force of public sentiment back of him, he could never get a law through. That the reason he himself had been successful with the tariff and the currency bills was because the people demanded them, and Congress knew it. It was not the pressure from him, but the pressure of the nation back of him.

'He read some extracts from his works on government, in order to define better his views. He expressed himself as being in sympathy with the movement for amending the Constitution with less difficulty than at present. . . .

'He said he had not slept well the night before; that he had nightmares, and that he thought he was seeing some of his Princeton enemies. These terrible days have sunk deep into his soul and he will carry their marks to his grave.

'December 22, 1913: At dinner there was no one present but the family, and the conversation ran along general lines. I asked the President how high he ranked Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. He said, *very, very high*. He had also noticed that great orations and great poems, when spoken or written under deep emotion, were simple in language. He mentioned Burke as an example. Some member of the family took ex-

ception to this opinion and cited Browning and also suggested that Shakespeare made his heroes say grandiloquent things under stress of great emotion. . . .

'I spoke of his success, and he said his Princeton experience hung over him sometimes like a nightmare; that he had wonderful success there, and all at once conditions changed and the troubles, of which every one knew, were brought about. He seemed to fear that such a dénouement might occur again. . . .

'It was twenty minutes to twelve when we left his study for bed. He was solicitous of my welfare and came into my room to see that everything was properly arranged.

'*April 27, 1914:* The President spoke of not feeling at home anywhere now; that is, he had a feeling that he had no home. He said he felt the same way when he was at Princeton and occupied the house of the President; that while he was perfectly comfortable and happy in his surroundings, yet he always had that unsettled feeling as if he had no permanent abiding-place.

'*April 28, 1914:* At breakfast I spoke of Edward S. Martin's delicious humor, and I thought he was not only humorous but had as much good sense as any one I knew. The President replied that "humor and good sense go together." . . .

'I asked if he would like to be editor of a daily paper. He replied that nothing would appeal to him less, for the reason that no one could write every day an opinion of value. It was difficult enough to do this once a week, but impossible to do it each day. He said he enjoyed *Punch* very much. That "while there were no laughs in it, it was full of smiles."

'*May 11, 1914:* No one dined with us excepting Grayson,¹ and after dinner he left us. The President read poems to me for nearly an hour. It was Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold, Edward Sill, and Keats. What he particularly liked was "A

¹ Dr. Cary T. Grayson, physician to the President.

Fool's Prayer" by Sill, and "A Conservative" by Gilman. When he finished reading, I took out my budget.¹

'August 30, 1914: The last morning I was with the President [in the country] he planned to play golf early enough to get back for lunch and leave on the 2.40 train for Washington. It was my intention to leave . . . when he started for the golf field. This necessitated our getting up early and about the same time. He arose a half-hour earlier than was necessary, merely to give me the uninterrupted use of our common bathroom. This illustrates, I think, as well as anything I could mention, his consideration for others and the simplicity of the man. I notice, too, in his relations with his family that he is always tender, affectionate, and considerate.

'September 28, 1914: We talked much of leadership and its importance in government. He has demonstrated this to an unusual degree. He thinks our form of government can be changed by personal leadership; but I thought the Constitution should be altered, for no matter how great a leader a man was, I could see situations that would block him unless the Constitution was modified. He does not feel as strongly about this as I do.

'November 7, 1914: There were no outside visitors for dinner, but the President artfully evaded getting alone with me in his study. He was afraid I would renew the McAdoo-Tumulty controversy. However, he need not have worried. We had a delightful evening. He began by talking about German political philosophy and how wrong their conclusions usually were. He spoke of himself as a disciple of Burke and Bagehot. This is literally true, for he is always quoting from one or the other, mostly from Bagehot.

'He began to speak of a flexible or fluid constitution in contradistinction to a rigid one. He thought that constitu-

¹ Meaning the items of political business that demanded the President's attention.

tions changed without the text being altered, and cited our own as an example. At the beginning, he thought, there was no doubt that there was no difference of opinion as to the right of the States to secede. This practically unanimous opinion probably prevailed down to Jackson's time. Then there began a large sentiment for union which finally culminated in our Civil War, and a complete change of the Constitution without its text being altered.

'Just then the ladies came in the sitting-room where we were, and I got him to read some poems, something he very much likes to do. He read William Watson's "Wordsworth's Grave," and afterward, at my request, Gray's "Elegy." He also amused himself with any number of limericks. We did not go to bed until around 10.30.

'*December 19, 1914:* As usual, no one excepting the family was present at dinner. After we had finished the President read aloud for nearly two hours, "The Adventures in Arcadia of the Idle Rich."

When President Wilson came to New York, he almost invariably stayed with Colonel House. The two would motor in the country, often to Piping Rock, followed by the secret service automobile and three cars of newspapermen who hovered around the President 'like birds of prey,' the Colonel wrote, to be ready in case of an accident. More pleasant were the evenings spent in the small apartment on Thirty-Fifth Street and later on Fifty-Third Street. House disconnected the telephone, barred the door, and left to the President the blessed choice between going to bed or a talk upon some subject unconnected with politics — literature, ethics, the immortality of the soul.

Like Napoleon, Wilson enjoyed suddenly descending upon his friends.

'*November 14, 1914:* Last night Loulie and I went to dinner

and theatre with the Bertrons. He had the Belgian Minister and Madame Havenith. The play was "The Only Girl," which I found amusing. Upon my return to the apartment I found a call from the White House. In answering it, they told me the President would arrive at six o'clock this morning and would expect me to breakfast at six-thirty. This changed my plans and I had to notify the Police Commissioner and several others, so it was well after midnight before I went to bed, and I arose at half-past five.

'The matter of entertaining a President within such confined quarters as our little apartment is not an easy undertaking, especially since I have no clerical force excepting my one secretary.

'*October 8, 1915:* To-day started off with the usual bustle incident to a visit from the President. Telegrams, telephone calls, secret service men, newspaper reporters, notes, etc., etc. However, the confusion will cease the moment the President arrives, for I do not permit the telephone to ring and we are undisturbed by letters, notes, telegrams, or visitors. When he is once here, everything appears as peaceful as if there were no such things as noise and confusion in the world.'

II

House's admiration for the President's qualities was as keen as his personal affection was deep. He regarded Wilson's power of leadership as supreme, and in certain respects he placed a high estimate upon his intellectual qualities.

'I have seen a great deal of the President on this visit [he wrote April 17, 1914], and we have opened our minds to one another without reserve. I am impressed by the analytic qualities of his mind and the clearness with which he expresses his thoughts. I have come in contact with minds of greater initiative and imagination, but never one that had more analytical power and comprehension.

'November 14, 1914: The President . . . is efficient in his manner of working. For instance, when we were discussing his message to the people concerning the Belgian Relief funds he said: "Now let us decide what points are best to cover." He took a telegraph blank having lines on it, and began to take down in shorthand the different points, he making some suggestions and I making others. There were about five points to be covered, and he asked me to think if that were all. When we concluded, there was nothing more; he called his stenographer and dictated the message in full.

'He has one of the best ordered minds I have ever come in contact with, although he is always complaining of forgetfulness.'

On the other hand, Colonel House was too objective not to observe certain qualities in the President which weakened him as an executive and the effects of which might ultimately seriously endanger his influence.

'One peculiar phase of the President's character develops itself more fully from time to time [he wrote, November 22, 1915]; that is, he "dodges trouble." Let me put something up to him that is disagreeable and I have great difficulty in getting him to meet it. I have no doubt that some of the trouble he had at Princeton was caused by this delay in meeting vexatious problems.

'Another phase of his character is the intensity of his prejudices against people. He likes a few and is very loyal to them, but his prejudices are many and often unjust. He finds great difficulty in conferring with men against whom, for some reason, he has a prejudice and in whom he can find nothing good.

'July 10, 1915: I am afraid that the President's characterization of himself as "a man with a one-track mind" is all too true, for he does not seem able to carry along more than one

idea at a time. I say this regretfully, because I have the profoundest admiration for his judgment, his ability, and his patriotism.

'December 8, 1915: The President, as I have often said before, is too casual and does the most important things sometimes without much reflection.'

An example of such casualness is to be found in Mr. Wilson's speeches, which at times he delivered almost impromptu. He had the power of arranging in his head, at short notice, the order of the topics he would treat and even of constituting the phrases he would use. On May 11, 1914, he came from Washington to deliver a memorial speech at the Brooklyn Navy Yard as tribute to the sailors who had died in the capture of Vera Cruz. House met him at the station and asked him about the speech. 'He had not prepared anything,' wrote the Colonel, 'but he would think it out *en route* from the Battery to the Navy Yard. It is his way of doing. Sometime he will make a serious blunder. It is an occasion for something great, and he may or may not rise to the occasion.'

Unfortunately, President Wilson lacked the power to conceal his prejudices and he was not equipped by temperament or experience to appear a good 'mixer.' A Senator passed the word to House that 'the Senators are in an ugly mood and critical of the President. One grievance is that when they go to the White House for conferences, they are offered nothing to drink excepting water and nothing to smoke.' 'The President,' House commented, 'does not drink excepting occasionally at meals and he never smokes; consequently he does not offer such things to his guests.'

More serious was the fact that the President did not convey the impression of great respect for the Senators, either individually or as a body. 'Senator ——,' he hazarded, 'is the most comprehensively ignorant man I have ever met.'

And later, referring to the same statesman, Wilson said to House, 'Some one wanted to know the other day if I didn't think So-and-So the most selfish man in America. I replied, "I am sorry, but I am already committed to Senator ——."' Such remarks, frequently as apt as they were indiscreet, did not tend to promote cordial relations between the two branches of government.

Mr. Wilson, however, evidently felt that the criticism passed upon him for aloofness and cold self-confidence was quite unjustified.

'*December 22, 1913* [conversation between House and Wilson]: I said my long experience with public officials had made me fearful of any one after they were elected to office; that the adulation of friends and partisans and the position itself, seemed to go to their heads and they did not do rational things. . . . He thought there was no fear of this with him; that his long university training had shown him how necessary it was to confer about important matters; that he seldom went into a conference and came out with the same ideas as when he went in.

'*April 15, 1914*: I asked [Wilson] whom he considered the greatest man in the early days of the Republic. He thought Alexander Hamilton was easily the ablest. We spoke of Washington and how much he depended upon Hamilton's advice. I thought this in itself indicated Washington's greatness. The fact that he was able to pick out Hamilton from among his associates, as his guiding mind, and that he used him in this way, showed a breadth of view that was remarkable. I told him that all the really big men I had known had taken advice from others, while the little men refused to take it. . . .

'At another time in our conversation, he remarked that he always sought advice. I almost laughed at this statement, for McAdoo had just been telling me to-day that he was at

White Sulphur with the President and his family when the despatch came from Admiral Mayo concerning his demand of Huerta to salute our flag, and he said the President never even mentioned the matter to him. The President does get a lot of information and suggestions from others, but it mostly comes gratuitously and not by his asking. McReynolds, Houston, Lane, and all the others have the same story to tell. . . .

'April 18, 1914: Houston and I lunched with Martin [recorded House]. Henry Watterson was also there. He spoke kindly of the President and said they did not differ regarding his policies, but he was a man that he, Watterson, could not successfully coöperate with, indicating that the President was cold and indifferent. I told him that as far as my own experience had been, he was just the opposite, for I had never had a sweeter, kinder, or more affectionate friend than Woodrow Wilson. . . .

'June 27, 1914 [in London]: I lunched with Page.¹ Afterwards we went into the private park in front of his house and talked for an hour or more. He asked me to bring to the attention of the President the fact that he, the President, was not seeing enough business men and was not talking to them, as he expressed it, "in their language." He thought the President had a broad and philanthropic view of the situation, and that everything he was doing for the country was absolutely right, but he failed to give proper assurances to the business world that he had their welfare at heart and was not unfriendly as they thought. He suggested that the President should invite some of them to lunch and show them some marked social attention. I did not think he would do this — he was not constituted that way; that I had been at the White House a great deal, but, with the exception of seeing Cleveland Dodge there once, I had not met any one other than the immediate family.

¹ Walter Hines Page, Ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

'I told him, too, how very tired the President was and how he had to conserve his strength, and that we must take him as he was and not as some people would like to have him. He said a prominent American told him the other day that the President did not confer with any one excepting me; . . . he thought a President should not confine himself to a single individual. Page asked how he knew this was true. He replied that it was a matter of common knowledge in America.

'I told Page the President consulted with the individual members of his Cabinet about their departments, but he did not consult with them on matters affecting their colleagues, and I thought he was right. If he did this, he would soon have every Cabinet officer meddling with the affairs of the others, and there would be general dissatisfaction.'

Keenly aware of the wave of criticism that threatened the President because of his retired habits, and realizing that Wilson's strength lay in the formulation and exposition of policy rather than in the despatch of business through personal conference, House set himself to the labor of innumerable interviews and multifarious correspondence, which might offset the criticism and lighten the burden of detail that weighs upon every President. He intercepted importunates on their way to the White House and promised to arrange their business with the President more rapidly than they could themselves. He sifted applications for appointments. He discussed industrial relations with capitalists and labor leaders. He advised the chiefs of industrial corporations how to settle their difficulties with the Government. And afterwards, reporting the gist of these interviews to the President, he brought him into touch with the currents of opinion and affairs.

'*March 22, 1913:* Mr. Frick came at eleven. He wished to know whether I thought it was possible to settle the United

States Steel Corporation suit outside of the courts. He declared that he came of his own initiative and no one knew he was doing so. He wanted the matter kept confidential, excepting the President and Attorney-General. We discussed the matter at some length. I pointed out the difficulties, with which he concurred. He seemed fair. I promised to mention the matter and to see what could be done. . . .

'*March 24, 1913:* I told him [Wilson] about Mr. Frick's call and his suggestion in regard to the United States Steel Corporation suit. Before the President replied, I said, "You had better let me tell Frick that you referred me to the Attorney-General and suggested that whatever proposal came to you should come through the Attorney-General's Office." The President smiled and said, "You may consider it has been said."

'We discussed it at some length. The President thought that the Steel Corporation should have the same consideration as any other, neither more nor less, and that they should be allowed to make a proposition for an agreement as to a decree of court in the suit. . . .

'*April 18, 1913:* I went to the White House early and met the President on his way to the memorial service held for the late President of the Honduras. I found a large number of people waiting, Mitchell Palmer being one of them. I asked if I could not attend to his matters for him, explaining how busy the President was and how uneasy we were for his health if the pressure continued. He said he wanted to know about Guthrie's chances for an ambassadorship. I was able to tell him that the President had him down for Japan. I asked, "What next?" He wished to know about Berry for Collector of the Port of Philadelphia. I was able to tell him that McAdoo and I had threshed that out the day before and we would both recommend his appointment.

'After that he wanted to know about Graham, who wishes to go in the Attorney-General's Office. I told him that Mc-

Reynolds and I had discussed that the day before and that he intended to appoint him. This satisfied Palmer and he went back to the Capitol.

'Jerry Sullivan from Iowa was waiting to see the President, and I treated him as I did Palmer. He had just been appointed on the Appraisers' Court in New York. . . . He was uncertain as to whether he ought to leave Iowa and wished to know how much time he could have to decide. . . . I asked him not to bother the President, but to take it up with me and I would thresh it out with the Attorney-General and take it to the President in concentrated form. He had several other desires, which I advised him to put in writing and to send to me at his convenience.

'I wish I could always be here to do these things for the President and give him time to devote himself to the larger problems which confront the country. . . .

'*August 2, 1913*: John Mitchell, President of the Federation of Miners, and Timothy Healy, President of the International Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen, lunched with me to-day. I talked to them earnestly concerning the future of labor. I urged upon them the necessity of taking a broad view, and not letting the unimportant things of to-day interfere with the larger ones which are to come. . . .

'*November 19, 1913*: I lunched with Charles Grasty of the *Baltimore Sun*. The other guest was Mr. Daniel Willard of the Baltimore and Ohio. I found Willard had a clear knowledge of railroad rates. Many of the facts given me by Secretary Lane, Commissioner Marble, and Frank Trumbull are misleading. Mr. Willard is very agreeable. He used the tablecloth instead of paper to make diagrams and to illustrate his points, and he ate no lunch to speak of, but talked all the time, though not tiresomely. . . .'

Not the least important function taken over by the Colonel was that of receiving complaints against the Ad-

ministration — which his personal friends, who frequently did not share his admiration for the President, passed on to him with a rugged disregard for his peace of mind. With journalists and editors he kept always in close touch, and they seemed to find in him a man to whom it was worth while to send criticism.

Mr. E. S. Martin to Colonel House

May 18, 1915

DEAR HOUSE:

. . . Cass Gilbert was at lunch. I said to him: 'The most that I shall do to-day will be to send clippings to House. Why do people do such things for House?' And then we went on to discuss House.

Well! I hope House is pretty well and that the swivel in his honorable neck is working easily, so that when his head is turned with consortations with the mighty he can twist it back without too much effort.

Good luck!

E. S. MARTIN

1914

DEAR HOUSE:

I commend to your thoughtful consideration the story I read in the paper, that in some districts in India where they held a bee and cleaned out the tigers, the wild pigs so multiplied that they ruined the crops.

Are the wild pigs going to . . . devour us when we pass the anti-trust bills with the labor union exemptions and muzzle the railroads and skin the millionaires?

I think that is quite a parable about the tigers and the wild pigs.

The I.W.W.'s, the laborites, the socialists, all the cranks and all the hoboes, they are the wild pigs.

Yours

E. S. M.

May 11, 1915

DEAR HOUSE:

... Woodrow, after a three-day conference exclusively with himself, made a short speech yesterday which I didn't like; but no matter. I wished he had talked to himself and conferred with some one else. They say he has not conferred one single lick with Bill Bryan . . . and that is good. So we profit by the virtues of Woodrow's defects. . . .

I think Wilson will do right, but if he gets sloppy I'm going to get right in with the Powers of Darkness [Roosevelt and his followers] and help drive the Bryan and Daniels crowd out into the wilderness. This I say, not that it is true, but to enable you to feel the temper of the public. . . .

Good luck.

E. S. M.

Mr. George W. Wickersham to Mr. E. S. Martin (forwarded to Colonel House)

NEW YORK, February 3, 1914

MY DEAR MARTIN:

Your editorial for February 11 is very sane. The trouble with Mr. Wilson is that he lives in an imaginary world. He fancies that a thing should be so, and it *is* so. Which is all very well until a large enough number of people begin to inquire, 'Is it so?' Then, like 'the unsubstantial fabric of a vision,' it vanishes. Unlike it, it *does* leave a mark behind.

Yours faithfully

GEORGE W. WICKERSHAM

Mr. James Speyer to Colonel House

NEW YORK, March 12, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I am glad you are coming back soon! I am satisfied that the gentlemen in Washington do *not* realize the seriousness of the financial situation through the general impairment

of railroad credit. The Interstate Commerce Commission shows no disposition to hurry its decision, as to an advance in rates; on the contrary, they have again extended the time for hearings and are asking more questions, etc. Meantime gross and net earnings are declining and the weaker roads like the Erie, Southern Railway, Chesapeake and Ohio, etc., cannot sell their bonds except at bankruptcy figures, *if* at all. I can only repeat that in my opinion, which I do *not* express publicly, we are face to face with the possibility not of *one* but of *several* receiverships of the big railroad systems. And you know how harmful that would be and how slow the recovery. Mr. Rea's statement of which I enclose a copy is absolutely true and so is the enclosed article from the *Railway Gazette*.

Something must be done and *done soon*, in a big and courageous way, to stop these attacks by Government agencies both Federal and State, if disaster is to be averted. We need a practical and constructive policy and measures.

I wish I could write more cheerfully, but even I am not sufficiently optimistic to close my eyes to existing conditions.

With kind regards

Sincerely yours

JAMES SPEYER

Major Henry L. Higginson to Colonel House

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
January 13, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . It does not seem clear to Washington that the action there and in the States is keeping business men on pins, and that, having lost considerable money and lost almost entire confidence, they are not willing to risk their credit. They have simply withdrawn their money in a large way from active business, and are waiting to see whether it is safe for them to pledge their names and their honor in carrying out either old or new enterprises. . . . It is not what Mr. Wilson's

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Administration has wished; it is not his intention or that of Congress, no doubt, but they do not see, they do not realize how people feel.

I was glad to vote for Mr. Wilson, and have liked a great deal that he and Congress, with his guidance, have done; but this shipping bill is a terrible mistake. If we can only have peace and nothing new, trust placed in railroad directorates and in other great concerns, we shall go on very well. . . .

Perhaps these matters could be laid before influential men and do some good, and perhaps not.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours

H. L. HIGGINSON

Mr. E. S. Martin to Colonel House

NEW YORK, February 10, 1915

DEAR HOUSE:

Your press agent is still working overtime.

Who is he, anyhow?

Here are a few clippings.

Our poor country is working along under shortened sail since you left.¹ I don't know any more than I can help about what is going on, and read the papers through smoked glasses. I understand that your friend W. W. has clenched his teeth through the remnants of the shipping bill and means to hold on. He has a heroic bite. I am afraid it is his destiny finally to adhere to something that will sink with him. But who can tell? We are all in the Lord's hands and should be hopeful however anxious. . . .

Yours

E. S. MARTIN

House received the complaints cordially, explained the situation, and promised to do what he could to better it. To

¹ For six months in Europe.

members of the Cabinet he passed on the criticisms and insisted upon the need of meeting the factors that produced them.

'November 7, 1913: Bishop Brent came at half-past five to tell of conditions in the Philippines. He says they have a very wrong impression of the Administration, believing that the Democratic Party's advent to power means immediate self-government for them. He does not believe it possible to give them self-government until the school children of to-day become old enough to take an active part in public affairs.

'I complimented him upon the work he is doing, and suggested that any time he wished to reach the President or to accomplish something which he could not accomplish through the ordinary channels, he could communicate with me.'

Colonel House to Mr. William Garrott Brown

NEW YORK, April 10, 1913

DEAR MR. BROWN:

Martin tells me that you think too many Southerners are being given office under this Administration.

You are quite right, but it is hard to help it. The best material that has been suggested for office comes from the South, and it is almost as hard to get satisfactory Democrats from the North as it would be for a Republican Administration to get satisfactory Republicans from the South.

In naming Mr. Page for England the President went into the subject carefully, and by process of elimination Mr. Page seemed to be the most available. And so it has been in every instance. . . .

It seems to me that we will have to assume the burden of responsibility and let it go at that. If the Administration succeeds, as we now hope, then it will be a great tribute to

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the South; and if it fails, we must necessarily shoulder a larger part of the blame. . . .

With warm regards and best wishes, I am

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Mr. E. S. Martin to Colonel House

NEW YORK, October 21, 1915

DEAR HOUSE:

It uplifted me very much to talk to you.

It always does.

You must be a hypnotizer. Anyhow you always make me feel that we're going to do our duty.

Here's next week's *Life* with a good cartoon.

More power to your elbow!

E. S. M.

Colonel House to Secretary McAdoo

AUSTIN, TEXAS, March 7, 1914

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I am enclosing you two letters from Colonel Nelson of the *Kansas City Star*, which I think it would be well to have the President glance over.

Every day some complaint of this sort reaches me. I never tire of reading the generous chorus of praise of the President's first year in office, and no one knows better than we how richly he deserves it. However, long experience has taught me how quickly this may turn in other directions. If this should happen, I feel sure it will not be from any act of the President himself, but because those of us whom he has trusted on the watch tower have failed in their duty toward him. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

III

The extraordinary position of Colonel House, without office and yet an integral part of the Administration, was made possible not merely by the personal regard of the President and the infinite variety of services which House performed for him, but by the intimacy of relations he maintained with the Cabinet. He carried on constant correspondence with them, sometimes personal, sometimes political, always cordial in character. Each time that he visited Washington he evidently took pains to study the problems of their departments and to acquire for them whatever information he could. Brief selections from his memoranda indicate the informality of their intercourse.

'March 20, 1913: From Burleson I went to call upon the Secretary of the Interior, and spent a very pleasant quarter of an hour. After that I returned to the Cosmos Club, where I met McAdoo and Houston. They immediately began to berate me for having put them in the Cabinet. They wanted to know what they had done to have such jobs imposed upon them. Houston said he had work enough to do for six healthy men. . . .

'April 13, 1913: Secretary Lane came an hour before the time set for the dinner to be given Ambassador James Bryce. He desired to talk of his department and to outline some plans for the future. . . .

'November 24, 1913: We arrived at the Bryans' at nine and went almost immediately to bed. It was understood that we were to have breakfast at half-past seven, but, much to our relief, Mrs. Bryan knocked on our doors a few minutes later and announced that Mr. Bryan would take his horse-back exercise before breakfast, so we would not have it until half-past eight — an unusually late hour for the Bryan household. . . .

'November 25, 1913: To-day was Cabinet day, and I remained to meet the different members as they came in, for there was something I had to say to each. . . .

'December 12, 1913: Houston and Burleson came around to see me. I first took up with them the question of Cabinet officers not making speeches without the President's permission, and perhaps not making any speeches unless the President had something in particular for them to say to the country about their departments. I thought the present habit of members of the Cabinet making indiscriminate speeches was very bad, and often embarrassing. I suggested that if the President would designate them to speak upon certain subjects at certain times, what they said would have much weight and would be almost equal to a presidential utterance.

'I found there was some feeling among the members of the Cabinet because the Friday Cabinet meetings had been discontinued. I agreed to mention it to the President and ask him to resume them. Later in the day I did this, and the President consented to do so.

'The President was pleased when I told him I had spoken to a sufficient number of the Cabinet to ensure the adoption of my suggestion that no speeches should be made in the future without his consent, and only when he thought the occasion demanded it. . . .

'November 15, 1915: Last night the Secretary of War sent a special messenger from Washington, bearing a letter for me concerning his report. He desired me to discuss with the President the advisability of putting his report out in advance of handing it to the President. The President does not wish him to do so, and I am to convey to Garrison this unpleasant information. Mr. Bryan has wired requesting that I ask the President to appoint a friend of his as Marshal here. This he also declined to do, because he said the man was not fit for that particular place. . . .

'December 22, 1913: McAdoo's carriage met me [upon arrival in Washington] and I drove to his home for breakfast. He came to my room in his pajamas, half asleep. He had been up practically all night so as to be in touch by telephone with the House and Senate Conference Committee, which did not reach a conclusion until five o'clock this morning.

'During the morning I remained in McAdoo's private office, telephoning some of the Cabinet members and making some memoranda of things I desired to discuss with the President. . . .

'December 23, 1913: I walked with McAdoo to the Cabinet meeting and saw the others as they assembled. Redfield was particularly anxious to show me some statistics regarding our exports, which he considered interesting. . . .

'January 16, 1914: I spoke to each member of the Cabinet as they came in, and talked to Lane about the conservation of our radium deposits, strongly urging it. . . .

'April 28, 1914: McAdoo and I went back to the White House, as there was to be a Cabinet meeting. There I met all the Cabinet, but had no conversation with any of them excepting Houston. I advised him that the President felt he could not spare him from the Department of Agriculture for the present, but later would probably place him on the Federal Reserve Board. . . .

'May 8, 1914: From the Treasury I went to the White House Offices in order to see members of the Cabinet before they convened. McReynolds, Burleson, Lane, Garrison, and others each held me for a moment. Lane was anxious to know whether I thought it advisable for him to go to California at this time to take the LL.D. degree which the University of California has offered him. I advised taking it up with the President and being governed by his wishes. . . .'

No more striking example of the cordial feeling of Cabinet members towards Colonel House can be found than the offer

made by the Postmaster-General and the Attorney-General to resign, if their withdrawal would make it easier for the President to appoint House Secretary of State. This occurred in the early autumn of 1915, after Bryan's resignation.

'Burluson and Gregory [noted House on June 20, 1915] thought perhaps I was refusing to become Secretary of State because it would give Texas three men in the Cabinet and all from Austin. They therefore offered to send in their resignations if I would accept.

'When I told the President about Burluson and Gregory offering to resign so as to leave me free to accept the Secretaryship of State without embarrassment to him, he said, "I am glad you told me, for it is something I shall always remember with pleasure.'"

Colonel House to Postmaster-General Burluson

ROSLYN, LONG ISLAND
June 21, 1915

DEAR ALBERT:

Gregory has given me your message, and nothing has ever touched me more deeply.

There is no consideration, I think, that would influence me enough to make me accept an office. My endeavor must always be in the path I have so long followed. If I could be brought to think of it at all, it would be to serve my friends and not to accept sacrifices from them.

You and Gregory have made me feel that life is worth living and that all I have tried to do has not been in vain.

Your friend always

E. M. HOUSE

To House, members of the Cabinet brought the most varied problems. He responded with an unsparing expenditure of time and energy and, like Kipling's hero, frequently

showed them a quiet and safe way round, out, or under. They evidently relied upon his judgment in matters of appointments. 'Will you kindly have this pair looked up,' wrote McAdoo, 'and tell me what is thought of them?' And two days later: 'Please hurry up report on Mr. Vernon [appointments].' And again, still later: 'Here is a sample of my troubles. Will you be good enough to look into the character of this man and let me hear from you quickly?'

'May 10, 1914: Attorney-General McReynolds lunched with me [recorded House]. We went over much the same ground covered in Washington. We discussed a vacant Federal judgeship... and I insisted upon his making an immediate appointment. The docket is becoming clogged and there is no reason for his delay. I had X to see him this morning in order that he might look him over. His only objection to him was that he had no chin. The two men I sent him last week as candidates for United States Marshals seemed to be all right excepting that they were too fat. I have another suggestion to make for an appointment, but the man has a large mole on the back of his ear. I shall ask him to be careful not to expose that side of his head.

'Later in the day, Gregory and I were laughing at this eccentricity of McReynolds. Gregory says he is such a big, fine-looking fellow himself that he cannot get it through his head that any one has any ability that is not built upon the same lines.'

Attorney-General McReynolds to Colonel House

NEW YORK, May 11, 1914

DEAR MR. HOUSE:

I've devoted some time to the judgeship, and this is the way it lies in my mind:

X is well recommended and would not be a bad appointment; neither will he ever make more than an ordinary

judge. He did not make a good impression on me personally.

Y made a better impression, but I do not regard him as the very best kind of material. If I should act wholly on my own impressions, I'd guess in favor of Y.

However, if you gentlemen think it wisest to select X, I will recommend his appointment and take the chance. He said that he was not certain about acceptance if tendered. We ought to know whether he will, before any formal tender is made to him.

Will you see that the rest is done?

Called you on the 'phone, but you were reported out with the President.

Sincerely

McREYNOLDS

House's opinion was finally approved.

With Gregory, who succeeded McReynolds when the latter was appointed to the Supreme Court, Colonel House's association was even more intimate. The Colonel discussed frankly with him the relations of a Cabinet member with the President, and gave him the benefit of his own experience:

'Never to go into long-winded arguments upon any subject, but to state his position in brief terms and never repeat. That when he and the President agreed upon a matter, never to give him reasons for so agreeing, as the President was too busy to listen to unimportant details. I was sure he would always be able to see the President whenever necessary if he did not burden him with unimportant and unnecessary verbiage. . . .

'Gregory is very able and has been exceedingly successful with New Haven affairs, but it has not spoiled him in the least. He is one of the few that I have ever met who, I believe, would never get "the big head" no matter how suc-



Albert S. Burleson

David F. Houston

Thomas W. Gregory

THREE TEXAS CABINET-MEMBERS



cessful he became. He is not only able, but is as loyal as the Legion of Cæsar.'

Colonel House to Attorney-General Gregory

PRIDE'S CROSSING, MASSACHUSETTS
August 20, 1914

MY DEAR FRIEND:

. . . I am so eager for your success and so anxious it may be brought about without any impairment of your strength that there are many suggestions that have come to me since our last talk.

Do be careful about making appointments too soon. Take your time about them and do not let friendship have any undue influence upon you. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On his side, Mr. Gregory wrote continually to House, evidencing invariably the strongest affection both for him and for the President. 'How can I ever repay such confidence or justify it,' he wrote on August 22, 1914. 'How can I ever even up matters with you, who have given him so exaggerated an idea of my ability?' And four days later: 'Come to Washington soon, give us all the suggestions you can spare, and do not doubt that I know you to be, as you have been for years, my very best friend.'

Apparently the Cabinet counted on House not merely to discover available material for appointments, but also to inform unsatisfactory office-holders that they need not expect reappointment or continuance. The function could not have been attractive. House writes to McAdoo: 'I am always ready to meet any suggestion that you make, but if you know Mr. X at all you would know that it would be utterly impossible for me or any one else to notify him "in a tactful way" and "in a way not to hurt his feelings" that his services

were to be discontinued. I would as soon undertake to square the circle or to prove the fourth dimension.'

Mr. X, who was evidently a gentleman to be handled diplomatically, seems to have made difficulties, for some time later Mr. Gregory wrote as follows to the Colonel:

Attorney-General Gregory to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, November 25, 1914

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I went to the White House last night and had a long talk with the President about X. I do not think the President will agree to appoint him to the — position, although a final conclusion was not reached. The President made a memorandum of X's case and is going to make an effort to provide for him in some way, and I will keep the matter in mind.

I do not want X, however, to be eternally bombarding my private secretary and me with telegrams demanding his immediate appointment to the place, and I must say that he is making a nuisance of himself. I wish you would get this idea conveyed to him in some diplomatic way. . . .

Sincerely and affectionately yours

T. W. GREGORY

Much more interesting and congenial was the task which Colonel House set himself whenever in Europe — that of studying all sorts of reforms so as to be able to pass on new ideas to the heads of departments in Washington.

'This afternoon [he wrote in London, June 20, 1913] Sir Horace Plunkett came to call and remained for an hour. We discussed the betterment of the farming class along the lines of more effective farming, farming credits, coöperative marketing, and the making of country life more pleasant and

desirable. He wished me to come to Ireland and visit him for three days before we sail, and I have promised to go. I am much interested in this phase of governmental work. I want to see what has been done in Ireland under his direction so that I may take some practical knowledge of it to the President and to Secretary Houston for their information.'

House knew of the lifetime of service which Plunkett had devoted to the science of agricultural improvement and to its application to Ireland, of his friendship with Roosevelt, and his love for America. He looked upon him as among the most eminent of living British statesmen, and he hoped to win his interest and help in the solution of American agricultural problems. Plunkett, on his side, had been on the watch for a chance to come into contact with the new Democratic Administration and was delighted to find in the President's adviser a congenial spirit, between whom and himself sprang up an enduring companionship. 'Thus began,' said Plunkett, twelve years later, 'this precious friendship of my later years.'¹

Sir Horace Plunkett to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 16, 1913

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

You leave me wondering how you can show such extraordinary kindness to a stranger in the land, of whom you know so little, and how I can ever repay such hospitality and help. Yesterday morning and last night will long remain delightful memories. You gave me the opportunity I badly needed to explain things to Mr. Houston, and in this, judging by his kindness to me to-day, I think I must have had some success. I had a most useful time with him and others at the Department this morning and shall probably resume my studies to-morrow. I paid my respects to the President and was

¹ Conversation with the author, August 1, 1925.

shocked to see him looking so worn. The change since January last is terribly marked, and you ought to try and force him to take a week's complete rest the moment the strain is relaxed — even at the sacrifice of some public business.

You will be glad to know that already the atmosphere at the Department of Agriculture has noticeably changed. I am going to think quietly over what I have learned and shall probably write you from Battle Creek a suggestion for a line which, if taken by the President in his first annual message, might greatly assist the Agricultural Department. You would know whether to mention it to the President. Any suggestions I may have from time to time for the Department I shall send direct to the Secretary. . . .

With renewed thanks and kind remembrances to Mrs. House, I am

Sincerely yours

HORACE PLUNKETT

Most characteristic is the following letter, which suggests the remarkable position held by Colonel House. Mr. Lane had in mind resigning from the Cabinet in case a certain other high office should be opened to him. Quite obviously he regarded House's approval as necessary, and yet his fondness for the Colonel was such that he was unwilling to embarrass him by approaching him directly.

Secretary Lane to Dr. S. E. Mezes

WASHINGTON, July 4, 1916

MY DEAR SID:

. . . Now don't think me importunate or cheeky or impatient. I'm here to do my 'bit.' I'll stand guard all night without a whimper. All I want is for you, in that superlatively tactful way of yours, to find out if my chances are worth considering at this time — and if they are, will the

Colonel make them something better than mere chances. If they are not, I shall continue sawing wood, and whistling most of the time.

I am not asking for what Ned calls 'bull-con' or for any pat on the back. If you can give me a tip, I shall be obliged; if not, I shall be as always your most devoted and sometimes humble servant,

F. K. L.

P.S. Treat this rather frivolous epistle upon a most important subject as entirely between *us*. I wouldn't for a good right leg want Colonel E. M. to think me to be butting in.

IV

The activities of Colonel House were not confined to assisting the National Administration. We find him in consultation with the Boston city authorities when appointments were to be made, and the New York City and State Democrats looked to him for counsel and aid. An infinite number of lesser problems were cheerfully deposited upon his doorstep by friends, acquaintances, and strangers. He soothed disgruntled journalists, and discussed the plans of inventors who would save the Republic from material destruction in the next war and social enthusiasts who would preserve its soul during the peace.

'I have had as fine a collection of cranks to-day [he wrote on October 20, 1913] as it has been my lot to meet for a long time. Mr. Bryan sent one, Secretary Daniels sent another, and I inherited yet another from the President. The talk has ranged all the way from office-seeking to the control of the planetary system. . . .'

'October 23, 1914: My, my, what a busy day! Commencing with Governor Glynn, McAdoo, Dudley Malone, Commissioner Adamson, former Corporation Counsel Archibald

Watson, Stuart Gibboney, Clarence Shearn, Montgomery Hare, Francis Lynde Stetson, McAneny, and so many others I cannot even think of them. Every phase of the New York State election has been referred to me to-day. Telegrams, party notices, arrangements for meetings, have all passed up for visa. I am literally tired out and shall be glad when the election has come and gone. . . .

'*May 23, 1914* [on an Atlantic liner]: I had several wireless messages, one from Mrs. —, who desires her husband, who is now Consul at —, appointed to the vacancy in London. Even at sea there is no rest from the office-seekers. . . .

'*November 4, 1914*: Loulie and I took the 12.08 for Washington. Major-General — went with us by invitation. I shall be more careful next time, for he literally talked me to death. If he can fight as hard as he can talk, no enemy in the world could resist him. . . .'

Colonel House regarded his position in public affairs with philosophical eye and not without a touch of humor. 'The funny part of it is,' he wrote to his brother-in-law, 'that people seem to think that I have done something unusual, when as a matter of fact it is only because the newspapers have begun to say extravagant things about me. Such, however, is the stuff of which fame is made.'

The interest of the Colonel's life was beyond question, but none the less it must have proved wearying. The more people realized the difficulty of reaching President Wilson personally, the more strenuous were the efforts they made at least to reach House.

'The Governor comes in again this afternoon [wrote House to Dr. Mezes] to spend the night with me and go to the theatre. It is an exceedingly pleasant diversion to have him, but you have no idea how much work it entails.

'As soon as the papers blaze forth in the morning, my

troubles immediately begin anew and I receive communications from unheard-of quarters as well as from friends who have been lost for many years. . . .'

And later:

' . . . I am suffering from the after-effects of the President's visit. All the latent cranks in the country are at me. Some to kill,¹ some to amuse, but most of them to instruct concerning what is best to be done in every phase of government. . . .'

House also asked himself what would be the effect of his growing reputation upon the mind of the President and others in official positions. The rôle of *éminence grise* was one that demanded a never-failing tact. It may have been flattering to be so placed that every one should regard his consent to a proposal as equivalent to success, but it was politically perilous as well as physically tiring.

Colonel House to Dr. S. E. Mezes

NEW YORK, April 24, 1913

DEAR SIDNEY:

. . . I was in Washington ten days, and when I returned I literally had to wade through mail to get to my desk. Every office-seeker and every crank in the United States is on my trail, and I get photographs from all sorts and conditions of people who think in this way they can impress their identity more securely upon me.

It all comes from the newspaper notoriety, and the end is not yet. The next edition of *Collier's*, I believe, is to do the

¹ The following, although belonging to a later period, is typical of the threatening letters House received: 'Sorry I missed the President when he left your home. I had a nice bullet for him for a wedding present! I get him yet and you to, because you are a facker. A friend of Justice.'

thing in grand style. The article is to be entitled 'The President's Silent Partner.' I urged them to name it anything but that, but nothing but that would satisfy them. They said that title had much more punch in it than any other. I agree to that, but I am afraid that I will get some of the licks.

I do not know how much of this kind of thing W. W. can stand. The last edition of *Harper's Weekly* spoke of me as 'Assistant President House.' I think it is time for me to go to Europe or take to the woods.

Fraternally yours

E. M. HOUSE

House decided to go to Europe, where he spent the summer of 1913. But he returned to find his influence undiminished and his energies engaged in a succession of major problems, at first domestic and then international in character.

CHAPTER VI

THE ADMINISTRATION STARTS WORK

President Wilson has brought his party out of the wilderness of Bryanism. It has been a great exhibition of leadership.

New York Tribune, December 24, 1913

I

'THE main thing, I think [wrote House to Wilson, July 31, 1915], is always to do the job better than any one else has ever done it, and the political end will take care of itself. This has always been my theory, and I have found it satisfactory and successful.'

This note, which recurs continually in House's letters, would doubtless have surprised many persons who, without adequate information, looked upon the Colonel primarily as a political manager and an expert in party tactics. Another misconception lay in the belief that House acted as a brake upon the President, constantly restraining him from over-enthusiasm in reform and urging caution in speeches and legislative measures. His papers by no means bear out this supposition. One may deduce from them, indeed, the definite conclusion that the Colonel was the more radical of the two and was ever in fear lest this Administration, like so many others, once it came into power should be content merely to govern and forget to pave the path for progress. House always insisted upon the need of courage and of radical reform. A clear example of his feeling is found in two conversations, almost a year apart, between House and the President. The first occurred at the moment when tariff lobbyists were threatening the political annihilation of Wilson if he persisted in driving through the Tariff Bill without regard to the demands of special interests. The second took

place when reactionary forces were stirring feeling against him because of his proposed anti-trust legislation.

'May 11, 1913: Captain Bill McDonald once told me that he attributed his still being alive to the fact that he had never hesitated the fraction of a second, but had always gone straight towards the point of danger, and the courage of the other fellow had always failed. I urged this attitude upon the President as strongly as I knew how, and told him it was the *most essential thing of all*. . . .

'April 27, 1914: We talked of the desirability of pushing the progressive cause forward. I thought unless we did this, we could not justify being in the position we were. We spoke of the political results of such a course, and came to the conclusion that it was best not to consider that aspect at all, but to go resolutely forward with the reform programme and let the future take care of itself.'

✓ The extent of Colonel House's influence upon the legislative plans of the Administration may be gathered from a remarkable document which deserves some attention. In the autumn of 1912, immediately after the presidential election, there was published a novel, or political romance, entitled 'Philip Dru: Administrator.' It was the story of a young West Point graduate, incapacitated for military service by his health, who was caught by the spirit of revolt against the tyranny of privileged interests. A stupid and reactionary Government at Washington provokes armed rebellion, in which Dru joins whole-heartedly and which he ultimately leads to complete success. He himself becomes dictator and proceeds by ordinance to remake the mechanism of government, to reform the basic laws that determine the relation of the classes, to remodel the defensive forces of the republic, and to bring about an international grouping or league of powers, founded upon Anglo-Saxon solidarity. His reforms

accomplished, he gives effect once more to representative institutions as formulated in a new American Constitution, better fitted than the old for the spirit and conditions of the twentieth century.

As a romance, the book was not notable, for the effort of the anonymous author had evidently been spent upon the careful working-out of the political and social ideas of the young Philip Dru rather than upon its literary form. Certain reviewers, however, were piqued by the daring and the ingenuity of these ideas and, treating the book as a political manifesto rather than a novel, acclaimed it as a remarkable publication. Speculation as to the personality of the unknown author, who was described merely as 'a man prominent in political councils,' naturally followed. There seemed to be general agreement that he could not belong to either of the two older parties. 'We trust he is to be found among the Democrats,' wrote one reviewer, 'but we greatly fear he is of the New Party.' Another reviewer was of similar opinion: 'We trust that the author's counsel and assistance will be available at Washington, if not during the present Administration, surely when the Progressive Party assumes control.' There were, indeed, numerous suggestions that Mr. Roosevelt himself was the author.

Five years after its publication an enterprising bookseller, noting the growing influence of House in the Wilson Administration, wrote with regard to the book: 'As time goes on the interest in it becomes more intense, due to the fact that so many of the ideas expressed by "Philip Dru: Administrator," have become laws of this Republic, and so many of his ideas have been discussed as becoming laws.' And he ends with the question, 'Is Colonel E. M. House of Texas the author? If not, who is?'

Colonel House was, in truth, the author; to his other occupations he had added that of novelist. He tells us himself in a brief memorandum how, in the autumn of 1911, he con-

ceived the idea of writing a novel as a medium to express his economic and political theories. That winter in Austin he was seriously ill.

'When I began to convalesce at home, and before I was able to get about, I wrote "Philip Dru: Administrator." I was surprised at the rapidity with which I wrote, for I was not certain when I began that I could do it at all. . . .

'I was also surprised to find how much I was interested in doing this kind of work. I had written platforms, speeches, etc., for different candidates and officials, and newspaper articles for campaign purposes, but this was an entirely new departure. I did not spend more than thirty days upon the first draft of the book. Mezes read and approved it, and I sent it to Houston to look over, largely with the view of getting his judgment as to the economic features of it.

'He kept the manuscript until I passed through St. Louis on my way East. He declared his belief that it was economically sound, but held that the fiction in it was so thin that he advised rewriting it as a serious work, as he had suggested originally.'

Colonel House to Dr. D. F. Houston

AUSTIN, TEXAS, *March 12, 1912*

DEAR DOCTOR HOUSTON:

. . . I expect to elaborate somewhat concerning the functions of the National Government.

I particularly want to make it clear that the Executive and his Cabinet will be more nearly akin to the English Premier than to the French, inasmuch as I want him to have the right to propose measures directly and without referring them to a committee.

If you have any suggestions along this or any other lines, please let me have them.

I have done some padding — as, for instance, the story of

the tenement fire — which I expect to take out later and put in more serious stuff.

It is not much of a novel, as you will soon discover; at the same time, unless it were known by that name its audience would be reduced at least ninety-nine per cent. If it was called what I really mean it to be, only those who think pretty much as I do would read it, and those I am trying to reach would never look at it.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

But this was the spring of 1912, and all of House's energies were taken up with the pre-convention campaign that ended with the nomination of Wilson. The early summer he spent in Europe. Evidently not wishing to give the time necessary to putting it into the form that Mr. Houston advised, by elimination of the romance, and fearing that a scientific essay would not reach a large public, he decided merely to smooth it out so far as possible while on the Atlantic.

'I worked assiduously on "Philip Dru" all the way over and all the way back, but had no time for it in Europe. . . . We returned early in August, and the first thing I did was to shake myself clear of "Philip Dru."

'E. S. Martin read the manuscript and wanted me to re-write it, saying that "some of it was so good that it was a pity that parts of it were so bad." I had no time, however, for such diversions, for the political campaign was engrossing my entire time and the publisher was urging me to give him the manuscript so it might be advertised in the autumn announcements.

'I was so much more interested in the campaign than I was in the book that I turned it over to the publisher, having determined to let it go as it was.'

Whatever the literary merits of 'Philip Dru,' it gives us an insight into the main political and social principles that actuated House in his companionship with President Wilson. Through it runs the note of social democracy reminiscent of Louis Blanc and the revolutionaries of 1848: 'This book is dedicated to the unhappy many who have lived and died lacking opportunity. . . .' 'The time is now measurably near when it will be just as reprehensible for the mentally strong to hold in subjection the mentally weak, and to force them to bear the grievous burdens which a misconceived civilization has imposed upon them.' Government, accordingly, must be inspired by the spirit of charity rather than the spirit of ruthless efficiency. Especially must privileged interests be excluded from governmental influence, for by the nature of things their point of view is selfish.

Through the book also runs the idea that in the United States, government is unresponsive to popular desires — a 'negative' government, House calls it — for it is at more pains to do nothing with safety than to attempt desirable reforms which might disturb vested interests and alienate the voters. 'We have been living under a Government of negation.' The theory of checks and balances has developed so as to reënforce this negative character of government; closer co-operation between the President and Congress, perhaps in the direction of parliamentary methods, is necessary if the tendency of American government is to be made active and positive.

The specific measures enacted by Philip Dru as Administrator of the nation, indicated the reforms desired by House.

The Administrator appointed a 'board composed of economists and others well versed in matters relating to the tariff and internal revenue, who . . . were instructed to work out a tariff law which would contemplate the abolition of the theory of protection as a governmental policy.'

'The Administrator further directed the tax board to work out a graduated income tax. . . .'

Philip Dru also provided for the 'formulation of a new banking law, affording a flexible currency bottomed largely upon commercial assets, the real wealth of the nation, instead of upon debt, as formerly. . . . Its final construction would completely destroy the credit trust, the greatest, the most far-reaching, and under evil direction the most pernicious trust of all.'

'He also proposed making corporations share with the Government and States a certain part of their net earnings. . . .'

Corp income

Fascism

Such were some of Dru's plans which shortly found actual life in Wilsonian legislation. No wonder that Cabinet members like Mr. Lane and Mr. Bryan commented upon the influence of Dru with the President. 'All that book has said should be,' wrote Lane, 'comes about. . . . The President comes to "Philip Dru" in the end.'¹

Other excerpts indicate the extent of House's progressiveness.

'Labor is no longer to be classed as an inert commodity to be bought and sold by the law of supply and demand.'

Dru 'prepared an old-age pension law and also a laborer's insurance law covering loss in cases of illness, incapacity, and death.'

'He had incorporated in the Franchise Law the right of Labor to have one representative upon the boards of corporations and to share a certain percentage of the earnings above the wages, after a reasonable per cent upon the capital had been earned. In turn it was to be obligatory upon them [the laborers] not to strike, but to submit all grievances to arbitration.'

¹ *Letters of Franklin K. Lane*, p. 297.

To such an extent had Colonel House formulated his ideas upon national problems before the election of Wilson. 'In regard to "Philip Dru,"' wrote House in 1916, 'I want to say that there are some things in it I wrote hastily and in which I do not concur, but most of it I stand upon as being both my ethical and political faith.'

II

Four great legislative problems confronted Wilson, and their solution constitutes his chief claim, in matters of domestic politics, to the title of statesman. They concerned the revision of the tariff, with the introduction of an income tax law, the creation of the Federal Reserve banking system, the control of trusts, and the regulation of industrial relations. In meeting them Wilson displayed the inspiring leadership essential to success; he showed himself as convincing and sympathetic when he dealt with Congress as a whole, as he was reserved in his dealings with individual Congressmen. By the end of the special session which passed both the Tariff and Currency Acts, his moral supremacy was firmly established and his mastery of the party was complete. He was hailed as the Moses who had led the party out of the legislative ineffectiveness supposedly characteristic of all Democrats.

In each of the great problems House took deep interest. He brought to the President the variety of opinions which he culled from his numerous personal contacts, he utilized his relations with party leaders to assist the passage of the bills through Congress. But it was in the currency question that he took chief interest, for this he had long studied and from its solution might be expected positive, tangible benefits in a short time. As cotton planter and one-time banker in Texas he appreciated the dangers of an inelastic currency, and as a liberal he distrusted the financial power which certain metropolitan banking firms were able to wield over national commerce and industry.

Organized capital, 'Wall Street' in popular parlance, had secured a control of banking credits which, if it were extended, might place the industrial life of the country in the power of private and at least partially irresponsible interests. Against this so-called 'credit trust' Mr. Bryan had protested in 1896: 'Let the Government go out of the banking business,' the financial magnates had cried; to which Bryan retorted, 'Let the banks go out of the Government business.' If private individuals could release or withhold credits at will, it meant a control of industry and inequality of opportunity at complete variance with traditional American principles.

Colonel House to Senator Culberson

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 26, 1911

DEAR SENATOR:

... I think Woodrow Wilson's remark that the money trust was the most pernicious of all trusts, is eminently correct.

A few individuals and their satellites control the leading banks and trust companies in America. They also control the leading corporations; and if they are to be permitted on the one hand to use the corporations as a bar against loss to any speculation which they may make, and to use on the other hand the banks and trust companies to borrow all the funds they may need for such speculations, the stockholders of the corporations which they dominate and the business world that depends upon funds from the trust companies and banks which they dominate, are bound to suffer. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

During the autumn of 1912 and the spring of 1913, even in the midst of the campaign and the process of forming a Cabinet, House worked constantly on the currency problem,

in order to be prepared to assist the President when he should meet the congressional committees. The task which Colonel House set himself was primarily to prevent the President-elect from committing himself to any one scheme until the problem had been thoroughly studied; later he guided the measure so that it was left in the control of experts and preserved from the heresies of political incompetents. The Colonel was the unseen guardian angel of the bill, constantly assisting the Secretary of the Treasury and the Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees in their active and successful labor of translating it into law. Wilson, who was accused of a tendency to avoid advice, proved himself in fact to be far from the self-confident doctrinaire pictured by his opponents, and in the matter of currency reform he was determined that the bill should be founded upon expert opinion.

‘The greatest embarrassment of my political career [he said to an enthusiast on this subject] has been that active duties seem to deprive me absolutely of time for careful investigation. I seem almost obliged to form conclusions from impressions instead of from study, but I intend to go much more thoroughly into this matter before saying anything about it; and I heartily agree with you that this, the most fundamental question of all, must be approached with caution and fearlessness and receive dispassionate and open-minded treatment. I wish that I had more knowledge, more thorough acquaintance, with the matters involved. All that I can promise you is sincere study. I wish that I could promise you a constructive ability.’

Colonel House was indefatigable in providing for the President the knowledge that he sought. He collected in his study the banking laws of every nation of Europe. He gathered reports and abstracts from college professors of economics and banking. But he laid chief stress upon his frequent

conferences with the bankers themselves, especially those who had had practical experience in drafting previous bills for Republican Administrations.

'December 19, 1912: I talked with Paul Warburg over the telephone regarding currency reform. I told of my Washington trip and what I had done there to get it in working order; that the Senators and Congressmen seemed anxious to do what Governor Wilson desired and that I knew the President-elect thought straight concerning the issue.

'February 26, 1913: I went to the Harding dinner and talked with the guests invited to meet me. It was an interesting occasion. I first talked to Mr. Frick, then with Denman, and afterwards with Otto Kahn.

'March 13, 1913: Vanderlip and I had an interesting discussion regarding currency reform.

'March 27, 1913: Mr. J. P. Morgan, Jr., and Mr. Denny of his firm, came promptly at five. McAdoo came about ten minutes afterwards. Morgan had a currency plan already formulated and printed. We discussed it at some length. I suggested that he should have it typewritten and sent to us to-day.'¹

'The Governor [recorded Colonel House on January 8, 1913] agreed to put me in touch with Glass, Chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee, and I am to work out a measure which is to be submitted to him.

'He spoke of his fear that Bryan would not approve such a bill as I have in mind. I said it was better to contend with Mr. Bryan's disapproval and fail in securing any bill at all, than it was to get one which was not sound.

'March 24, 1913: I had an engagement with Carter Glass at five. We drove, in order not to be interrupted. . . .

¹ Typewritten, in order to avoid the impression that might be given by a printed plan that Morgan's were so sure of their financial power that they could impose a cut-and-dried plan.

'I urged him not to allow . . . the Senate Committee to change what we had agreed upon in any of the essential features. He promised to be firm. I advised using honey so long as it was effective, but, when it was not, I would bring the President and Secretary of the Treasury to his rescue.

'I spoke to the President about this after dinner and advised that McAdoo and I whip the Glass measure into final shape, which he could endorse and take to Owen ¹ as his own. My opinion was that Owen would be more likely to accept it as a presidential measure than as a measure coming from the House Committee on Banking and Currency.'

The Currency Bill was brought into the House of Representatives early in the extra session, its main features unchanged from the first drafts decided upon by the President, McAdoo, and the Chairmen of the House and Senate Committees. The initial difficulties threatened by certain elements in the party which tended toward economic free-thinking, were safely passed. There remained, however, the opposition of a number of Senators, behind which lay the dislike of the bill expressed by prominent Eastern bankers, who evidently feared that it meant a weakening of Wall Street's power and an amateur or political control of national financial problems. House spent much of his summer in defending the bill and more of his autumn in securing political support for it.

'*July 23, 1913* [conversation with Josiah Quincy, former Mayor of Boston]: I tried to show him the folly of the Eastern bankers taking an antagonistic attitude towards the Currency Bill. The Administration is endeavoring to serve the country as a whole, and it is the better part of wisdom for the Eastern bankers to join hands in working out a measure for the general good.

¹ Chairman of the Senate Committee.

'Quincy wanted to know what I thought the result would be of their threat to withdraw their national bank charters and take out state charters. I thought the threat was puerile, and not to be discussed, and that the bill would be passed no matter what action they took in that direction.'

On the following day, House dined with the members of the Boston Clearing House Association to discuss the bill. He went in no optimistic frame of mind. 'I have a feeling,' he wrote, 'that they are not coming for the purpose of discussing the measure with open minds, but are antagonistic to it. I shall be alone to defend the measure.'

His forebodings were apparently realized, for he noted after the dinner: 'I found the bankers singularly barren of suggestions. They seem to stand upon the general proposition of being against the Administration bill, but without any constructive suggestions looking to its betterment.'

House found more consolation and satisfaction in a long talk with Major Henry L. Higginson, at the end of August.

'I can well understand [wrote House] why he is considered by many, Boston's first citizen. We talked of the currency question and I found that he had a breadth of view unusual amongst those of his calling. He seemed to want what was best for the entire country, and not something for his particular locality and profession. I explained with what care the bill had been framed. Just before he arrived, I had finished a review by Professor Sprague of Harvard of Paul Warburg's criticism of the Glass-Owen bill, and will transmit it to Washington to-morrow. Every banker like Warburg, who knows the subject practically, has been called upon in the making of the bill. Major Higginson seemed thoroughly satisfied with the endeavors the Administration have made to construct a good and beneficent measure.'

Colonel House to Mr. E. S. Martin

BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS
September 2, 1913

DEAR MARTIN:

... The Currency Bill should go through the House next week, but it will have a harder road in the Senate. I have been working upon it assiduously. McAdoo has been here three or four times, and it seems to me that I have seen every banker and political economist in the East.

The bankers, sad to relate, know next to nothing about it, and none of them agrees as to what is best. The only unanimity of opinion amongst them is that the bill should be made for them and be operated by them, and they cannot understand that the manufacturers, merchants, railroads, farmers, and others have any rights in the premises.

I think the bill is getting in good shape. Houston was with me last week and he says that in his opinion, and in the opinion of ninety per cent of the political economists throughout the country whose opinions are of value, it is the best bill that has ever been constructed — infinitely better than the Aldrich Bill. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

'October 19, 1913: I saw Senator Reed of Missouri in the late afternoon and discussed the currency question with him. He says the President seems to be more concerned in regard to haste than he does as to the measure itself. In this, of course, he is mistaken. The President is satisfied with the measure approximately as it is, and he knows that Reed and the other Democratic Senators who are delaying it are doing so from a failure to study the measure as it has progressed through the House, and he is impatient in consequence.

'October 31, 1913: Paul Warburg was my first caller, and he came to discuss the currency measure. There are many

features of the Owen-Glass Bill that he does not approve. I promised to put him in touch with McAdoo and Senator Owen, so that he might discuss it with them.

'Senator Murray Crane ¹ followed Warburg. He has been in touch with Senators Weeks and Nelson of the Currency Committee, and urged them to bring about quick action in order that the business community could have done with this uncertainty and could go ahead with the renewed hope a proper currency measure will give them. He telephoned me later that he had been in communication with Washington, and he advised that we bring some pressure upon the Democratic insurgents of the Committee. I called up McAdoo immediately and asked him to convey this information to the President and to gently start the pressure. I also arranged for him to meet Warburg here on Monday.

'*November 17, 1913*: Paul Warburg telephoned about his trip to Washington. He is much disturbed over the currency situation and requested an interview, along with Jacob Schiff and Cleveland H. Dodge. Mr. Dodge came in advance of the others. He said he felt obliged to come at their request, because they had just given him a substantial subscription for the Y.M.C.A. fund. He had a feeling that the President knew what he was doing and did not need any more advice than he was getting from the channels he himself selected. I told him I shared this view and that, since all the experts disagreed, it left one in doubt as to what to do.

'Mr. Schiff and Mr. Warburg came in a few minutes. Warburg did most of the talking. He had a new suggestion in regard to grouping the regional reserve banks, so as to get the units welded together and in easier touch with the Federal Reserve Board. Mr. Schiff did not agree as to the advisability of doing this. He thought the regional reserve banks should be cut down to four and let it go at that.

'They wanted me to go to Washington with Mr. Warburg

¹ Republican Senator from Massachusetts.

and Mr. Dodge, Mr. Schiff saying I was the Moses and they would be the Aarons. He asked if I knew my Bible well enough for this to be clear to me. I told him I did. I combated the idea that the President was stubborn in his stand upon the currency measure. I thought he had to be firm and had to make up his mind as to what was good and what was bad in the innumerable suggestions that came to him, and that was all he was doing. I advised against going to the President with new suggestions. I thought they should be taken to Secretary McAdoo, Senator Owen, and Mr. Glass; if they agreed as to the advisability of accepting them, the President would probably also accept them.'

Pressure from both sides and from above, as exercised by the President, finally compelled the acquiescence of the opposing Senators; and on December 20, 'a gala day' House called it, the Federal Reserve Bill passed the Senate. It was hailed generally as a greater triumph for Wilson even than the Tariff Act, and in the Colonel's matured judgment was the most important single legislative act of the entire Wilson Administration. Even the strongly Republican New York *Tribune* could not withhold words of commendation: 'President Wilson has brought his party out of the wilderness of Bryanism. It has been a great exhibition of leadership.'

Few persons suspected the share taken by Colonel House in the formation and passing of the Federal Reserve Act, and he said nothing that might enlighten the public. Towards the end of December, 1913, after the Senate had approved the bill, House was discussing it with two outstanding journalists, Lawrence of the Associated Press and Price of the *Washington Star*. 'I wish you would let me tell about your activities in making the bill,' said the latter. But the Colonel was obdurate in his insistence upon silence. 'Will you stay over to see it signed?' asked Lawrence. But now

that the main job was accomplished, House admitted he lacked sufficient interest in any mere ceremony to keep him in Washington.

III

As events developed, Colonel House's connection with the Federal Reserve Act was by no means ended when it became law, for there remained the problem of the appointment of the five Governors of the Federal Reserve Board who, with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Comptroller of the Currency, act as the coördinating body of the system. The personnel of the Board was obviously a matter of the first importance, not merely for the sake of administrative efficiency, but also because the easiest way to win public confidence in a measure which has been questioned is to appoint men whom the public admires and trusts.

Colonel House acted in much the same capacity when it came to the appointment of the Board as he did in the selection of the Cabinet; that is, he gathered lists of possibilities, interviewed them, culled opinions about them, sifted the names and passed them on to President Wilson and Secretary McAdoo. The following excerpts are typical:

'January 19, 1914: Mr. X came to lunch. I had a very frank talk with him, saying I had thought of him in connection with the Federal Reserve Board and intended to present his name to the President provided I did not find some one else whom I thought better fitted for the place. The more I see of him, the more I like him. He is not the biggest mentality I have met, but he has good sense and has many fine qualities.

'Mr. Y came to be looked over for the Federal Reserve Board. He differs from X inasmuch as he is an applicant, while I sought X out myself without any suggestion from any one. . . . He is older and has had more experience, but he

is not so fine a type. I played the part of schoolmaster, as usual, and questioned him closely about himself and his business career.

'*January 21, 1914:* After dinner we [Wilson and House] went to the President's study as usual, and began work on the Federal Reserve Board appointments. I insisted that it was the most important constructive legislative measure that had been passed since the foundation of the Republic and thought its success or failure would largely depend upon the personnel of the Board. He replied, "My dear friend, do not frighten me any more than I am now." I saw no need for alarm, because for this particular Board there was plenty of good material to choose from. . . .

'In discussing the Federal Reserve Board, there was one man whose name I presented by saying that he had been getting his friends to endorse him and had secured many eminent people to ask for his appointment. The President replied to this, "Let us eliminate him without further discussion."'

Secretary McAdoo to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, *February 15, 1914* [?]

DEAR COLONEL:

. . . I wish some people would quit trying to put over political appointments on the Board! That is the most insidious and difficult thing to deal with. I am firmly opposed to making these banks political instrumentalities, and yet I am going to offend many of my best friends because they can't see the importance of eliminating politics absolutely from the organization of the banks. Of course this doesn't apply to you! I'm speaking of politicians.

With warm regards, always

Cordially yours

W. G. McADOO

*Colonel House to the President*AUSTIN, TEXAS, *February 21, 1914*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I find that Mr. X of Dallas is too old to be considered, so he will have to be eliminated.

Burleson, who is here to-day, tells me that Doctor Y, of whom you speak, is a crank of the first water and would not do.

I do not know Mr. Z, and the objection to him might be that he is not sufficiently prominent for his appointment to carry weight. That is something to be considered in this Board if it is to be thought of in the same sense as the Supreme Court.

I can think of some men that I am sure would be equal to the job, but they would not carry confidence and therefore would be poor appointments.

If the elder Simmons were appointed for the two-year term, you could replace him by Houston afterwards, if you desired. Then, with Miller from the Pacific Coast and Wheeler or some one else from Chicago, you would have the West taken care of. . . .

If Z does not bear inspection, then your suggestion of Gregory ¹ would not be bad. Gregory is something of the same type as Carter Glass, and, while he knows nothing of the matter now, yet within six months he would be as well-informed upon the subject as Glass was after that period of time.

Call me when you need me, for I am always under orders.

Yours with devotion

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. Any recommendation made by members of Congress should be *prima facie* evidence of unfitness, and I would not take any suggestions from that quarter without the most

¹ T. W. Gregory, later Attorney-General.

careful investigation. What I mean is that their recommendations would be political, and therefore largely worthless.

'*March 25, 1914:* Houston, McAdoo, Williams, and I [wrote House] discussed the division of the country into districts and the location of the regional reserve banks.

'In the evening the President and I dined alone and went immediately to his study to have an old-time business session in regard to the Federal Reserve Board. I found he had added no names to those I had given him before I left for Texas. We concluded, however, that I should get up some new material and submit it to him next week, when he hopes to be able to visit me in New York.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 3, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am terribly disappointed that you could not come this week, and more particularly since Mrs. Wilson's condition is the cause.

I have been working assiduously towards getting a list of suggestions to submit to you for the Federal Reserve Board. Since you are not coming, I am enclosing them in this.

If Richard Olney would take the two-year term, it would be fine, for Houston could then be appointed to succeed him. I have asked a number of people whose opinions are worth while, in regard to Olney, and they all approve it. I do not know whether he would accept, but I have been told that he might do so.

There are a number of names on the list that seem to me admirable, but they would need a little more looking into. If you will indicate the ones that appeal to you, I will investigate further. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

During the following weeks, McAdoo and House had many conferences, as a result of which the President was ready by the end of April to make his appointments. House would have been pleased to have Houston appointed Governor of the Federal Reserve Board, but Wilson would not consent to his leaving the Cabinet at this time. 'I wish there were two Houstons instead of one,' he had told House on February 18. 'I really do not see how I can spare him from the Secretaryship of Agriculture, particularly at this juncture when we are considering rural credits and when we are just beginning to be able to guide the farmers in new directions. We have not yet entirely convinced them of our usefulness.'

Instead, the President accepted House's suggestion of offering the post of Governor to Richard Olney of Boston, Secretary of State under President Cleveland and one of the most distinguished figures of the party. Paul Warburg of New York, because of his interest and experience in currency problems under both Republican and Democratic Administrations, and W. P. G. Harding as a leading banker of the South, had always been sponsored by House and were accepted by the President. To represent the Middle West and the Pacific Coast, H. A. Wheeler of Chicago and A. C. Miller of California had finally been selected. Warburg, Harding, and Wheeler were professional bankers, Olney a lawyer, and Miller a college professor whose distinction in the field of economics had brought him into the Department of the Interior. Political affiliations were not a factor in their appointment; but of the five two were Republicans, two Democrats, and the fifth an independent.

Notes made by House of conversations with Wilson in April throw light on the final process of appointment.

'April 15, 1914: We motored for an hour and a half and had a delightful talk. We discussed the Federal Reserve Board at length, and McAdoo's attitude toward the different

names proposed. I had taken the precaution to thresh these matters out with McAdoo and could tell the President his state of mind. I am anxious for this Board to administer the currency law successfully, for I am certain the President's reputation in history will rest largely upon its success or failure.

'April 28, 1914: After dinner we went to the office for the President to sign his mail. We read the Mexican despatches together and afterward got down to the real finish of the Federal Reserve Board. He took his pen and wrote down their names: Richard Olney first, then Paul Warburg, Harding, Wheeler, and Miller. He turned to me and said, "To whom would you give the ten-year term?" I advised giving it to Miller, which he did. He gave Olney the two-year term, Warburg four years, Harding and Wheeler the six and eight-year terms.

'I told him McAdoo preferred Hamlin.¹ He replied, "But I prefer Olney and I happen to be President." He also said, "McAdoo thinks we are forming a social club." This, of course, was because McAdoo had consistently urged a Board that would work in harmony with him.'

Olney, however, found it impossible to accept. He wrote the President that he had undertaken trusts which he could not resign and that the provision requiring each member of the Board to give his entire time to its work would prove an insuperable obstacle to his acceptance. 'You can hardly be sorrier than I am,' he said, 'that I am able to do so little in aid of an Administration whose first year of achievement makes it one of the most notable the country has ever known.' The appointment was therefore given to Mr. Hamlin, according to McAdoo's wishes.²

¹ Mr. Hamlin was an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury whom McAdoo desired to take out of the Department and put upon the Board.

² A further change in the original composition of the Board resulted from Mr. Wheeler's inability to serve. After some delay the place was given to F. C. Delano of Chicago.

IV

The close of the first legislative session of the Wilson Administration was a season of triumph for the Democratic Party. Two of the major problems had been met with vigor and honesty, and settled, in principle at least, to the satisfaction of the nation. The income tax provisions of the Tariff Act and the Federal Reserve System of the Currency Act established a solid basis upon which national finances could rest securely during the days of stress that followed the outbreak of war in Europe. The triumph of the Administration was the greater in view of the failure of the preceding Republican Administrations to settle the currency problem. The main principles of the solution finally carried through by Wilson, the Republicans had advocated, individually or collectively; but they had lacked either the courage or the strength to write them into law.

Wilson's success justified largely the inclusion of Mr. Bryan in the Cabinet. The Commoner's sense of loyalty had kept him from an attack upon the Federal Reserve Act which, it would appear, he never entirely understood; but had he been outside the Cabinet, with his influence in the party, he could have destroyed the measure which failed to accord with his personal doctrines.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, December 20, 1913

MY DEAR HOUSE:

. . . I've just read of the passage by the Senate of the Currency Bill. What a record that is! The Tariff Act and the Currency Act at one sitting. I don't know the final form of the currency measure, but no matter. The getting of it through is an unmatched achievement. . . . It's all wonderful; and I'll be proud to do or to endure anything for the man at

the helm who steers the old ship in this fashion. If I'd lived a hundred years ago I'd have said, 'There's the hand of God in this.'

Yours

W. H. P.

Mr. Jacob W. Schiff to Colonel House

NEW YORK, December 23, 1913

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I want to say a word of appreciation to you for the silent, but no doubt effective work you have done in the interest of currency legislation and to congratulate you, that the measure has finally been enacted into law. We all know that an entirely perfect bill, satisfactory to everybody, would have been an impossibility and I feel quite certain fair men will admit that unless the President had stood as firm as he did, we would likely have had no legislation at all. The bill is a good one in many respects, anyhow good enough to start with and to let experience teach us in what directions it needs perfection, which in due time we shall then get. In any event you have personally good reasons to feel gratified with what has been accomplished, and trusting that this feeling may increase your holiday spirit,

I am with good wishes

Faithfully yours

JACOB W. SCHIFF

Secretary Lane to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 25, 1913

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... This should be a glad time for you. I know of no one who has more fully realized his ambition or who may with more justification take pride in the good he has done.

I was sorry not to see you when the President signed the

Currency Bill. He made a speech in all ways worthy of himself — which is saying much. . . .

Sincerely yours

FRANKLIN K. LANE

The fact that he had had some share in the legislative accomplishment of these months was the reward that House sought for the pains and effort he had given to help in making Wilson's Administration a success. To a friend who wrote complaining that House's aversion for holding office would deprive him of the public credit that belonged to him, the Colonel replied: 'I am satisfied with the consciousness of having taken part in things that are worth while.'

The sentence was not entirely accurate, for, although Colonel House was obviously careless of the fact that the extent of his activities was not widely suspected, he wanted to exercise his energy in a broader field. He was wearied by the details of party politics and appointments; even the share he had taken in constructive domestic legislation did not satisfy him. From the beginning of 1914 he gave more and more of his time to what he regarded as the highest form of politics and that for which he was peculiarly suited — international affairs. They shortly became his main pre-occupation, and it is in this field that he rendered his greatest services.

CHAPTER VII

ASPECTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

If some of the veteran diplomats could have heard us, they would have fallen in a faint.

Sir William Tyrrell to House, November 13, 1913

I

NOTHING is more strange than the chain of circumstances which finally brought President Wilson to play a rôle of supreme importance in the affairs of the world, and to centre his whole being upon a policy of international service. At the beginning of his political career, and even during his first two years as President, diplomatic questions were of far less interest for him than his legislative programme; he was slow to develop what might be called a definite policy, and he left his Ambassadors to work out their problems themselves. Shortly after the appointment of Mr. Page as Ambassador to St. James's, Colonel House reports that he asked Wilson 'if he had given Ambassador Page special instructions. . . . He had not, but took it for granted that he would be diplomatic and conciliatory.'

This seems casual, but we may remind ourselves that neither the traditions of the Democratic Party nor the background of Mr. Wilson could lead to the expectation of keen interest in other than domestic matters. The Democratic platform touched on foreign affairs only in a brief reference to the Philippines, and Wilson himself in his first inaugural address confined himself entirely to questions of social and industrial reform.

For Colonel House, on the other hand, foreign problems were always of the first interest and importance. When he says that he shaped his early career so as to prepare him and

permit him to satisfy his penchant for politics, he interpreted the word 'politics' in its broadest sense, and included international relations. During his career in Texas he had never ceased to study current diplomacy; and running all through his varied activities as the President's adviser in 1913 there is obvious the desire to free himself from details of domestic politics and to find time to help in the formulation of a positive foreign policy. With the passing of the legislative programme of 1913, he felt convinced that the moment had come for Wilson to lay its broad foundations. A year and a half later, on June 24, 1915, he wrote: 'To my mind, the President has never appreciated the importance of our foreign policy and has laid undue emphasis upon domestic affairs. I thoroughly approved this up to the end of the special session of Congress, when the tariff, banking, and such other measures were involved. . . .'

However slow to formulate a positive policy, President Wilson was acutely aware of the danger that always menaces American interests abroad when a change of administration occurs, and to his credit be it said that he fought constantly against the threatened intrusion of the spoils system. His first choices for the more important diplomatic posts were President Eliot, Richard Olney, Professor Fine of Princeton; and before his inauguration he expressed to House his desire to elevate 'the foreign service by appointments as nearly akin to that of Dr. Eliot as he could find favorable material.' The problem was not a simple one, in view of the difficulty of discovering distinguished Americans with the necessary combination of intellectual background and material resources, and also in view of the purely partisan influences which regarded the foreign service as primarily designed to furnish occupation for political supporters. The invincible good-nature of Mr. Bryan made it hard for him to refuse an application for a diplomatic or consular appointment, especially when made by some loyal

adherent of 16-1 in '96. Surely such a one had earned his reward!¹

House was entirely of the President's opinion. He urged that even the highest consular offices should be kept under Civil Service Regulations, and it was at his insistent recommendation that *diplomates de carrière*, such as William Phillips and H. P. Fletcher, who had proved their ability under Republican Administrations, were brought back into the diplomatic service or promoted. And he warned the President against appointments that might seem connected with business interests.

'April 18, 1913: I told Mr. Bryan [recorded House] of my conversation with the President regarding the question of keeping the Consuls under the Civil Service. . . . The President stated that he would hold to Roosevelt's executive order in regard to Consuls. Mr. Bryan is a spoilsman and is in favor of turning the Republicans out and putting in Democrats. He argued strongly and eloquently for his position. I remained quiet, for my sympathy is with the President's policy even though it keeps some of our very good friends from their desires.

'January 16, 1914: We discussed the President's Civil Service views [House wrote of a later conversation with the Secretary of State], which, of course, do not agree with Mr. Bryan's. I can see some feeling developing between them . . . on the question of patronage. Mr. Bryan has no pa-

¹ Thus the Secretary of State wrote to the Receiver of Customs in San Domingo, who had been appointed through the influence of Mr. McCombs: 'Now that you have arrived and are acquainting yourself with the situation, can you let me know what positions you have at your disposal, with which to reward deserving Democrats? . . . You have had enough experience in politics to know how valuable workers are when the campaign is on; and how difficult it is to find rewards for all the deserving. . . . Let me know what is requisite, together with the salary, and when appointments are likely to be made.' (Letter dated August 20, 1913, and published in the *New York Sun*, January 15, 1915.)

tience with the Civil Service. He said the President told him I had recommended —, and the President desired to appoint him. Mr. Bryan said, "Of course he can do as he pleases, but I am certain — is one of those supercilious persons who will be constantly looking down upon me."

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, October 8, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

One or two people have asked me to suggest X for the Mexican Embassy.

I hardly think it is necessary to caution you about this, but I feel that perhaps I had better do so.

X, I have always been told, was a part of the Y, Z Oil Company and a bosom friend of Z. The fact that you offered him Argentina makes them feel that he would have a chance for this place, which I have no doubt he would accept quickly enough.

When this appointment is made, I would be certain that the appointee was chemically clean from oil or ore.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

When it came to the more important diplomatic appointments, Wilson appealed constantly to House for information and advice. At one moment the President commissioned him to discover an applicant's attitude on religion, as he was being considered for China and the President wanted to know whether or not he was an orthodox Christian.¹ House undertook the delicate task, and the following day put the presumptive candidate through an examination on religious principles. 'He did not seem to have any worth while,' re-

¹ This interest upon the part of Mr. Wilson was dictated by Mr. Bryan's insistence that none but an orthodox Christian could be appointed as Minister to China.

corded the Colonel, and the appointment was not made. With House the President discussed at length the choice of men for St. James's, Berlin, Rome, Vienna, and Paris.

For the Court of St. James's, Wilson expressed himself as anxious to find a man who could continue the traditions established by Adams, Bayard, and Hay. But first President Eliot, and then Richard Olney, declined the post. Colonel House, who was himself frequently suggested for this position, urged Walter Hines Page. The latter was personally magnetic, possessed a genial and discriminating wit, and could boast of a distinguished journalistic career. On March 20, House, recording a conversation with the President in which Mr. Wilson expressed his discouragement at the lack of material for the important ambassadorships, wrote: 'I think he will eventually offer the London mission to Walter Page.'

'*March 24, 1913:* We first took up foreign appointments [House noted of a later conversation with Mr. Wilson]. He thought that Walter Page was about the best man left for Ambassador to Great Britain. I was not only the first to suggest Page for this place, but, since Eliot and Olney declined it, I have advocated him earnestly. He asked if I thought Page would take it. I assured him that he would, and promised to find out definitely to-morrow.

'We discussed a great number of other people for foreign appointments. . . . I thought Thomas Nelson Page should have Italy, and he agreed. . . .

'*March 26, 1913:* I called up [Walter] Page and said, "Good morning, Your Excellency." He wanted to know what it meant. I replied it meant a great deal. He seemed quite agitated and asked whether I was not joking. I replied that I was not, for the President had authorized me to ask him if he would accept the Ambassadorship to the Court of St. James's. We arranged for him to call at 4.30.

'Page arrived promptly. He was excited over the news I had conveyed. He asked me to tell him exactly how it happened. I told him I had suggested his name to the President two months ago. . . . I had talked to the President from time to time about the matter, and when I dined with him on Tuesday he had authorized me to find whether he, Page, would accept.

'He was immensely pleased with the compliment, but expressed doubt as to his ability to fill the place. It was so entirely different from anything he had previously done. . . .

'*March 28, 1913:* Walter Page telephoned around nine o'clock: "I have decided to turn my face towards the East," which meant he would accept the post to Great Britain. I felicitated him and expressed my pleasure. He wished to know the next move. I told him I would notify the President and that he would write him a formal note offering him the Ambassadorship.

'I called up the President at Washington a little after nine, to tell of Page's acceptance. He replied, "That is fine; I am very glad." He promised to write him at once.

'I telephoned Page to let him know how pleased the President was. He expressed great appreciation for what I had done. . . .'

Having confided to House the mission of informing Mr. Page of his choice, the President thought little more about it and was apparently in no hurry to communicate himself with the appointee — an attitude which surprised and troubled the new Ambassador and recalls the manner in which Secretary Houston had been appointed to the Cabinet:

'*March 30, 1913:* Walter Page and Secretary Houston came to dinner [wrote House], and we had a delightful time. Houston and I tried to make Page feel happy in his new field of endeavor. He seems fearful lest he might not be able

to maintain himself, and yet he said he had enough sporting blood to undertake it. He was somewhat disturbed because he had not heard from the President, and asked me whether I thought it was actually settled.

'Houston then told of his experience. He said, "I have never to this good day received any notification of my appointment as Secretary of Agriculture, excepting that which I received from Mr. House." And further, "I was uncertain whether I should come to Washington, but I concluded I had better do so. I came, and I had no notification there. Finally some cards were sent to my wife and to me, inviting us to lunch at the White House after the Inauguration. We went, the President shook hands with me and said he was glad to see me, but nothing else. The President's Secretary sent me word that the President expected me at the White House at eleven o'clock the next day for an informal meeting of the Cabinet. I felt that matters were getting warm and I was getting nearer my job. I went to the informal meeting and, since I seemed to be expected, concluded that in due time I would be notified; but I never was. Then I read in the newspapers that my name had gone to the Senate, and finally I received my commission." . . .

'*April 12, 1913*: I lunched at the White House [recorded House]. Louie, Mr. and Mrs. Page, and Mr. and Mrs. Wallace were the other guests. Soon after lunch I rang up Mr. Bryan to tell him that Mr. Page desired to pay his respects. He asked us to come over to the State Department at once. Bryan was very gracious to Page, which pleased him because he has not said many kindly things of Mr. Bryan. Page hoped Mr. Bryan would place him in the kindergarten and teach him as rapidly as possible the essentials of his work. Bryan laughingly replied, "I will have to learn myself first." . . .'

These were busy days for Colonel House. It was the period

when he was trying to concentrate upon the framing of the Federal Reserve Act; but on the one hand the President, and on the other every one who desired a diplomatic post, assailed him for advice and assistance.¹

'*March 10, 1913*: Another stream of callers all day, and long distance telephones from Washington and elsewhere. This job of being "adviser to the President" may have its compensations, but it certainly has its drawbacks. . . .

'*March 11, 1913*: Again another day of office-seekers. Thomas Nelson Page called. He did not mention his own aspirations, but I brought up the subject myself. I told him that it had been the President's intention to appoint him either to France or Italy, but I was afraid now that he [Mr. Wilson] had reached Washington he would be stormed by those desiring the appointments for others.

'Page said he would prefer Italy to France, though France was a greater honor. . . .

'*April 12, 1913*: The dinner to the French Ambassador, Monsieur Jusserand, was interesting. I talked with Senator Lodge. He wants a man from Nahant retained in the Boston Custom House, and I promised to try and arrange it if he was competent.

'Thomas Nelson Page was at the dinner, and I informed him that if no change was made he would go to Italy. I advised him to keep away from the President. . . .

'*April 16, 1913*: A Colonel who would be a Brigadier-General, and a Secretary of Legation who would be transferred from Japan to France, caught me at breakfast. The diplomat is wealthy, so I requisitioned his motor and had him take me from place to place until lunch time. . . .

'*April 20, 1913*: Justice Gerard came to see me about his chances for ambassadorial honors. I thought they were

¹ The character and the amount of the work carried on by Colonel House suggests the advisability of including in the Cabinet a member without portfolio.

slight, but they were better now than they had been. He laughed and said, "I do not believe that until right recently I had any chances at all." That, I replied, was true. I told him, furthermore, if McCombs and Morgenthau were given foreign appointments that five out of the nineteen major places would have gone to New York, which was out of all proportion to her share. He saw the point. He did not believe McCombs would accept. He evidently does not know McCombs; he is as likely to do one thing as another. . . .

'September 29, 1913: X is sitting on the doormat again. Rumors that McCombs is not to take the Ambassadorship to France have started his hopes afresh. . . .'

II

Because of his interest in foreign affairs and diplomatic appointments, House was brought into close touch with the Ambassadors, and the cordial relations that resulted went far to facilitate the special missions which he undertook in Europe during the war. Thomas Nelson Page wrote after his appointment:

'Neither letter nor cable can in the least convey the appreciation I have of your kindness to me since our first acquaintance. I am just going to let the debt stand as it is, and reckon ourselves as old friends whose community of feeling and sentiment does away with any count of mere time.'

Brand Whitlock wrote from Brussels:

'My dear friend, I hope it's only *un petit au revoir*. . . . Your last letter brought me joy. . . . It increased, if that were possible, my desire to see you and to have again one of those long chats. . . . I have need of such sympathetic intercourse.'

Willard at Madrid, Penfield at Vienna, Morris at Stock-

holm wrote frequently to him, and House evidently spared neither time nor effort in keeping them informed of political developments at home.

The Colonel's correspondence with Gerard' at Berlin and Walter Page at London was voluminous.

'I told Gerard [recorded House] that he would get very meagre information from the State Department concerning the happenings in Administration circles, and I promised to keep him measurably well-posted in order that he might confer without embarrassment with the Kaiser or the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In turn, he said he would write me every ten days.'

Colonel House's relations with Mr. Gerard became of great political importance in the stirring days that were to come, for the Ambassador kept his promise. His war letters to House were pungent and prophetic, and through them President Wilson was to be informed accurately of the complicated forces that governed Germany. Nothing is further from fact than the legend that the President lacked available and authentic information of the political underworld on the continent of Europe. Mr. Gerard was excelled by none in the dignity and capacity with which he maintained the interests and furthered the policy of his Government in the most trying diplomatic situation of the war zone. He knew how to establish cordial relations with the Berlin Government, and he gave thought to the details that make for friendliness. But he never forgot Bismarck's aphorism: 'A good Ambassador ought not to be too popular in the country to which he is accredited.'

*Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House*BERLIN, *November 4, 1913*

MY DEAR COLONEL:

Now that I have presented my letters to the Kaiser, I have something to report.

Pursuant to your suggestion I stopped in London to see Page, and had to wait nearly a week for him, as he was in Scotland with Carnegie. I found him a most agreeable and attractive man, and, from all I heard in London, he is a great success.

I spent the remainder of my time in Paris, principally in furniture shops, but arrived here the 6th October. . . . The Kaiser was away and I was not received until last Wednesday.

The Kaiser has permitted me to wear ordinary clothes, which disposes of the infernal uniform question, so there I am now better off than Page who has to wear knickers to Court functions.

Before seeing the Kaiser I called on the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg — a very tall, pleasant, Abraham Lincoln sort of man. He is one of the few officials who does not speak English, but we got on very well in French and some German. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is away, but his substitute, Zimmermann, is a very jolly sort of large German who was once a Judge, which made us friends at once. The rest of my time I put in at Embassy work, of which there is plenty, and in calling on the various Ambassadors and calling on others who call on me. I think I have the house question settled and will take an old quiet-looking house formerly owned by Prince Hatzfeld, then by the von Schwabachs . . . and just now bought by an adjoining bank. It will cost me a good deal to put it in repair, but, as it is large enough for the Embassy offices, if I get the same allowance as heretofore made, I shall pay much less rent than the Paris man or than Page in London, who, by the way, has secured a most suitable and 'fashionable' house in Grosvenor Square.

I have taken up a lot of things which former Ambassadors did not. I am taking an active part in the American Benevolent Society, the American Church (where Lanier and I sit every Sunday in the front pew), the American Institute, and the American Lunch Club, the American Association of Commerce and Traders, etc., and my wife will become President of the American Woman Club, a very worthy charity which takes care of the numerous girl students in Berlin.

We must have made a wonderful sight when we were presented to the Kaiser; they sent the Royal carriages for us with footmen standing behind in powdered wigs, outriders, etc., though we looked rather dismal in our dress suits. In the glass carriages we must have looked like a funeral. The Kaiser is a much more majestic-looking man than I expected. . . . We mostly talked business and sport, and he asked why we didn't have an Embassy building in Berlin and congratulated me on at last housing the Embassy in a decent house. When I presented the staff to him, he asked why we did not all ride in the Thiergarten and I told him we would challenge any Embassy in Berlin to any known form of sport.

Friday I went to Potsdam by train in a Royal military carriage and was driven to the new Palace, where I was presented, alone, to the Empress. She is a tall, fine-looking woman, and we talked of nothing in particular, just 'white conversation.'

I made a speech at a German art banquet and have been doing a good deal of work for the Panama Exposition. There is an agreement between England and Germany that neither shall exhibit unless both do. . . .

Yours ever

JAMES W. GERARD

With Walter Hines Page, as with Gerard, Colonel House maintained constant and intimate relations. The new Am-

bassador to St. James's was pleased to have a correspondent to whom he might write frankly and through whom he might influence the President. When House came to London in June, 1913, Page greeted him warmly and shared with him his hopes and difficulties.

'I dined with Page last night [wrote Colonel House on June 19] and remained with him until half-past twelve. . . . He finally walked home with me to our hotel.

'He had many curious and interesting experiences to relate and he was much disturbed at some of his social blunders. The one which distressed him most was at the Duke of Norfolk's the other evening. He took Princess — in to dinner and afterward, when they were in the drawing-room, he left her without being dismissed. The reason he did this was that he had been reminded that he was the one to leave first, and for the moment he forgot that with a member of the Royal Family the reverse course was proper.

'He considered taking a duchess or royalty out to dinner was hard sledding. They refused to exert themselves in the slightest to keep up the conversation, and he said it was the hardest work he had yet encountered in his Ambassadorial duties. He spoke particularly of the Duchess of ——. She was a woman of good sense, he understood, but she kept it quietly to herself when he was with her. He had gotten quite "chummy" with the Duke of Connaught, and was doing all he could to make himself agreeable to the important people in England.

'He asks me to aid him in formulating some constructive policy that will make the President's Administration and his notable in the annals of this Embassy. He said of all men, I could help him most in this regard. He is always generous in his praise of me. I shall try to outline some plan before I leave, for I have some things in mind which I think may rebound to the advantage of both countries.'

Mr. Page had great success in winning the regard and respect of the British people and the Government to which he was accredited. His *bonhomie*, his transparent honesty of purpose and method, his evident anxiety to discover means of promoting Anglo-American friendship, soon placed relations between the two Governments upon a cordial personal basis, which Page, like House, believed to be the only firm foundation for intercourse between nations. The Ambassador and his wife had won the hearts of the British even before the trying months of the war, in which Page's hatred of German militarism intensified British affection for him. On July 12, 1914, Colonel House noted of a conversation with the English journalist, Sidney Brooks:

'In speaking of the Pages, Brooks said Mrs. Page had made the greatest success of "any Ambassadors within his memory." This is delightful to hear.'

Mr. Page, however, as he himself confessed, was subject to moods, 'I sometimes think,' he wrote to House, 'they are the dominant moods of my life, when I feel that I don't want any official position at all. . . . I have so long been entirely free and so independent that official restraint is yet unnatural.' He found it hard to sink his individual convictions in carrying out instructions from Washington. He enjoyed his work, but the difficulties always attaching to the life of an American Ambassador abroad galled him, and his sensitive nature suffered under vexations which some of the other Ambassadors hardly noticed. To House he poured out his soul. In a letter of December 12, 1914, he concluded: 'I didn't mean to write you all these things. . . . But I must once in a while blow off to somebody. You have the misfortune to be the only man to whom I *can* blow off.' With characteristic frankness, the Ambassador let the Colonel understand with some definiteness that he regarded the conduct of the State

Department under Mr. Bryan as worse than unfortunate. And yet at the conclusion of almost every long letter came the assurance that in the main he was enjoying his task, and the intimation that the vexations were minor by-products. 'As for this Embassy,' he wrote April 27, 1914, 'we're getting on better. We now get answers to questions, and if I had ever been disposed to complain, there's no excuse for complaining now.'

All the difficulties with which the State Department had to contend, House explained: the need of a period of experience, the pressure of political factors, the lack of funds. 'Please bear in mind too,' he wrote to Page, 'that just now the State Department is working day and night and is all too short of help. They expect a bill of relief from Congress shortly, and then you will get more secretaries and they will get more help.' With serpentine wisdom, he replied to Page's criticism of individuals in Washington by repeating complimentary remarks which those very individuals had recently passed regarding the Ambassador. Thus, on October 29, 1914, in a letter to Page: 'Your criticism of X came to me the day that Wallace was telling me of a talk he had with him the day before, in which he, X, said: "Y and Z together have not done as much as Walter Page, and yet they advertise themselves so well that the American people think that comparatively no one else has done anything." This is to be forgotten.'

The relations of House with the American Ambassadors abroad were paralleled closely by those which he maintained with foreign diplomatists in Washington. Before the outbreak of the war he was on intimate, almost confidential, terms with Spring-Rice and Bernstorff, Jusserand and Dumba. He was thus admirably equipped to study plans for developing the positive foreign policy upon which he hoped President Wilson would soon embark.

III

Colonel House's conception of such a policy was far-reaching. He believed that the time had passed when the United States could pose effectively as the protector of all the American states, and he wanted to bring about a definite friendly understanding with the great South American states upon the basis of an equal partnership. He realized acutely the feeling in South America, hostile to the United States and based upon the consciousness that the Monroe Doctrine (as they interpreted it) was thoroughly one-sided and accordingly distasteful to Latin-American sensibilities. If it could be transformed into a common policy and a common responsibility in which all American states participated, it would, House insisted, benefit the United States no less materially than morally. Such a partnership, he believed, might develop into a league for the preservation of peace and tranquillity in the Americas, and would be of the utmost service in handling situations such as had arisen in Mexico.

This ambitious plan, reminiscent of Blaine's Pan-American proposals, carried another, even more ambitious, as its inevitable consequence. A general Pan-American Pact was bound to interest the European Powers, some of which, such as the British Empire, were also American Powers. House was one of the few persons in the United States who realized before the war how thoroughly the previous thirty years had altered our relations with Europe and made of the United States, intellectually and economically, one of the family of World Powers. Political companionship, he was convinced, must follow. Never lacking in boldness, he was willing to accept the consequences; and just as he felt that the mythical protectorate of the Monroe Doctrine should be transformed into an American partnership, so he believed that the legend of political isolation from Europe was the outworn

remnant of an age that was past. What he wanted was some sort of coöperative understanding with the great European Powers that might help to preserve the peace of the world, in which the United States had vital material interest. This conviction was not lessened by his realization that the European situation was critical and might at any moment result in a general European war.

Such a policy implied a frank recognition that the factors upon which American traditions rested had disappeared. If it were to be developed successfully, a working understanding with Great Britain would be necessary, both because the presence of the British in Latin America could not wisely be ignored and also because the imperial power of Great Britain was necessary to any feasible plan of international coöperation.

Anglo-American relations were not unfriendly at the beginning of the Wilson Administration, but a cordial and intimate understanding could not be reached until two clouds were removed, of which the most important, at least in the public mind, concerned the Panama tolls controversy. During the last year of Mr. Taft's Administration, Congress had passed an act exempting vessels engaged in coastwise trade of the United States from Panama Canal tolls, notwithstanding a clause in the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901 which provided that the Canal should be open to ships of all nations on 'terms of entire equality.' Feeling in the United States, especially in Irish districts, favored such exemption warmly, on the ground that it was 'reasonable,' and made an 'open canal.' A plank in the Democratic platform approved it. Feeling in Great Britain supported with equal warmth the contention that, reasonable or not, such exemption directly contravened engagements taken in 1901; the issue was not one of logic, but simply whether the United States would keep its word.

Even before Wilson assumed office, he and House seem to

have agreed that, despite the overwhelming majority in Congress that favored exemption, the American contention ought not to be upheld.¹ It was of supreme importance to emphasize international ethics by an insistence upon the sanctity of treaties. On January 24, 1913, House discussed the matter with Wilson:

'I asked him concerning his views in regard to the Panama Canal tolls controversy with Great Britain. I was glad to find that he took the same view that I have, and that is that the clause should be repealed.'

Action could not be taken by the President during the extra session of Congress. It was first necessary that he establish firmly his leadership, for what he planned was nothing less than a complete conversion of the party upon an issue intensely troubled by the strong anti-British feeling characteristic of many Democratic strongholds. The topic was therefore not raised during the extra session. Ambassador Page did not fail to call constant attention to the importance of the question, indulging in promises of the benefits of repeal that might be regarded as exaggerated.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, August 28, 1913

MY DEAR HOUSE:

... If the United States will . . . repeal the Canal toll discrimination, we can command the British fleet, British manufacturers — anything we please. Till we do these things, they'll regard us as mean and stingy and dishonorable on occasion and, therefore, peculiar and given to queer freaks;

¹ 'The repeal of the tolls exemption was opposed by nearly all of the Democratic leaders in Congress. To drive the repeal through the House and the Senate, Wilson was compelled to have recourse to Cabinet members, especially Burlinson and McAdoo.' (Note by E. M. H.)

they like us, but don't know what to think of our Government. Our Government, they don't trust or admire. . . .

Heartily yours

WALTER H. PAGE

If the British felt they had cause of complaint with the American Government over the matter of the Canal tolls, the American Government, on the other hand, felt that the British were hampering Wilson's policy in Mexico. The British Ambassador in Mexico, Sir Lionel Carden, was known to be an advocate of Huerta and was supposed to represent the British oil interests of Lord Cowdray. Huerta was believed to have made extravagant promises of concessions to those interests in the event that his régime became firmly established. The American Government assumed that the British Foreign Office stood behind the British oil interests and that the British provisional recognition of Huerta meant that they would fight Wilson's policy of non-recognition.

Obviously the difficulties with the British resulted largely from misunderstanding and misinformation on both sides. What was necessary was a frank interchange of views, and House welcomed the opportunity given him in the summer of 1913 to approach the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey.

It was on July 3, 1913, that the two first met, at a small luncheon given by Sir Edward at his house, 33 Eccleston Square. The only others present were Ambassador Page and Lord Crewe, then Secretary for India. Colonel House doubtless looks back upon the luncheon as an event in his career, since he came to have for Grey an affection and a respect unsurpassed in his relations with foreign statesmen. This feeling resulted in large measure from a singular community of personal tastes and ideals, which from the moment they met made a deep impression upon Colonel House. He found in Sir Edward a philosopher, like himself careless of conven-

tional honors, with no apparent sense of his own importance, driven, over-hard perhaps, by what he felt to be his duty and taking no credit therefor. As statesman, moreover, the British Foreign Secretary approached House's ideal, supremely distinguished as he was by sincerity of purpose and honesty of method; above all a diplomat who did not regard diplomacy as a mysterious intrigue, but rather as a means by which the representatives of different states could discuss frankly the coincidence or the clash of national interests and reach a peaceable understanding. House was then and always convinced that foreign policy should be conducted like personal business, from which it differed only in degree of importance; and he wanted to introduce into diplomacy the characteristics of personal intercourse, with its code of individual honesty and friendliness. In Grey he discovered a man with whom he could treat upon this basis. We shall find them discussing the most delicate points of national policy with the frankness that officials of the same department of a government might use.

Their first conversation was of importance, for it led in the autumn to an understanding on the two vexatious questions at issue. House explained Wilson's Mexican policy and attitude on the tolls exemptions; Grey intimated that British support of Huerta was neither definite nor final.

'July 3, 1913: While Lord Crewe and Page were discussing the eradication of the hookworm in India and other countries [recorded House], Sir Edward and I fell to talking of the Mexican situation. I told him the President did not want to intervene and was giving the different factions every possible opportunity to get together. He wished to know whether the President was opposed to any particular faction. I thought it was immaterial, as far as our Government was concerned, which faction was in power, if order was maintained. I thought our Government would have recognized

Huerta's provisional Government if they had carried out their written promise to call an election at an early date and abide by its decisions.

'Sir Edward said his Government had not recognized the Huerta Government excepting as a provisional one, and that if Huerta undertook to run for President in spite of his promise not to do so, their recognition of him would come up again as an entirely new proposition. He intimated that in those circumstances they would not recognize him.

'He wished to know what would happen if we intervened, and suggested that perhaps the same condition would prevail as in Cuba. I replied that this was a question for the future, but personally I did not believe intervention would be as serious as most people thought.

'We then drifted to the Panama Canal tolls question. He said his Government intended to put two propositions squarely up to our Government; i.e., whether we desired to take up the discussion of the treaty as it stood, or whether we would prefer arbitration. His Government have no objection to our Government giving free passage to coastwise vessels, so long as it did not interfere with British shipping or was not unfavorable to it; but just what plan could be devised to bring this about, he did not know. However, he was willing to take up the discussion with our Government in the event the free tolls were not abolished by the bill now before our Senate.

'I suggested that the matter should not be pressed for the moment, but be left open for the long session of Congress beginning in December. I explained that the President was exceedingly anxious to get through his legislative programme at the extra session; that a reduction of the tariff and the reform of our currency system were almost vital to the success of his Administration, and that in the Senate he had only a narrow margin on the tariff and he did not wish to press anything else until these measures were through.

'Sir Edward said he quite understood the President's position and sympathized with it, and his Government were perfectly willing to allow the matter to rest as suggested.'

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, July 8, 1913

DEAR MR. HOUSE:

I had an interview to-day with Sir Edward Grey about a matter of state business; and, when I rose to go, he followed me to the door and stopped me and said that he owed me much for the pleasure I had given him in making him acquainted with you; and he wished me to tell you that he should expect to see you whenever you should come to London: 'I was much interested in what he told me — a man that I'm glad to know,' said he.

I send you this while it is still hot in my mind. . . .

It was a duchess last night — an easy and friendly one; to-night it's a bishop, quality yet unknown; to-morrow night, the Russian Ambassador, a fine old Slav whom I know.

Yours heartily

W. H. P.

Thus, at the moment when Anglo-American relations threatened to become clouded by popular feeling over Panama tolls, the personal intervention of Page and House went far to secure complete official cordiality. Grey was evidently assured of the friendliness of the President, as manifested through his personal adviser. On the other hand, the forbearance of the British in not pressing the tolls question convinced Wilson of what House and Page insisted upon; namely, that Grey was anxious to work with the United States and that a cordial understanding was possible if only outstanding issues could be frankly discussed.

That Sir Edward was impressed by the value of his talk with House is indicated by his decision to send his secretary,

Sir William Tyrrell, to the United States to canvass the whole matter of Anglo-American relations with the President and his adviser. This was the more important in that the new British Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, was ill and unable to take up his duties actively. Tyrrell proved to be an ideal selection. He shared the complete confidence of Grey and his views on international relations, so that not merely could he give to Wilson Grey's exact ideas, but he might claim from the President an equal frankness. No one understood better the ins and outs of Continental politics, or realized more acutely how great an asset to the British American sympathy might become in case of trouble in Europe. He possessed, moreover, an almost boyish enthusiasm for the task in hand, which completely won the affection of the Colonel and the confidence of the President. He came in doubt as to the willingness of the Americans to cooperate with Grey. He returned convinced that they would play the game. 'Tyrrell's back,' wrote Ambassador Page to House, in December, 'a changed man. He says that you and the President and Houston did it. That's all to the good.'

House took pains to come into touch with Sir William immediately after his arrival, and explained to Wilson the importance of his mission.

'November 11, 1913: The President saw me at once, although I had no appointment. I expressed concern in regard to Mexico and explained more in detail about Sir William Tyrrell. In talking to Sir William we were practically talking to Sir Edward Grey, and I thought it would be foolish not to utilize the opportunity in order to bring about a better understanding with England regarding Mexico. I told him of my luncheon engagement at the British Embassy on Wednesday, and thought if he would give me a free hand I might do something worth while. He authorized me to talk to Sir William as freely as I considered advisable. . . .

'November 12, 1913: I suggested again that in my talk with Sir William Tyrrell it would be well to urge him to get England to bring the other Powers to exert pressure upon Huerta in order that he might eliminate himself.

'The President asked me to come to the White House and remain with him overnight. I told him I had counted upon returning home, but my going depended upon the success of my interview with Sir William. I promised to get in touch with him, the President, as soon afterward as it was convenient to him, provided anything worth while developed. He said he had wished to get with me yesterday. He also told of how very tired he was. . . .'

Colonel House had met Sir William in New York, but the decisive interviews took place in Washington, at the British Embassy and the White House.

'November 12, 1913: At one o'clock [recorded House], I lunched with Lady Spring-Rice at the British Embassy. . . .

'Sir Cecil Spring-Rice was not well enough to appear, and sent me words of regret. After lunch, Sir William Tyrrell and I went into another room and discussed the questions uppermost in the minds of both. He began by showing me despatches from his Government and his own replies. He declared Lord Cowdray had no concessions from Huerta, and if he could get them in the future, his Government would not recognize their validity. He thought a deliberate attempt was being made to connect Cowdray with these matters in order to create a sentiment for intervention. He said Sir Lionel Carden was not antagonistic to America; he was fair and would do in spirit, as well as in act, just what he was told to do by his Government. He admitted he was very pro-British, but, other than that, no criticism could be made of him.

'I replied that both the President and Mr. Bryan held very

different views of Lord Cowdray and Sir Lionel Carden, and I was glad to hear the other side. He spoke of Sir Edward Grey's desire to bring about a cessation of armaments, for he thought our present civilization would eventually be destroyed upon that rock. He thought, too, that an armament trust was forcing all Governments not only to pay excessive prices, but was creating war scares — they being the only people having any interest in having the different Governments keep up large expenditures for war purposes.

'We talked of the Panama tolls question. Sir William said Sir Edward Grey's idea was that no possible good came to nations if either the letter or the spirit of a treaty were broken. He said the English people felt keenly upon this subject, and no one more so than Sir Edward himself; and the only reason he held office was his desire to promote the peace of nations.

'I replied that the President felt as keenly as Sir Edward did about the inviolability of treaties, and I thought when he talked with him, the President would make his position clear. I expressed the desire immediately to bring the President and Sir William together, and he was delighted to have the opportunity. . . .'

President Wilson was not generally expansive in conferences with persons whom he met for the first time, and House was somewhat surprised and even more pleased that the interview developed the degree of frankness that characterized it.

'*November 13, 1913:* The President received Tyrrell in the Blue Room. He had on a grey sack suit, while Sir William wore a cutaway. They both appeared a little embarrassed. The President opened the conversation by saying I had told him of my conversation with him yesterday; and then outlined the purpose of our Government regarding Mexico, very

much as I had done the day before. Sir William replied much as he had to me. The President spoke frankly and well; so did Sir William. It was an extremely interesting discussion.

‘The President, of his own volition, brought up the arbitration treaty and the Panama tolls question and, much to my surprise, told Sir William what he had in mind, not only as to his views, but also how he expected to put them into force. He asked him to convey to Sir Edward Grey his sympathy with the view that our treaty with England should remain inviolable, but to ask him to have patience until he had time to develop the matter properly. He thought an overwhelming majority of our people held his views, but there was an opposition composed largely of Hibernian patriots, both in the Senate and out, that always desired a fling at England.

‘We talked of the necessity of curbing armaments and of the power of the financial world in our politics to-day. Sir William was just as earnest in his opinion regarding this as either the President or I. . . . The President said, “It is the greatest fight we all have on to-day, and every good citizen should enlist.”

‘The hour was up, and the President had to leave for other engagements. . . . I talked with Sir William for a moment after the President left. He was pleased with the interview and thanked me cordially. He said he had never before had such a frank talk about matters of so much importance. We all spoke with the utmost candor and without diplomatic gloss. He said, “If some of the veteran diplomats could have heard us, they would have fallen in a faint.” Before leaving, we agreed to keep in touch with one another. He is to telephone me whenever he receives despatches which he thinks I should see, and I am to go to Washington when necessary.’

IV

The basis of House’s diplomacy was always complete frankness whenever he negotiated with men who were will-

ing to place their cards on the table; and the relations he developed with the British through Sir William Tyrrell were intimate. Tyrrell responded readily. 'You will forgive, I know,' he wrote to House on January 20, 1914, 'the frankness of my utterance, but that is the basis of our relationship, isn't it?' As a result of this intimacy, a quite informal, but none the less significant, understanding was reached.

The British Foreign Office made plain to Sir Lionel Carden that he must not take steps to interfere in any way with Wilson's anti-Huerta policy in Mexico. Tyrrell on November 26 showed to House despatches from Grey, plainly indicating this; and henceforth the Administration profited by the British influence. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the abdication and flight of Huerta, in July, 1914, was directly related to the withdrawal of British support. Huerta's elimination was the first and perhaps the only diplomatic triumph won by Wilson in his Mexican policy, and it is right that future historians should understand that something of it was due to British coöperation.

On the other hand, President Wilson promised to push the repeal of the clause exempting American coastwise shipping from the Canal tolls, provided the British would not hurry him. To this they gladly agreed, and on December 13, House wrote to Page: 'Sir Cecil Spring-Rice will leave the Panama tolls question entirely in our hands.' The conversation with the British Ambassador to which House refers is interesting in view of the events of 1914, for it indicated how thoroughly Sir Edward Grey was determined to base his foreign policy upon the principle of the sanctity of treaties.

'December 11, 1913: I lunched at the British Embassy. I was the only guest. Sir Cecil Spring-Rice and I talked of the Panama tolls question, and he agreed to leave the matter alone and let us take it up at our leisure and handle it in the way we thought best. He said that as far as the monetary

end of it was concerned, the British Government would perhaps lose something more by their interpretation of the treaty than by ours; but the thing they had most in mind was maintaining inviolable treaty obligations. He said in southern Europe that question was constantly to the fore; and the next time it arose after the United States had violated the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, the fact would be thoroughly threshed out, and it would be said that Britain made no objection to the violation of a treaty where the United States was concerned, but when one of the smaller nations of eastern Europe did so a great hue and cry was raised.'

House had taken up the tolls problem with Wilson in October, at a time when the President's legislative programme seemed to be nearing completion, and he found Wilson determined to force repeal of the exemption upon Congress, although he recognized that it would test his party leadership more than any question that had thus far arisen. The President thought 'that trouble would be encountered in the Senate, particularly in the opposition of Senator O'Gorman, who constantly regards himself as an Irishman contending against England rather than as a United States Senator upholding the dignity and welfare of this country.'

The Colonel, according to his habit, preferred to persuade the opposition before open debate began, rather than fighting out the issue in Congress. He brought the situation to the attention of Senator O'Gorman's son-in-law, Dudley Malone, a warm supporter of the Administration, who had just resigned from the State Department to become Collector of the Port of New York.

'November 26, 1913: Malone and I discussed the Panama tolls question. He indicated that Senator O'Gorman would make a strenuous fight to uphold his position on this subject. I diplomatically showed him reasons for this country

to keep on good terms with Great Britain. I explained how the President's hands would be tied in Mexico if he did not have the sympathy of Great Britain in his plans. Malone saw the point and agreed to help in bringing Senator O'Gorman around to a more reasonable view. He promised to start upon this at once, and I agreed to confer with O'Gorman later and try to persuade him to accept the President's policy. . . .

'January 21, 1914: We [Wilson and House] . . . decided it was best to bring the matter to the attention of Congress immediately, so that the British Government would have something to go on when Parliament convened February 10. We decided it was best not to see Senator O'Gorman alone, but to call the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in as a whole, Republicans and Democrats alike, and explain the situation to them; that it would be well to tell them how important it was at this particular time that our relations with Great Britain should be undisturbed; that it was better to make concessions in regard to Panama rather than lose the support of England in our Mexican, Central and South American policy.

'The President has called the Committee for Monday. I shall look forward with some anxiety to the outcome. I suggested that a poll be taken of the Senate in advance, in order to find what support he would have. Senator James was decided upon for this work. Senator Stone would have been selected, but he has not been well and is in the South for the moment.

'The President said one of the strangest things that had come about was that he and Stone had become good friends and that the Senator seemed to have a positive affection for him. . . .'

It proved impossible to push the matter forward as rapidly as House had hoped, for the opposition was still strong in

both Committee and Senate. It yielded, however, before Wilson's insistence. On March 5, the support of the Senate Committee apparently assured to him, the President in a message to Congress formally asked the repeal of the clause exempting from tolls vessels engaged in coastwise trade. He based his demand chiefly upon the fact that everywhere, except in certain quarters of the United States, opinion held that the clause violated the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty.

'Whatever may be our own differences of opinion [said Wilson to Congress] concerning this much-debated measure, its meaning is not debated outside the United States. Everywhere else the language of the treaty is given but one interpretation, and that interpretation precludes the exemption I am asking you to repeal. We consented to the treaty; its language we accepted, if we did not originate; and we are too big, too powerful, too self-respecting a nation to interpret with too strained or refined a reading the words of our own promises just because we have power enough to give us leave to read them as we please. The large thing to do is the only thing that we can afford to do. . . .'

The President also had in mind, of course, the value of British influence in meeting the Mexican problem, and to this he made veiled reference which excited endless speculation and of which he himself never gave public explanation. 'I ask this of you,' he said, 'in support of the foreign policy of the Administration. I shall not know how to deal with other matters of even greater delicacy and nearer consequence if you do not grant it to me in ungrudging measure.' The other matter of great delicacy was the elimination of Huerta and the understanding with Great Britain.

The obvious determination of the President, the sense of loyalty to his leadership in the Democratic Party, and the active labors of Burleson and McAdoo, who had charge of

getting the measure through House and Senate respectively, finally bore fruit. In June the repeal of the special exemption became law. From this time forward, the United States Government could count upon the sympathy of Sir Edward Grey.

'June 27, 1914 [London]: I lunched with Sir Edward Grey, Sir William Tyrrell, and Walter Page [wrote Colonel House]. We talked from 1.30 until 3.30. . . . Sir Edward and I did practically all the talking, Page and Sir William only occasionally joining in.

'We spoke first of the Panama tolls repeal bill. Sir Edward expressed pleasure at the fine way in which the President did it and without any negotiations between the two Governments in regard to it. He spoke of his having done it of his own volition because of his high sense of justice. He purposes paying this tribute to the President in Parliament when a fit opportunity occurs.'

The fit opportunity did not occur, for only a month later the European war broke out and the mind of Sir Edward was caught by problems that were nearer home. But the sentiment of American friendliness lingered in the Foreign Office even during the vexatious discussions regarding blockade and neutral rights. Through his insistence upon the sanctity of international engagements, furthermore, Wilson was able to assume a tone in his controversy with Germany which would have been impossible if he had yielded to the dictates of expediency in the question of Panama tolls.

CHAPTER VIII

A PAN-AMERICAN PACT

It will be such a great accomplishment that there will be nothing he [Wilson] can ever do afterward that can approach it in importance.

Ambassador Naon to Colonel House, December 29, 1914

I

THE success with which President Wilson forced the repeal of the Panama tolls exemption upon an unwilling Congress, thus securing the good will of the British as well as vindicating the good faith of the United States, was followed almost immediately by the flight of Huerta from Mexico. This diplomatic victory was of even less significance than the fact that, by refusing to intervene actively in Mexico and by calling for the mediation of the A.B.C. Powers, he had given a powerful stimulus to the cordiality of South American feeling. Mr. Fletcher, Minister to Chile, wrote enthusiastically to House of 'the President's success in the Mexican difficulties — turning, as he did, a situation fraught with difficulties and danger to our American relations into a triumph of Pan-Americanism.'

Colonel House was anxious to capitalize the advantage of the moment, in order to develop a positive and permanent Pan-American policy, based upon the principle of conference and coöperation. The world had witnessed the bankruptcy of European diplomacy, which the outbreak of the Great War made manifest in August, 1914, and which, in House's opinion, resulted primarily from the lack of an organized system of international coöperation. Such a system he was anxious that Wilson should develop for the Americas; and when the President visited him in November he laid his plans before him.

'November 25, 1914: I advised him [recorded the Colonel] to pay less attention to his domestic policy and greater attention to the welding together of the two western continents. I thought the Federal Reserve Act was his greatest constructive work and was the thing that would stand out and make his Administration notable. Now I would like him to place beside that great measure a constructive international policy, which he had already started by getting the A.B.C. nations to act as arbitrators at Niagara. I thought the time had arrived to show the world that friendship, justice, and kindness were more potent than the mailed fist.

'He listened attentively to what I had to say, and asserted that he would do it and would use his speech at San Francisco, when he opened the Exposition, to outline this policy.'

A few days later, so eager was he to see such a policy developed while circumstances were propitious, Colonel House permitted himself a rare luxury — that of enforcing his verbal advice by a letter.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, November 30, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . As I said to you when you were here, I feel that the wise thing for you to do is to make your foreign policy the feature of your Administration during the next two years.

The opportunity to weld North and South America together in closer union is at your hand; do you not think you should take some initiative in this direction before your speech at the Panama Exposition? You might take that occasion to amplify it, but in the meantime there are many things that might be done to give it further acceleration. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Some weeks later, the plan had taken more definite form in the Colonel's thoughts and he decided that he would go to Washington to impress it upon the President — a still more unusual step on his part and one that indicated how much importance he attached to the scheme. What Colonel House had in mind was nothing less than a rather loose league of American states which should guarantee security from aggression and furnish a mechanism for the pacific settlement of disputes.

The reader will doubtless observe that what House planned bears a close relationship to the League of Nations which Wilson ultimately advocated for the world at large. Especially significant is the account which the Colonel gives of the following conversation with the President, for it indicates that at this moment was born almost the exact wording of Article X of the League of Nations Covenant.

'December 16, 1914: I then explained the purpose of my visit to Washington. I thought he [Wilson] might or might not have an opportunity to play a great and beneficent part in the European tragedy; but there was one thing he could do at once, and that was to inaugurate a policy that would weld the Western Hemisphere together. It was my idea to formulate a plan, to be agreed upon by the republics of the two continents, which in itself would serve as a model for the European nations when peace is at last brought about.

'I could see that this excited his enthusiasm. My idea was that the republics of the two continents should agree to guarantee each other's territorial integrity and that they should also agree to government ownership of munitions of war. I suggested that he take a pencil and write the points to be covered.

'He took a pencil, and this is what he wrote:

“1st. Mutual guaranties of political independence under

republican form of government and mutual guaranties of territorial integrity.¹

“2nd. Mutual agreement that the Government of each of the contracting parties acquire complete control within its jurisdiction of the manufacture and sale of munitions of war.”

‘He wished to know if there was anything else. I thought this was sufficient, taken in conjunction with the Bryan Peace Treaties which had already been concluded between the republics of the two continents.

‘He then went to his little typewriter and made a copy of what he had written, and handed it to me to use with the three South American Ambassadors with whom it was thought best to initiate negotiations. We discussed the method of procedure, and it was agreed that it should be done quite informally and without either himself or the Secretary of State appearing in it until after I had sounded the different Governments at interest. We did this for another reason, and that was not to hurt Mr. Bryan’s sensibilities. It was agreed that I should explain the matter to Mr. Bryan and should tell him why it was thought best for me to do it rather than the President or himself.

‘The President was evidently somewhat nervous about Mr. Bryan’s attitude. It was easy to see that he did not want him to interfere in any way with my procedure, and yet he was afraid he might be sensitive regarding it. I thought I could work it out satisfactorily, for Mr. Bryan is generous and big-minded in matters of this sort. . . .

‘*December 17, 1914:* I arranged for an interview with Mr. Bryan at 9.30 this morning. I outlined the plan the Presi-

¹ Cf. Article X of the League of Nations Covenant: ‘The members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.’

dent and I were preparing for the linking of the Western Hemisphere and showed him what the President had written, explaining why it was thought best that I should do it. He acquiesced in a most generous way, which proved my forecast to the President was correct. . . . After but a few minutes' conversation upon the subject of this proposed league, he began to discuss the Venezuela Minister's proposal concerning the calling of a convention of belligerent and neutral nations, for the purpose of securing the rights of neutrals. He also discussed the Russian treaty, which had been tentatively suggested as being possible at this time. After that he got off on prohibition, and I was glad to take him to his office and proceed to other business. . . .'

Mr. Bryan, in truth, appeared to take but little interest in this Pan-American policy, for he had complete confidence in the 'cooling-off' treaties he had arranged, which provided for a period of investigation, in case of dispute, before hostilities could be started. Some days later, after House had reported progress to the Secretary of State, the Colonel recorded:

'December 20, 1914: Mr. Bryan seemed pleased with what had been done, but drifted off into the question of patronage and the best way to "do up Senator X." . . . He followed me all the way to the automobile, bareheaded in the cold bleak wind, to get in as much as he could upon that subject.'

II

Given a free hand, Colonel House proceeded with surprising rapidity. On December 19, he saw the three Ambassadors of the A.B.C. Powers and was much encouraged by their attitude. What he planned was obviously to the advantage of the South American States, in that it would bring them into equal partnership with the United

States and would transform the Monroe Doctrine from a protective assurance on the part of one state into a mutual covenant. Whether or not a Pan-American Pact of the kind he suggested would prove an effective guaranty of peace might be doubtful; but it would certainly eliminate the implication of inferiority which South America deduced from the traditional form of the Monroe Doctrine. To secure such moral advantages, however, the South American States must renounce all aggressive designs. Would they prove equal to the opportunity offered them? The plan assumed also that the smaller Latin-American States had attained a degree of political stability which would permit them to maintain the promises which they made. The assumption was at least questionable.

'December 19, 1914: Justice Lamar telephoned that the Argentine Ambassador was back. I made an engagement with him at half-past eleven. I hurriedly gathered together what data I could get concerning Argentina and upon Naon himself. When the Justice introduced me, he excused himself for a moment and took Naon aside to inform him how thoroughly I represented the President. He then took his leave.

'I began the conversation by complimenting Naon upon the advanced thought in his country, particularly in regard to penal reform. I considered the Argentine fifty or one hundred years ahead of Europe and the United States in that direction. I marvelled at the statesmanship that saw as long ago as 1864, when they had their war with Uruguay, that a victorious nation had no moral right to despoil the territory of the vanquished. After I had made these few remarks, I had fertile soil upon which to sow the seeds of my argument.

'Naon took the typewritten memorandum which the President had given me and warmly approved both sen-

tences one and two. He was tremendously impressed with the significance of the first article, and said it struck a new note and would create an epoch in governmental affairs. When I told him the President had written the memorandum on the typewriter himself, he asked permission to keep it, saying it would become an historical document of much value.

'I urged him to communicate with his Government by cable and to give me an answer by Monday or Tuesday. He felt confident the reply would be favorable. He took my address in New York and said he would communicate with me without delay. I let him understand that when the South American Governments had acted upon the matter and it had been pretty well buttoned-up, I would step aside and have the President and Mr. Bryan act officially. When I left, he followed me to the door and said he considered it a joy to work toward the consummation of such a policy as "your great and good President has promoted." . . .

'At lunch I reported to the President the substance of my conversation with the Ambassador from the Argentine, and he was delighted. Naon thought I would have more difficulty with the Brazilian and Chilean Ambassadors.

'The President said in talking with them I could go very far, and he was emphatic in the statement that the United States would not tolerate . . . aggression upon other republics.

'In the afternoon I saw them both. Da Gama ¹ was easy of conquest and with practically the same argument I used with Naon. Suarez ² was more difficult because he is not so clever, in the first instance, and, in the second, Chile has a boundary dispute with Peru. He asked if I knew of this, and I told him I did, but we would arrange in the final drawing of the agreement to cover such cases, since there were other boundary disputes which would have to be adjusted, like

¹ The Brazilian Ambassador.

² The Chilean Ambassador.

that between Costa Rica and Panama. They both agreed to cable their Governments and strongly recommend the ratification of the proposal.'

This was rapid work for the first day of negotiations and Colonel House, who knew something of diplomatic delays, did not conceal his satisfaction. He was pleased still more by the speed with which the Ambassadors of Brazil and Argentina extracted replies to his suggestion from their Governments. Brazil was the first to respond, less than a week after the original suggestion of the Colonel had been offered.

Ambassador da Gama to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, December 24, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have just received the answer from my Minister of Foreign Affairs to the telegram I sent him on Saturday, 19th, transmitting the two propositions of the President's project of convention.

The answer was delayed pending further information that I sent on Monday and then consultation with our President, who gladly authorizes me to declare that both points of the President's proposal are agreeable, it being understood that only American territories are contemplated in the first of those paragraphs.

I suppose that the sounding having proved favorable, the formal overture of the negotiations will soon follow. This will be an epoch-making negotiation.

Yours sincerely

DA GAMA

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, December 26, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a copy of a letter from da Gama which I have just received and which I know will please you as much as it has me.

As you know, I had a telephone talk with Naon; but he spoke such broken English and the connection was so bad, that I could not gather the sense of his message. He promised to write, but I have nothing from him yet. I gleaned enough to know that he wanted to have another conference; therefore I told him I would be in Washington early next week.

This is a matter of such far-reaching consequence that I feel we should pay more attention to it just now than even the European affair, for the reason that, if brought to a successful conclusion, the one must have a decided influence upon the other. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Three days later House went again to Washington, where he had a gratifying conference with the Argentine Ambassador. Naon handed to him the following despatch, which had just come in from Buenos Ayres: "The Government receives with sympathy the proposition with the understanding that such a proposition tends to transform the one-sided character of the Monroe Doctrine into a common policy of all the American countries."

'December 29, 1914: Naon was very enthusiastic [House recorded] over the entire proposal and said, ". . . It will be such a great accomplishment that there will be nothing he [Wilson] can ever do afterward that can approach it in importance."

'He thought Chile would hesitate to come in. . . . He had talked with the Chilean Ambassador since I was in Washington and had not received much encouragement. I told him that the United States would not favor the acquisition of territory by the other republics, either by war or otherwise, and that Chile might as well accept that condition in a formal convention. He replied that Argentina held the same view, and would not willingly permit territorial aggrandizement in South America.'

The Colonel returned to the White House to report to Wilson.

'We discussed the best means of buttoning-up the South American proposition, and it was agreed that he should see Senator Stone immediately upon his return; and we again discussed whether it would be advisable to bring the matter before the entire Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, or before the Democratic members of it. He would not discuss anything of importance with Senator —— for the reason that he immediately gave it to the press; in this instance it was necessary to have the matter presented to the country properly when they first heard it, and not get a garbled or distorted account from a political opponent.

'I told him Naon desired to know whether it was our purpose to make twenty-one different treaties or a single convention. I had replied that it was the intention to make a single convention, which the President thought was right. Naon suggested, I told him, that the A.B.C. Powers and ourselves should first thresh out the terms to a satisfactory conclusion before bringing in the smaller republics. This, too, the President agreed to.

'*December 30, 1914:* We had breakfast, as usual, at eight. The President and I talked a few minutes afterward and laid out the business that I should attend to. I made

an engagement with the Chilean Ambassador for eleven o'clock.

'I found he had not heard from his Government. He gave a change of ministry as the reason, and was sure he would receive a favorable reply. I could not see how he could fail to do so. This was not really in accordance with Naon's statement to me, but I found Naon wrong in the first estimate of the manner in which Brazil and Chile would receive the proposals.

'*January 13, 1915:* I found the Chilean Ambassador very cordial, but he had not heard from his Government regarding the President's proposal. I told him the Senate would adjourn in about sixty days and would not meet again for nearly a year, and that it was important for him to get into communication with his Government again and ask them to send a response. I informed him of the favorable responses from both Brazil and Argentina; but before proceeding to a further discussion of the convention we wished to hear from Chile. The President requested me to say to him that he had approached Senator Stone of the Foreign Relations Committee and had found him sympathetic, and he felt sure there would be no difficulty from that source. . . .

'I went . . . to see the Brazilian Ambassador to inform him also that the President had taken the matter up with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and he would soon call them together for a more intimate discussion of the details of the convention. Da Gama was pleased with this procedure and thought it was wise for the President to get the Senate in line before any public announcement was made.

'I returned to the White House for lunch, and while the President was dressing for his golf I told of my morning's work.'

Chile was slow in responding, but on January 21, 1915,

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Colonel House received the following letter from Ambassador Suarez:

Ambassador Suarez to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, *January 19, 1915*

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . I wished to inform you that I have since two days the expected reply from Chile. It is favorable in principle and praises the idea as a generous and pan-american one.

Although it is sometimes not a little difficult to find the proper expressions to render an idea agreeable to several parties, I hope we shall succeed when the moment of discussing the development of our first accord comes.

Mr. Bryan has told me lately to be in full acquaintance with the matter; and under this understanding I assume I can communicate with him in your absence.

I am, my dear Mr. House,

Very sincerely yours

EDO. SUAREZ

This was ambiguous, but House, who was on the point of leaving for Europe, to be engaged upon quite different but equally important affairs, urged the President to accept the letter at its face value and push the agreement through.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *January 21, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a copy of a letter which has come from the Chilean Ambassador this morning.

Everything now seems to be in shape for you to go ahead. I believe the country will receive this policy with enthusiasm and it will make your Administration notable, even had you done but little else. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

III

Colonel House left for Europe on January 31, 1915. Henceforth his time and his energies were chiefly occupied with the problems that arose from the European war, but his interest never flagged in the Pan-American policy which he had done so much to inaugurate. He insisted upon its general value as an example, which might later be followed in Europe, of international organization in place of international anarchy; he emphasized its special value in view of the persistent uneasiness resulting from the always unsettled Mexican problem. For the elimination of Huerta had not led to any diminution of disorder; attacks upon American lives and property continued, and American public opinion, at least in certain circles, called for a positive policy that might end the crisis.

House himself was constitutionally unable to approve a purely negative line of action, and, while he realized the dangers of forcible intervention in Mexico by the United States alone, he believed that with the coöperation of the South American Powers, the mediation of which had already been utilized in 1914, the Mexican problem could be settled. Such a step would fit in perfectly with the plan for a Pan-American Pact. Just before leaving for Europe he urged it upon the President and the Secretary of State.

'January 24, 1915: I suggested [to Wilson] that the Mexican problem could best be solved now by calling in the A.B.C. Powers and ourselves. The President thought this an excellent idea and that it was merely a question of when to put it in operation. I offered to see the Ambassadors to-morrow if he thought well of it. He believed this would be too soon, for conditions were not quite ready in Mexico for such a move, and he was afraid the A.B.C. Ambassadors would not want to move so quickly. . . .

'January 25, 1915: I talked to Mr. Bryan of my suggesting a commission form of government for Mexico, with the A.B.C. Powers and ourselves acting jointly. He thought fairly well of it, but was not as enthusiastic as the President. I talked of the South American concord and many other matters.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, FRANCE, March 15, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Since I have been over here, every now and then Mexico raises its head.

It would be of enormous advantage to your prestige if you could place that problem well on the road to settlement before this war ends. I have heard it time and again — not directly, but through others — that the belligerent Governments will become insistent that order be restored there.

Winslow¹ tells me that he hears it constantly in Berlin. I have wondered whether you have taken the matter up with the A.B.C. Powers, as you contemplated when I left. This seems to me to be the wisest solution. I think you have now given them [the Mexicans] every chance to work it out themselves, and help should be offered them and insisted upon. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

President Wilson, however, was unwilling to take so decided a step at this time. Three months later he himself drew a graphic picture of conditions in Mexico: 'Her crops are destroyed, her fields lie unseeded, her work cattle are confiscated for the use of the armed factions, her people flee to the mountains to escape being drawn into unending bloodshed, and no man seems to see or lead the way to peace

¹ Lanier Winslow, attaché in Berlin.

and settled order. . . . Mexico is starving and without a Government.' Even so, he hesitated to take any positive action.

Colonel House was in Europe from January to June. On his return he found that, despite the cordial approval given by Argentina and Brazil, no progress had been made by Wilson or Bryan in pushing the Pan-American Pact to a definite conclusion. Clearly, much of the delay might be attributed to the hesitations of the Chilean Ambassador, but it seemed plain also that the Secretary of State had not taken up the matter with energy. He lacked the sort of ability necessary to translate ideas into facts. Mr. Bryan had imagination and foresight; many of his ideas which began as subjects of ridicule ended by becoming laws, but, except in rare instances, not through his own efforts.

'The most important event of the day [recorded House on June 18, 1915] was a visit from Henry P. Fletcher, our Ambassador to Chile. We discussed the South American situation as it related to the proposal I made the President before I left, concerning the welding of the two continents. I find nothing has been done in this matter during my absence. The Chilean Ambassador and Government have been the cause of the delay. They evidently do not want to tie themselves to a non-aggressive policy. . . . I do not feel, however, that the situation has been handled to the best advantage; and I shall take it up with the President again and suggest some means by which it may be expedited.

'Fletcher thought if we got the A.B.C. Powers to declare for the Monroe Doctrine it would be sufficient. I told him that this would in no way be sufficient and that he did not grasp the idea or scope of it. We desired to see the Americas knitted together so as to give the world a policy to be followed in the future. Haste was necessary for the reason that the European war made the time opportune, and, if it

did not go through before the end of the war, it might never do so.

'I suggested to Fletcher the advisability of his visiting the different South American countries to further the proposal. I thought if Chile continued to obstruct, we should go ahead without her. The smaller republics would agree and, with Argentina and Brazil, it made but little difference whether Chile came in or remained out.'

With the appointment of Mr. Lansing as Secretary of State, in July, 1915, following Bryan's resignation, new impetus was given to the proposals which House had initiated. 'I am again urging action in that direction,' the Colonel wrote on July 18 to Thomas Nelson Page. A week later, Mr. Lansing came up to the North Shore to spend the day with him.

'*July 24, 1915:* Secretary and Mrs. Lansing arrived on the 10.30 train. Lansing and I at once went into executive session and talked continuously until lunch. There was much to go over. I wished to tell him of European conditions, as I found them, and to give him an insight into what had been done in the Department concerning some important matters. . . . The South American proposal was one. I was surprised to find that Lansing was ignorant of what had been done. He said, as far as he knew there was nothing on file in the Department. I was surprised, too, that the President had not talked with him more freely and given him fuller information concerning pending matters. . . .

'We took up the Mexican situation and he is getting under way the arrangement to have the A.B.C. Powers join us in composing the difficulties there. He did not know the suggestion was mine and was made as far back as January and lying dormant until now. I do not think the President can altogether relieve himself of blame in this delay, for, while

he would probably have gone ahead with it if . . . he had had as Secretary of State a better executive, yet it might have been done even under the unfavorable circumstances with which he had to contend. . . .

'I find him [Lansing] thoroughly familiar with the machinery for such designs, and he seems to be energetic and ambitious to make a record.'

Practical effects of this conference were not slow to appear. In the first place, Mr. Lansing took up at least part of the suggestion that Colonel House had made the preceding January and which the President and Secretary Bryan had not pushed forward; namely, that the South American Powers should be called in to assist in the settlement of the Mexican problem. In August, upon the invitation of Mr. Lansing, the diplomatic representatives of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, and Uruguay met at Washington to discuss the Mexican settlement. From this conference there resulted an invitation to the different Mexican leaders to meet in pacific conference to arrange for general agreement and orderly elections. All the leaders, with the exception of the chief of the Constitutionals, Carranza, agreed to the invitation, and yet it was Carranza who seemed to exercise the widest powers in Mexico and whose coöperation was essential. Wilson did not deceive himself into the belief that Carranza was friendly to the United States, but both the President and House recognized in Carranza's lieutenant, Obregon, certain qualities which might prove equal to the problem of Mexican pacification.

'*September 23, 1915:* We breakfasted at eight [wrote House]. After breakfast Tumulty talked to me for nearly an hour. The President rescued me and took me up to his study. We discussed Mexico. He laughingly said that Carranza had once or twice put it over us and in a very skilful way.

He thought when the A.B.C. Conference resumed on the 8th of October, we would perhaps have to recognize Carranza. We were both of the opinion that General Obregon was responsible for the accelerated fortunes of Carranza and that he would perhaps finally turn out to be the "man of the hour" in Mexico. We agreed that if Carranza was to be recognized he must first guarantee religious freedom, give amnesty for all political offences, institute the land reforms which had been promised, give protection to foreigners, and recognize their just claims.'

Despite the steady negative returned by Carranza to the invitation to meet with the other Mexican leaders, the conference of American states at Washington refused to be snubbed; in October it decided that the Carranza régime constituted a *de facto* government in Mexico and recommended its recognition. This recognition was granted by the United States Government on October 19.

The Mexican problem was not thereby settled, but general opinion would probably have agreed with that of Ambassador Gerard, who wrote Colonel House in October: 'Carranza has his faults, like most of us, but it seems to me that it is the proper thing to recognize him and a good solution of a bad situation.'

Once again the method of solution was of more importance than the result. Students of the Latin-American situation insisted that it was of the first significance that the United States should have taken this step in conjunction with and upon the recommendation of the chief South American states. President Wilson did not fail to capitalize the friendly sentiments aroused in South America when he delivered his annual message:

'The moral is that the states of America are not hostile rivals, but coöperating friends, and that their growing sense

of community of interest, alike in matters political and alike in matters economic, is likely to give them a new significance as factors in international affairs and in the political history of the world.'

Under the influence of this display of the United States' desire to coöperate rather than to control, Mr. Lansing found it possible to continue discussions on the definite Pan-American Pact. On October 19, House wrote to Walter Hines Page: 'Lansing is pushing the South American proposal. The President, Lansing, and I went into this thoroughly some two weeks ago and decided upon a course of action which we believe will accelerate matters and perhaps bring it to a conclusion before Congress meets.'

As a result of long discussion, the original proposition made by House had been revised so as to eliminate one obvious source of practical difficulty; namely, the veto upon the private manufacture of arms. For reasons which the League of Nations Commission later were to find cogent, the abolition of private manufacture was deemed not feasible. Indeed, the new draft of the Pact carried merely a provision for an automatic embargo on munitions in case of revolutionary attack upon an existing government. Articles providing for investigation and arbitration in the settlement of disputes were added. The first and most important article, guaranteeing 'territorial integrity' and 'political independence under republican forms of government,' was retained.

Secretary Lansing to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, November 18, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I enclose a revision of the four propositions for the proposed Pan-American Convention.¹ Possibly the President has already sent you a copy, but I am doing so on the supposition that he has not.

¹ See Appendix to chapter.

Before Ambassador Naon sailed, I submitted to him the propositions and he was entirely satisfied with them.

This morning I saw the Brazilian Ambassador and he also approved. This afternoon I asked the Chilean Ambassador to come and see me, and after a long discussion of the whole question he changed his views in regard to the convention and said that he could see no reason why Chile could not accept the propositions as redrafted. I urged on him the advisability of speedy action and he agreed that he would at once communicate them to his Government and ask that the new Cabinet, which comes into office on December 20th, would act immediately and cable him instructions accordingly.

I feel convinced that the Ambassador will do all he can to secure favorable action by his Government.

I thought you would be interested to know the present status of the negotiations and when I see you will explain more fully the substance of my conversation with Mr. Suarez.

I hope to be in New York at the Army-Navy football game on the 27th and shall stay over until Sunday night. Possibly I may have an opportunity to see you then if you are not in Washington before that time.

With warm regards, I am

Cordially yours

ROBERT LANSING

IV

As in the case of the League of Nations Covenant three years later, Colonel House was less interested in the wording of the draft than in the spirit behind the agreement and in securing definite and unanimous acceptance. 'I think you have now gotten the four propositions down to the best possible form,' he wrote Mr. Lansing on November 20. And he urged the President to get the business 'buttoned-

up.' Indeed, the matter seemed so close to completion that on January 6, 1916, Mr. Wilson, in his address to the Pan-American Scientific Congress, stated publicly the gist of the proposals.

But more delays intervened. House again left for Europe in December, remaining abroad until March; and, apparently, during his absence little progress was made in overcoming the final difficulties. While in Europe, although engaged on complex and even more far-reaching business, the Colonel did not forget the Pan-American Pact and took what occasion he might to assist it. It was the subject of discussion between him and the Chilean Minister to Great Britain, Señor Eduardes, and also members of the British Cabinet. He was hopeful of British support, and even considered the possibility of the participation of Canada in the Covenant.

'*February 20, 1916:* I had a conference with the Chilean Minister before lunch [he wrote]. He said his Government was pleased with the proposed pact between the American republics. He mentioned the fear Chile had of Japan. He spoke of the advantage Chile could be to the United States because of her coastline as a base, and because of her nitrate and copper deposits. He believed that Chile during the coming year would take second place among copper-producing countries. While talking with him, it occurred to me it would be a good time for Great Britain to indicate that she was in sympathy with the Pan-American Pact; and I told Eduardes I would suggest to Sir Edward Grey to-morrow that he have some member of the House of Commons put a question to him asking if the Government was cognizant of this Pact, how they regarded it, and what effect it would have upon Great Britain. I shall suggest that Grey reply that Great Britain views it sympathetically; that, being one of the largest American Powers, she looks with favor upon any arrangement which will make for a closer union of American states.

'Eduardes was delighted with this suggestion. Later in the day I proposed it to Lansdowne.¹ He was startled, and said it was a matter needing careful consideration because Japan might consider it was directed at her. I thought Japan should be taken at her word. She has repeatedly said she had no designs in the Western Hemisphere, and Great Britain need only accept her assurances at their face value. Lansdowne favored the proposal, but declared it of such importance that careful thought should be given it.

'*February 21, 1916:* The first question I took up with Grey was the suggestion which came to me yesterday regarding the Pan-American Pact. I told Grey I had mentioned it to Lansdowne and he thought it a great move, provided it was so guarded as not to offend the Japanese. Grey took the same attitude I did, that the Japanese could not possibly consider it directed at them. He enthused over the idea and asked me to dictate the question I thought should be put to him in Parliament. I did so, while he wrote it down. It was, whether the Government was taking cognizance of the Pan-American Pact recently announced, guaranteeing the political and territorial integrity of the American republics, and what effect it would have upon the British Dominions in America.

'The thought then occurred to me, and I expressed it to Grey, that after this was done and after I had consulted with the President, the British Government might join the American guaranty as far as their American colonies were concerned. This, I told him, was one way [for Great Britain] to bring about a sympathetic alliance not only with the United States, but with the entire Western Hemisphere. In my opinion, it was an opportunity not to be disregarded and its tendency would be to bring together an influence which could control the peace of the world.

'Grey . . . thought it should be done. I afterward cabled

¹ Minister without Portfolio.

the President, telling him what I had proposed to Grey, but without giving details. . . .

'I gave Loreburn¹ a summary of what I had told Grey concerning the Pan-American Pact and what Grey had promised to do in the House of Commons provided the Canadian Prime Minister approved. Grey felt that a matter appertaining solely to American affairs should first be submitted to the Canadian Government, and this was being done by cable.

'I suggested to Loreburn that he prepare a speech in advance, without saying anything to Grey, so when the announcement was made in the Commons he could give it his warm approval in the House of Lords. He was eager to do this, for he said it presented to his mind a magnificent prospect.

'February 22, 1916: He [Grey] told me that Bonar Law was of the opinion it would be somewhat hasty to have the question asked in the House of Commons, and an answer given just now, about the Pan-American Pact. He has cabled the Canadian Prime Minister and the matter will be brought out at the time considered most opportune.'

Returning to the United States on March 5, House heard from Grey soon afterwards that the British thoroughly approved of the Pan-American Pact and were interested in the plan of affiliation with it, but evidently feared to make any public statement before its consummation seemed better assured.

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 23, 1916

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

Soon after you left, the Chilean Minister volunteered a statement to Sir M. de Bunsen² of his conversation with you about the Pan-American proposal.

¹ Lord Loreburn, an advanced Liberal and former Lord Chancellor.

² British Ambassador to Austria until 1914; appointed Special Ambassador to States of South America in 1918.

In consequence of what Sir M. de Bunsen told me I thought it desirable to see the Chilean Minister before saying anything in public. I found him pleased with what you had said to him, but insisting very carefully that the idea of partnership must be emphasized and that of tutelage suppressed.

He admitted that you had done this, but he made it clear that if I made any public statement it must be evident that I was founding myself not only on what President Wilson had said, but on the feelings of the A.B.C. countries in South America as well.

I asked him to send me a statement which he said the President of Chile had made favourable to the idea, so that if I had to say anything in public I might refer to it as well as to what President Wilson had said.

The Canadian Government were quite willing that I should say what I thought of saying in favour of it, but finding I should be on rather delicate ground as regards the A.B.C. countries, I think I will wait till the matter comes up in the Press again before making any public utterance.

I made it clear to the Chilean Minister that we were favourable to the plan as put before him by you, and that you had spoken to me in exactly the same way as to him, but I said nothing of having discussed with you the question of a public statement here.

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

Notwithstanding the cordial protestations of the Chilean Minister in London, House soon discovered that the attitude of Suarez in Washington was not encouraging and that, as a result of the hesitations of Chile, the early enthusiasm of Brazil was beginning to evaporate. The situation was complicated by a new Mexican crisis. On March 8, Villa, in revolt against Carranza and pursuing the temporarily profitable career of bandit under the diaphanous guise of

liberal patriot, crossed the frontier and murdered seventeen American citizens at Columbus, New Mexico. The punitive expedition under Pershing which was sent after him across the border, led to verbal and military retaliation on the part of Carranza which threatened to produce formal warfare between Mexico and the United States. The atmosphere during the spring and summer months was by no means favorable to the completion of the Pan-American Pact. Furthermore, Mr. Fletcher, who had been given charge of the negotiations, discovered an unwillingness to settle upon details that nullified the agreement upon the principle which the South American states had professed.

The differences were slight on the surface, but they proved sufficient to delay and finally to prevent signature of the Pan-American Pact. It was impossible for the United States to urge action, without arousing the suspicions of Chile that the Pact in reality was to serve our special interests rather than those of the Americas in general. On August 8, Frank Polk, then Under-Secretary of State, wrote to Colonel House that the Pact 'seems dead for the moment.'

On the following day, Mr. Fletcher reported that progress had stopped. Señor Naon desired delay in order that the tense feeling aroused by the crisis in Mexico and the dispute with Carranza might subside. The attitude of Chile became increasingly aloof.

'In view of the check put on the negotiations by Mr. Naon's unwillingness to sign [wrote Fletcher to House], I could not open out the treaty to the other republics. So the matter rests *in statu quo*. Chile is definitely and decidedly opposed to the treaty. . . . I feel sure that if we go on without Chile, that is, isolating her from the American concert, she will turn naturally elsewhere in finance and trade and that gradually a spirit of hostility against the United States will be engendered.'

Thus the summer dragged along. In September, following the subsidence of the Mexican crisis, the Argentine Ambassador declared himself ready to sign; but Chile still held off and Brazil tended to follow her example. The last reference in Colonel House's papers for 1916 to the plan which he had started nearly two years before, is dated October 1:

'Fletcher called to report on the Pan-American Peace Pact. He did not go further with Ambassador Naon, who is willing to sign for Argentina, because Lansing had promised Dr. Müller, Brazilian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that he would not move actively in the matter until the 15th of November, which would give Müller time to return to Brazil and ascertain the will of his Government. Müller has been in the United States for the past six weeks at a health resort.'

The weeks that followed were filled first with election activities and then with the negotiations that succeeded Germany's first peace note. The Pan-American Pact was pushed to one side and, with the entrance of the United States into the European war in the spring of 1917, it slipped into a forgotten grave.

The failure to carry through the plan to its completion must have brought harsh disappointment to Colonel House, who followed the progress of negotiations with invariable interest, although he ceased to retain active direction of their course. But even unfulfilled, the plan occupies a position of historical significance. It was designed not merely to bring the American states more closely together, but also to serve as a model to the European nations when they had ended the war. Both in its specific language and in its general intent, the Pan-American Pact is the immediate prototype of the Covenant of the League of Nations. By the summer of 1916 Colonel House could see its failure with

greater equanimity because his eyes already caught the vision of the United States entering and vivifying a larger concert than that of purely American states. The development of our relations with Europe, forced by the war, brought upon the horizon the need of a world organization into which the Americas might conceivably be drawn.

Even before the war House realized that the traditional separation of the United States from Europe in matters political could not be maintained indefinitely and that the time had come when political events of moment in Europe must inevitably prove of direct importance to the United States. It was this realization that led him to give over the active direction of the Pan-American scheme while his chief interest was caught in the European situation. It led him to visit the Kaiser in June, 1914, and thus to enter upon an adventure that determined the course of his main activities during the following six years. Nothing with which he had hitherto been connected, whether of a diplomatic character or in the field of domestic politics, compares in importance with the European mission he undertook in the early summer of 1914, to which we must now turn our attention.

APPENDIX

PAN-AMERICAN PACT — REVISED DRAFT

ARTICLE I

That the high contracting parties to this solemn covenant and agreement hereby join one another in a common and mutual guaranty of territorial integrity and of political independence under republican forms of government.

ARTICLE II

To give definitive application to the guaranty set forth in Article I, the high contracting parties severally covenant to endeavor forthwith to reach a settlement of all disputes as to boundaries or territory now pending between them by amicable agreement or by means of international arbitration.

ARTICLE III

That the high contracting parties further agree, First, that all questions, of whatever character, arising between any two or more of them which cannot be settled by the ordinary means of diplomatic correspondence shall, before any declaration of war or beginning of hostilities, be first submitted to a permanent international commission for investigation, one year being allowed for such investigation; and, Second, that if the dispute is not settled by investigation, to submit the same to arbitration, provided the question in dispute does not affect the honor, independence, or vital interests of the nations concerned or the interests of third parties.

ARTICLE IV

To the end that domestic tranquillity may prevail within their territories, the high contracting parties further severally covenant and agree that they will not permit the departure from their respective jurisdictions of any military or naval expedition hostile to the established government of any of the high contracting parties, and that they will prevent the exportation from their respective jurisdictions of arms, ammunition, or other munitions of war destined to or for the use of any person or persons notified to be in insurrection or revolt against the established government of any of the high contracting parties.

November, 1915

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT ADVENTURE

The situation is extraordinary. It is militarism run stark mad. . . . There is some day to be an awful cataclysm. . . .

House to Wilson, May 29, 1914, from Berlin

I

At the beginning of Wilson's Administration there were few citizens of the United States who professed a knowledge of, or an interest in, European politics. The traditions of the nineteenth century still held the public mind — traditions which laid down, as the primary principle of American policy, a complete abstention from the political affairs of Europe. They had their origin in sound judgment. During the early days of the Republic, as both Washington and Jefferson realized, entanglement in foreign alliances would have meant that the United States, lacking material strength, must have become the catspaw of an alien power. On the other hand, Nature had provided a wonderful opportunity if the independent colonists would turn their backs upon the Atlantic and devote themselves to developing the resources of their own land.

Thus during the early nineteenth century the young country spent its energy upon domestic problems: an aggressive extension of the frontier, a fierce wrestle with the backwoods, a struggle for political unity, the building of transportation lines, the creation of an industrial system. The people knew and cared little of what went on across the Atlantic.

But by the beginning of the twentieth century, conditions had changed. Not merely had the Pacific coast been reached and the intervening territory conquered, but through the merchant and the missionary American interests had been

established in the Orient, and the fortunes of war had brought the Philippines under the United States flag. Our Government claimed a position of equality with the European Powers in the Far East and, under the direction of Hay, had entered into close coöperation with them there. The acquisition of Porto Rico, the control of Cuba, the cutting of the Panama Canal, assured predominance in the Caribbean. Almost unconsciously, the country had become a world power, and it was certain that political contacts with Europe must become more frequent and close, for the great European states were also world powers and their interests touched ours at many points. Economic and intellectual intercourse with Europe was intimate and constant; political intercourse was henceforth inevitable.

This fact had been realized by President Roosevelt, who insisted that responsibility must accompany power. So keen was his sense of responsibility that in 1905 and 1906 he took an active, albeit unguessed, part in the negotiations that led to the Algeciras Conference, which averted the threat of a European war. This was a crisis in which the United States had no direct interest, and one which concerned purely European states. Roosevelt participated in the negotiations merely because of his conviction that the United States must fulfil its duties to the rest of the world in the cause of peace. In such a cause he was willing to scrap the tradition of isolation.

The war clouds of 1906, however, continued to hang low over Europe. The reconciliation of France and Great Britain, consummated in the Entente of 1904, had disturbed the Germans, who saw in it an encouragement to the French political renaissance and to the active foreign policy of the French Foreign Minister, Delcassé. They had hoped to break the Entente by raising the Moroccan issue, but failed. In 1907 they were still more disturbed by the Anglo-Russian reconciliation. It seemed to them that an iron ring was being

drawn about Germany. They feared especially the development of an aggressive Russian policy in the Balkans that would destroy Germany's ally, Austria, and cut off the road to the southeast. Once more, in 1911, they tried to break the Entente, now the Triple Entente, and again they failed.

Counsels in Germany were evidently divided. There were those, such as the Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, an amiable but anæmic personality, who hoped to find a solution in a peaceable understanding — especially with the British, without whose help Russian plans in the Near East could not succeed. But there were others who insisted that Germany must precipitate a war at the first favorable moment, before Russia was ready. The aggressive spirit had been taught for a generation by the professors, it was rampant in military circles, and it had caught the naval officers.

The temper of these groups, who doubtless did not represent exactly the ruling opinion of the nation, would have been a less serious factor, if it had not been supported by the widespread conviction that the Entente was planning to close in on Germany. In this case, as so often, fear proved to be the mother of recklessness. Should the control of German policy be captured even temporarily by the firebrands, backed by a panicky public sentiment, the danger of a decision to risk everything on a sudden attack was very real. And because of the complexity of the diplomatic groupings, such an attack would mean a general European war.

In England the peril was realized acutely, but the Government faced an unpleasant dilemma. The rapid development of German sea-power could not but be regarded as a threat to British security, which naturally led to the keenest sort of naval competition. Any slackening in British naval preparation would be flying in the face of Providence. In view of the engagements which the British had made with France, which however informal were none the less morally binding, military preparation was also necessary. Such preparation, on the

other hand, could only intensify the diplomatic crisis, by increasing the fears of Germany and giving a lever to the German militarists who desired war.

In Russia and in France military development was the order of the day. There were many who looked upon the general war as inevitable; the Dual Alliance must get ready and must omit no step which might increase its diplomatic and military weight. Any other policy would lay those in control open to the charge of criminal negligence. But each step taken seemed to transform the Dual Alliance from a defensive to an offensive combination and inevitably stimulated the fears and the belligerence of Germany.

Europe thus prepared for war and, as William Graham Sumner used to say, 'What you prepare for you get.' It is true that in 1913 the immediate danger seemed to pass when the efforts of Sir Edward Grey brought a pacific solution to the Balkan crisis. For a few months a *détente* in Anglo-German relations, assisted by the offer of British coöperation in German plans for the Bagdad Railway, appeared to provide a means for ending the conflict of alliances. But as the British Premier later wrote, the diplomats were conscious that they 'were skating on the thinnest of ice and that the peace of Europe was at the mercy of a chapter of unforeseen and unforeseeable accidents.'¹

II

Like Roosevelt, House was convinced that a European war must necessarily attain such proportions that every part of the world would be touched, and that it was both the duty and the interest of the United States to do all in its power to avert it. The days had passed when America was isolated from the Eastern Hemisphere; she had much to fear from European trouble and she could do much to appease it.

Even before the inauguration of President Wilson, House

¹ Asquith, *Genesis of the War*, 166.

planned a policy of coöperation which should include the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. He saw that the crux of the danger lay in the animosity of Germans and British, and he hoped that it might be allayed by getting the two countries to work towards a common end. Germany's expansive energy, he thought, might be turned into more useful channels than Krupp factories and dreadnoughts.

'*January 22, 1913*: Martin lunched with us [Colonel House recorded]. . . . I told him that I wanted to get Governor Wilson to let me bring about an understanding between Great Britain, this country, and Germany, in regard to the Monroe Doctrine. . . .

'I also told him that it would be my endeavor to bring about a better understanding between England and Germany; that if England were less intolerant of Germany's aspirations for expansion, good feeling could be brought about between them. I thought we could encourage Germany to exploit South America in a legitimate way; that is, by development of its resources and by sending her surplus population there; that such a move would be good for South America and would have a beneficial result generally.'

During the first year of the Wilson Administration, the pressure of domestic problems left the plan only half formed in House's mind. But he kept turning it over and, as occasion offered, he raised the subject with persons whose influence and information might prove useful.

'*April 23, 1913*: I have a letter from James Speyer [he wrote] asking me to meet at lunch downtown Count von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, who has expressed a desire to know me. I never go downtown, and declined. . . .

'*April 25, 1913*: James Speyer telephoned and again asked

if I would lunch with the German Ambassador uptown instead of downtown, and I promised to do so. . . .

'*May 9, 1913*: I lunched at Delmonico's with the German Ambassador, Count von Bernstorff, and Mr. Speyer.

'The Count talked rather more freely than I anticipated a diplomat of his training would. He spoke of Mr. Bryan and of the different assistants in the State Department with a good deal of freedom. He also criticized ex-Secretary Knox and Huntington Wilson, his First Assistant.

'The most interesting part of his conversation was after lunch, when Mr. Speyer left us and Bernstorff and I walked down the Avenue alone. I suggested, that it would be a great thing if there was a sympathetic understanding between England, Germany, Japan, and the United States. Together I thought they would be able to wield an influence for good throughout the world. They could ensure peace and the proper development of the waste places, besides maintaining an open door and equal opportunity to every one everywhere.

'Much to my surprise, he agreed with me. He said the understanding between Germany and England was much better of late, and if they had some mutual field of endeavor he thought a good understanding could finally be brought about between them. He suggested that perhaps China was the most promising field at present for concerted action, for the United States could work there with Germany and England. . . .'

Two months later, in London, House discussed the broad lines of this plan with the American Ambassador. Page sympathized thoroughly with House's scheme of utilizing the force of nations for purposes other than military or naval. 'It is a time,' he wrote to House, 'for some great constructive, forward idea — an idea for action. If the great world forces could, by fortunate events and fortunate combina-

tions, be united and led to clean up the tropics, the great armies might gradually become sanitary police, as in Panama, and finally gradually forget the fighting idea and at last dissolve. . . .'

But Page felt that the Europeans were too traditionally minded to embark upon such a plan, which had in it something suggestive of the Secretariat of the League of Nations. 'On the Continent of Europe,' he wrote, 'the Kaiser is probably the foremost man. Yet he cannot think far beyond the provincial views of the Germans. In England, Sir Edward Grey is the largest-voiced statesman. Yet even he does not seem to have a definitely constructive mind.'

House did not force his ideas upon the British at this time, but he discovered that in Sir Edward Grey he would deal with a man who may have lacked imagination, but who was sincerely desirous of attempting any scheme that might lead towards the maintenance of peace. On July 3, 1913, Colonel House had lunch with Grey, Lord Crewe, and Page.

'We discussed the feeling between Germany and England. Sir Edward remarked that the great cause of antagonism between nations was the distrust each felt for the other's motives. Before leaving this subject I told him of my luncheon with Count von Bernstorff, German Ambassador at Washington, and that I had been surprised to hear him say he believed that good feeling would soon come between England and Germany. My purpose in repeating this was to plant the seeds of peace.'

On his return to the United States, House was caught in the swirl of appointments and the passage of the Federal Reserve Act. But whenever he had the opportunity, he returned to his study of the European problem.

'September 1, 1913: I have had some interesting conversa-

tions with Dumba,¹ particularly in regard to some phases of the political situation in southeastern Europe. He was at one time Minister at Bucharest and, of course, knows the Balkan situation thoroughly.'

In November arrived Sir William Tyrrell, Grey's secretary, with whom House found it possible to discuss in all candor every sort of international question. After arranging with Tyrrell the understanding as to Wilson's Mexican policy and Panama tolls, the Colonel proceeded to impart his new plan, which he had formulated with some definiteness. The existing crisis he hoped to tide over by an understanding that would lead to a limitation of armaments. If this succeeded, he would follow it up with the plan he had already suggested to Bernstorff — a coöperative policy of developing the waste places of the world.

'December 2, 1913: I told him [Tyrrell] the next thing I wished to do was to bring about an understanding between France, Germany, England, and the United States, regarding a reduction of armaments, both military and naval. I said it was an ambitious undertaking, but was so well worth while that I intended to try it. He thought it one of the most far-reaching and beneficent things that could be done. He thought if we continued as at present, ruin would eventually follow, and in the meanwhile it would prevent us from solving the vexatious industrial problems we are all facing. He considered I had "a good sporting chance of success."

'I asked him to suggest my procedure, and we discussed that at length. He thought I should go to Germany and see the Kaiser first, and afterward the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance. He said I would find them responsive to the idea, but that the Minister of Marine, von Tirpitz, was a reactionary and largely responsible for the present German policy.

¹ Austro-Hungarian Ambassador.

'He did not think it necessary for me to take any credentials. He advised having our Ambassador in Germany whisper to the Kaiser that I was "the power behind the throne" in the United States. That if this were done, I would have to warn our Ambassador to tell official Berlin I did not care for "fuss and feathers"; otherwise I would have red carpets laid for me all over Berlin.

'He thought I should proceed quietly and secretly, but should secure an audience with the Kaiser and say to him, among other things, that England and America "had buried the hatchet" and there was a strong feeling that Germany should come into this good feeling and evidence their good intention by agreeing to stop building an extravagant navy, and to curtail militarism generally.

'Sir William assured me that England would coöperate with Germany cordially, and had been ready to do so for a long while. He saw no cause for difference between them. With England, United States, France, and Germany [agreed], we both thought the balance of the world would follow in line and a great change would come about. He said the Kaiser was a spectacular individual and partook more of French qualities than he did of German. He likened him to Roosevelt.

'Sir William promised to give me all the memoranda passed between Great Britain and Germany upon this question of disarmament, in order that I might see how entirely right Great Britain had been in her position.'

Ten days later, House discussed the plan with President Wilson and received his approval. 'I might almost say he was enthusiastic,' wrote House to Page. It was decided that in the early summer the Colonel should go directly to Berlin and take the plan to the Kaiser. If he proved complaisant, House would go to England.

During the winter and spring he made his preparations.

In January he wrote to Gerard to make sure of the Kaiser's plans; he learned that Wilhelm II would be in Corfu in the late spring, that he would return to Potsdam, go on to Kiel for the races, then on a cruise in Norwegian waters, and later to his estates on the Rhine.¹ House chose the earliest moment available and cabled Gerard to arrange the interview for June, after the Kaiser's return from Corfu.

The Colonel felt himself already in such close touch with the situation in Great Britain that he believed the chief task he must undertake would be a study of current German psychology and especially the character of William II. In January we find him taking lunch with Benjamin Ide Wheeler and quietly extracting information.

'*January 1, 1914:* We had a delightful time together. He is just back from Germany and has seen much of the Kaiser, not only this time but upon former visits. He visits him in the most informal manner and spends many hours with him and his family. He gave me nearly all the information I need regarding the Kaiser and his *entourage*. Wheeler is also a close friend of Roosevelt's, and I was interested in his comparison of the two men. He considers them very alike, particularly in regard to memory and impulsiveness, but they are dissimilar inasmuch as the Kaiser has a religious turn of mind and is more cultured in his manners.

'In order to obtain the information I desired, I had to disclose my object in questioning him; and he encouraged me to believe that I might have some chance of success in bringing the Kaiser around to an agreement for disarmament. He thought the Minister of Marine would be the obstacle, just as Sir William Tyrrell had pointed out. He

¹ House to Gerard, January 1, 1914; Gerard to House, February 11, March 15, 1914. The matter is of historical interest, since it has been asserted that the Kaiser sailed to Norway as a blind to cover German war plans. It is clear that his itinerary was arranged long before the murder of the Archduke.

said the Kaiser had told him that his object in building a navy was not to threaten England, but to add prestige to Germany's commerce upon the seven seas. He had spoken of how impossible war should be between England and Germany, or, in fact, how utterly foolish any general European war would be. He thinks the coming antagonism is between the Asiatics and the Western peoples and that within twenty years the Western peoples will recognize this and stand together more or less as a unit.

'Wheeler told of how narrowly a general European war was averted last March over the Balkan embroglio, and how the Emperor thinks he saved the day by his suggestion of creating the State of Albania.¹ The Kaiser told Wheeler that he had warned Russia if they attacked Austria, he would strike them immediately. The Kaiser also told him he felt kindly toward England and that he was Queen Victoria's favorite grandchild.

'In his talks with the Kaiser, he said the Kaiserin seldom joined in the conversation, but would sit quietly knitting and only entered the discussion when it fell upon domestic problems.

'Another difference between the Kaiser and T. R. was that the Kaiser was a good listener when necessary, and is courteous in doing so.'

Colonel House spent most of the winter in Texas. But as soon as he returned to the East in March and notwithstanding the time and effort he was giving to the Federal Reserve appointments, he continued preparations for his European venture. In April he had long conferences with

¹ After the defeats of the Turkish army by the Balkan League in the autumn of 1912, Austria protested against the acquisition of any part of the Adriatic littoral by Serbia. A conference of the Great Powers was held at London, where Great Britain and Germany worked for a compromise and where the independent State of Albania was created. Serbia acquired Macedonia, thus precipitating a quarrel with Bulgaria.

Irwin Laughlin, Counsellor of the American Embassy at St. James's.

'April 9, 1914: We fell to talking about my plan for decreasing armaments. Laughlin was three years First Secretary of the American Embassy at Berlin. During that time he talked with the German Chancellor regarding disarmament, and he did not believe there was one chance in a million of my getting Germany to consent to a naval holiday.

'I surprised him by telling him of the direct information I had of the Kaiser himself — none of which, though, was favorable to my plan, but rather coinciding with Laughlin's views. But what impressed him was the method I had in mind of accomplishing results. I explained my purpose not to take it up from a sentimental or purely ethical viewpoint, but to try and prove that it would be of material advantage to Germany.

'I went into some detail as to giving Germany a zone of influence in Asia Minor and Persia, and also lending a hope that they might be given a freer hand commercially in the Central and South American republics. I changed his views as to the desirability of making the effort, but he wanted time to think it over and promised to let me know his conclusions later. Laughlin knows the Germans well, and he told me of the difficulties of reaching the Emperor under right conditions. . . .

'April 10, 1914: Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Laughlin lunched with us. Laughlin and I went into my disarmament plan at some length. I used him as a dummy, as it were, knowing he would catch me if I tripped at any point. I discussed my intentions thoroughly, and talked to him as I would talk to the Kaiser were we to meet.

'After thinking of the matter overnight and hearing my plans more in detail, Laughlin believes I should make the effort. . . .

'April 16, 1914: At half-past nine I left to go to the Borden Harrimans' in order to meet the guests, since Mrs. Harriman had told them I would do so. Prince Münster, Prince Paul Troubetskoy and his wife, Ambassador Dumba, General Wood, and several others were there. I talked with Prince Münster for a while about the German Emperor, in order to get more information about him. . . .

'April 28, 1914: I spoke to the President about what I was doing in regard to Germany and the Kaiser, and he remarked, "You are preparing to make the ground fallow." I asked again whether he was certain that he wished me to go at this particular time. He replied, "The object you have in mind is too important to neglect." . . .

'May 7, 1914: Hugh Wallace saw Count von Bernstorff and told him I was going to Germany on the sixteenth day of May. Von Bernstorff said the German Foreign Office had already informed him I was coming and had asked him to give them a report upon me, which he had sent. He said he intended sending another, which I thought was perhaps inspired by Wallace. . . .'

Thus Colonel House set forth on his extraordinary mission, a private American citizen whose only relevant title was 'personal friend of the President,' a single individual hoping to pull the lever of common sense that might divert the nations of the Old World from the track of war to that of peace. To inject himself successfully into the core of the European maelstrom demanded as much courage as diplomatic deftness. These qualities he possessed, as well as a sense of proportion which caused him often to laugh at the stark humor of the odds against him. But the stake for which he played was tremendous. It was the peace of the world. If he failed no harm was done. And if he succeeded —!

He called his mission the Great Adventure.

III

*Colonel House to the President*AMERICAN EMBASSY
BERLIN, May 29, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I was fairly well informed as to the situation here when I reached Germany. Prince Münster and the Count von Moltke were fellow passengers, and I came to know von Moltke well.¹

Münster is what we would call a reactionary, and I let him do all the talking. Von Moltke, on the contrary, is perhaps the only noble in Germany who has a detached point of view and sees the situation as we do. He gave me valuable information, which merely tended to confirm my opinion as to the nearly impossible chance of bettering conditions.

I have not seen the Kaiser, but have been invited to lunch at Potsdam on Monday. Just what opportunity there may be to talk with him is an uncertainty. . . .

I have had long talks with von Jagow, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Admiral von Tirpitz. Jagow is a clever diplomat without much personality. Von Tirpitz is the father of the greater navy and is forceful and aggressive. Neither has ability of the highest order.

I was told not to talk to von Tirpitz, because of his well-known opposition to such views as we hold; but, finding that he is the most forceful man in Germany excepting the Kaiser, I concluded to go at him. We had an extremely interesting hour together, and I believe I made a dent. Not a big one, but sufficient at least to start a discussion in London.

I am careful always not to involve you. Opinions and

¹ This Count von Moltke was a nephew of the great Field Marshal and a cousin of the German Chief of Staff during the invasion of Belgium and France who was superseded by Falkenhayn after the failure of the German offensive.

purposes I give as my own, and you come in no further than what may be assumed because of our relations.

The situation is extraordinary. It is militarism run stark mad. Unless some one acting for you can bring about a different understanding, there is some day to be an awful cataclysm. No one in Europe can do it. There is too much hatred, too many jealousies. Whenever England consents, France and Russia will close in on Germany and Austria. England does not want Germany wholly crushed, for she would then have to reckon alone with her ancient enemy, Russia; but if Germany insists upon an ever-increasing navy, then England will have no choice.

The best chance for peace is an understanding between England and Germany in regard to naval armaments, and yet there is some disadvantage to us by these two getting too close.

It is an absorbing problem, and one of tremendous consequence. I wish it might be solved, and to the everlasting glory of your Administration and our American civilization.

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

What Colonel House soon realized was that in Germany there was a sense of fear as well as aggressiveness, the fear of the man tortured by uncertainty and ready to jump at the throat of the first who seemed to move. Conscious of the enmity which it had aroused, Germany kept its revolver cocked and would let it off at the least whisper.

'*May 27, 1914*: I had insisted before coming [recorded House] that we should not be entertained. There are only a few people I desire to meet. However, the Gerards did not literally follow our desires and we had several people every day. On Tuesday they gave a dinner of twenty-four covers, at which were Admiral von Tirpitz, Minister of Marine, von Jagow, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Goschen, the

British Ambassador, and Count and Countess von Moltke, who were invited at our request.

'Von Tirpitz and I left the dining-room together and we stood in one of the drawing-rooms and talked for an hour. He evidenced a decided dislike for the British, a dislike that almost amounted to hatred. One of the things that amused me most was his suggestion that the English "looked down upon Germans and considered them their inferiors."

'Von Tirpitz spoke of the anti-German feeling in the United States and cited our newspapers in evidence of it. He also spoke of Admiral Mahan's articles which have a pro-British leaning. I assured him our newspapers did not indicate our real feeling, and asked him whether the press of Germany represented the feeling of the Germans toward us. He replied, "Not at all." He said the Government had absolutely no control over the German newspapers, but in England, he noticed, the English brought their papers around to the Government point of view whenever the situation required it.

'I spoke of the courage and character of the President. This I illustrated by different incidents — one being his insistence in taking part in the funeral parade of the Vera Cruz sailors, and another his refusal to be intimidated or coerced into recognizing Huerta. I drew clearly the distinction between the President and Mr. Bryan. I wanted official Germany to know that if any international complications arose between our two countries, they would have to deal with a man of iron courage and inflexible will.

'Von Tirpitz and I talked largely of armaments, I pleading for a limitation in the interest of international peace and he stating vigorously the necessity of Germany's maintaining the highest possible order of military and naval organization. He disclaimed any desire for conquest and insisted it was peace that Germany wanted, but the way to maintain it was to put fear into the hearts of her enemies.

‘I pointed out the danger in this programme, for, while Great Britain did not desire to see Germany crushed because it would leave her to reckon alone with her ancient enemy, Russia, at the same time she could not view with equanimity the ever-increasing naval strength of Germany combined with her large and efficient standing army. If it came to a decision as to whether Germany should be crushed or be permitted to have a navy sufficient to overcome British supremacy at sea, their policy would clearly be to let Germany go under.

‘I thought an understanding could be brought about between Germany and England. He hoped so, but he did not trust England, because the English were not “reliable.” Von Tirpitz was the most anti-English of any of the German officials with whom I talked. I am giving my conversation with him very fully, for it indicates the general trend of my conversations with others.

‘Among other things we did was to go to the Aviation Field and see what they were doing in that direction. I found it difficult to get any estimate of the aërial strength of Germany. One of the airmen was brought up to the club by the German Major in charge and introduced to us. He then went up and did some spectacular flights for our benefit. He came directly over our heads and looped the loop several times. He performed all sorts of dangerous and curious manœuvres. I was glad when he came down, for I was afraid his enthusiasm to please might result in his death. The Major told me that thirty-six had already been killed on that field.

‘The airman was named Fokker, and he told me he was a Dutchman and had recently come from Holland at the request of the German Government.’

Thus was Colonel House, before the war, given a glimpse of the aviator whose name was to become terribly familiar.

IV

Not without difficulty and the exercise of diplomatic adroitness, Ambassador Gerard had arranged that House should have a private talk with the Kaiser. Official Berlin protested. The Foreign Office was perfectly willing that the Colonel should receive the satisfaction of an interview, but they insisted that some member of the civil Government must be present. House was equally definite in his insistence that it must be a *tête-à-tête* or nothing. 'If that is not possible,' he had written Gerard, 'then please do not bother about it at all.' He wanted to be sure that the frankness of the conversation should not be impeded by official red tape. Later he wrote: 'It was a bluff on my part, but I declined to see him unless it could be arranged that I could see him alone.'

Whatever the magic influence may have been, and House ascribes it to the diplomacy of Ambassador Gerard,¹ the bluff accomplished its purpose, and Gerard finally received word that if he and House would come to Potsdam on June 1, an occasion would be made for the latter to talk alone with the Kaiser. On that day took place the ceremonies of the *Schrippenfest*,² a gorgeous presentation of devotional militarism in the Prussian style, such as the Kaiser loved dearly.

¹ House wrote later, 'I cannot state too strongly my appreciation of the part the Ambassador played in finessing with Wilhelmstrasse in order to bring about the desired result.'

² The *Schrippenfest*, literally the 'White Roll Feast' (a *Schrippe* being a roll of white bread), was held annually on Whit-Monday for the model Battalion, in Potsdam. Traditionally it was the one occasion of the year when the common soldier received white instead of black bread, and when he was also treated to such luxuries as meat courses, stewed prunes, and wine. The feast was given by the Kaiser, who invited foreign military and naval attachés, ambassadors, and distinguished strangers. It was attended by the Kaiserin and the younger members of the imperial family. The outstanding feature of the ceremony was the Kaiser's presence at the table, sitting in the midst of his troops, eating their white rolls, and drinking from a glass already used by one of the common soldiers.

House and Gerard, in their black evening dress suits, provided a grotesque sombreness quite out of keeping with their surroundings — ‘like two black crows,’ as the Kaiser himself described them with more pungency than politeness.

‘June 1, 1914: Gerard and I [recorded House] set forth for Potsdam at half-past nine. We arrived too early and wandered about until nearly eleven, and then entered the Palace. We found ourselves to be the only guests invited to the *Schrippenfest*.

‘We were taken through a beautiful sweep of rooms, running across the park front, until we came to a side entrance. Here we waited a few minutes until the Kaiser was announced. He came up and shook hands and passed out with his suite into the park. We followed after the royal party, which consisted of the Emperor, the Empress, and the Princes and their wives. We were given a position near the royal family.

‘After religious exercises came the parade, then the decorations were given, and afterward we went across to the other Palace, where the soldiers were having their lunch. During this time I was largely with Herr Zimmermann, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Acting Secretary while von Jagow is absent [on his honeymoon]. I found him quite responsive to my ideas concerning a sympathetic understanding between Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. We discussed every phase of the present European situation.

‘We lunched in the famous Shell Hall [‘probably the ugliest room in the world,’ remarked Gerard].¹ The table was crescent-shaped and was beautifully decorated. Gerard and I were seated directly opposite the imperial party. On my right was the Minister for War, General von Falken-

¹ The walls of the room were composed of sea-shells which encrusted the plaster.

hayn;¹ the man to my left was some general from Saxony, but I did not catch his name. The Emperor talked across the table with our party, mostly with General von Falkenhayn. . . . The food was delicious and the meal not long, perhaps fifty minutes. . . .

'I had cautioned Gerard before coming to Berlin not to use the title of "Colonel" when referring to me or when introducing me after I arrived. This did not serve my purpose, for Bernstorff had cabled of my coming, so I became "Colonel" immediately. Most of my time at luncheon was used in explaining to my neighbors the kind of Colonel I was — not a real one in the European sense, but, as we would say in America, a geographical one. My explanation finally reached Falkenhayn's consciousness, but my neighbor from Saxony was hopelessly befuddled and continued until the last to discuss army technique. . . .

'Afterwards we adjourned to one of the larger drawing-rooms, where I was presented to the Empress. We talked of Corfu, the beauty of Germany in the spring, and other generalities. When this formality was over, the Kaiser's Aide-de-Camp came to say that His Majesty was ready to receive me on the terrace. . . .

'I found that he had all the versatility of Roosevelt with something more of charm, something less of force. He has what to me is a disagreeable habit of bringing his face very close to one when he talks most earnestly. His English is clear and well chosen and, though he talks vehemently, yet he is too much the gentleman to monopolize conversation. It was give-and-take all the way through. He knew what he wanted to say, so did I; and since we both talk rapidly, the half-hour was quite sufficient.

'Gerard and Zimmermann stood in conversation some ten

¹ Falkenhayn became later Chief of Staff and directed the German offensive of 1916 against Verdun. Following the failure to take Verdun, he was succeeded by Hindenburg.

or fifteen feet away, quite out of hearing. At first I thought I would never get His Majesty past his hobbies, but finally ✓ I drew him to the subject I had come to discuss. . . . I found him much less prejudiced and much less belligerent than von Tirpitz. He declared he wanted peace because it seemed to Germany's interest. Germany had been poor, she was now growing rich, and a few more years of peace would make her so. "She was menaced on every side. The bayonets of Europe were directed at her," and much more of this he gave me. Of England, he spoke kindly and admiringly. ✓ England, America, and Germany were kindred peoples and should draw closer together. Of other nations he had but little opinion. . . .

'He spoke of the folly of England forming an alliance with the Latins and Slavs, who had no sympathy with our ideals and purposes and who were vacillating and unreliable as allies. He spoke of them as being semi-barbarous, and of England, Germany, and the United States as being the only hope of advancing Christian civilization. . . .

'I thought Russia was the greatest menace to England and it was to England's advantage that Germany was in a position to hold Russia in check, and that Germany was the barrier between Europe and the Slavs. I found no difficulty in getting him to admit this.

'He spoke of the impossibility of Great Britain being able to make a permanent and satisfactory alliance with either Russia or France. I told him that the English were very much concerned over his ever-growing navy, which taken together with his enormous army constituted a menace; and there might come a time when they would have to decide whether they ran more danger from him and his people making a successful invasion than they did from Russia, and the possibility of losing their Asiatic colonies. I thought when that point was reached, the decision would be against Germany.

'I spoke of the community of interests between England, Germany, and the United States, and thought if they stood together the peace of the world could be maintained. He assented to this quite readily. However, in my opinion, there could be no understanding between England and Germany so long as he continued to increase his navy. He replied that he must have a large navy in order to protect Germany's commerce in an adequate way, and one commensurate with her growing power and importance. He also said it was necessary to have a navy large enough to be able to defend themselves against the combined efforts of Russia and France.¹

'I asked when he would reach the end of his naval programme. He said this was well known, since they had formulated a policy for building and, when that was completed, there would be an end; that Great Britain had nothing to fear from Germany, and that he personally was a friend of England and was doing her incalculable service in holding the balance of power against Russia.

'I told him that the President and I thought perhaps an American might be able to better compose the difficulties here and bring about an understanding with a view to peace than any European, because of their distrust and dislike for one another. He agreed to this suggestion. I had undertaken the work and that was my reason for coming to Germany, as I wanted to see him first. After leaving Germany it was my

¹ In a memorandum made later, House recorded: 'I forgot to say that I asked the Kaiser why Germany refused to sign the "Bryan treaty" providing for arbitration and a "cooling-off period" of a year before hostilities could be inaugurated. He replied: "Germany will never sign such a treaty. Our strength lies in being always prepared for war at a second's notice. We will not resign that advantage and give our enemies time to prepare."'

Had Germany signed this treaty, it would not have been possible for the United States to enter the war on the submarine issue until after the lapse of a twelvemonth, except on the ground that German use of submarines constituted acts of war against the United States.

purpose to go directly to England, where I should take the matter up with that Government as I had done with him.

'I explained that I expected to feel my way cautiously and see what could be accomplished, and, if he wished it, I would keep him informed. He asked me to do this and said letters would reach him "through our friend Zimmermann here in the Foreign Office." . . .

'I talked to the Kaiser on the terrace for thirty minutes and quite alone. Gerard and Zimmermann stood some ten feet away. There was a special train scheduled to leave Potsdam at three o'clock, and the time was growing perilously near and every one was becoming uneasy. The Empress herself came upon the terrace at one time for the purpose of breaking up our conversation, and, prior to that, she had sent one of her sons for the same purpose. Neither, however, approached us, for they saw the earnest and animated manner in which we were talking. She finally sent the Grand Chamberlain, who approached in a halting and embarrassed way, and told the Emperor of the difficulty. He scarcely noticed him and dismissed him curtly and continued our conversation for at least ten minutes more.

'By this time I had said all I cared to and was ready to leave myself; therefore I stopped talking and was very quiet in order to indicate that I, at least, was through. This had the desired effect and we bade each other good-bye. Gerard told me afterward that there was the greatest amount of interest displayed concerning what the Kaiser and I were discussing, and that all Berlin was talking of the episode and wondering what the devil we had to say to each other for so long and in such an animated way.'

v

Colonel House left for Paris in the evening that followed his memorable interview with the Kaiser. He was evidently well pleased with the reception that his plan had met, for

although the Emperor made no promises, he left House with sufficient encouragement to proceed in taking up matters with the British. 'I am glad to tell you,' he wrote Wilson from Paris, 'that I have been as successful as I anticipated. . . . I am very happy over what has been accomplished and I am eager to get to London to see what can be done there. I have a feeling that the soil will be much more fallow.'

What impressed House chiefly in Germany was not so much a will to war based upon any definite plan, but an unreasonable nervousness which might at any moment result in a reckless attack, and a complete inability to approach the problem with intelligent poise and capacity for compromise.

'I find that both England and Germany [he wrote the President] have one feeling in common, and that is fear of one another. Neither wants to be the first to propose negotiations, but both are agreed that they should be brought about, though neither desires to make the necessary concessions.'

In the meantime President Wilson, whose attitude toward the European situation had originally been not far from indifferent, began to appreciate the possibilities of the Great Adventure. He wrote House of the thrill of pleasure he experienced on receiving the Colonel's report and of his confidence that House had begun a great thing and was carrying it through in just the right way with characteristic tact and quietness.

In Paris discussions proved to be impossible. France was caught by a Cabinet crisis and the capital would think of nothing but the shooting of Calmette by Madame Caillaux and all the political consequences thereof. Following his custom when conditions seemed unpropitious, House retired into his shell, whence for a few days he continued merely to observe.

'June 8, 1914: I have spent a quiet week in Paris, my most arduous duty being to dodge Americans and others wanting to see me. We have had many invitations to dinner and luncheon, all of which have been declined, although one came from our Ambassador.

'I called on Herrick,¹ it having been understood that I would do so when I was ready to talk with him. Mr. Roosevelt had been with him the day before, and he told me something of T. R.'s mental and physical activities. Herrick made the prediction that T. R. was getting ready to go back home and to give the Democrats a thoroughly unhappy time. I replied that I was sure he could do nothing that would distress us so much as it would his fellow Republicans.

'Herrick read passages from his forthcoming book upon rural credits and told me that within a short time he would have it finished and ready for publication. He would then like to return to America. . . .

'June 12, 1914 [London]: I came from Paris on the 9th. I lunched with Page on the 10th and he lunched with me yesterday, so we have had an exchange of ideas. He was kind enough to say that he considered my work in Germany the most important done in this generation. I thought before making an estimate we would have to see how far I could get with it here. He replied I would find this Government very sympathetic and he felt a beginning was as good as accomplished. We decided to approach Sir Edward Grey first and leave it to his judgment whether to bring in Asquith and the King. . . .'

House arrived in London at the height of the season, and there was no possibility of securing political results with speed. Social affairs held sway, and it was not until a full week after the Colonel's arrival that Ambassador Page could find a free day for the lunch with Sir Edward. In the mean-

¹ The American Ambassador.

time House followed his habit of seeing people of interest and information — chatting with Sir Horace Plunkett and Lord Bryce, lunching at the Embassy with Roosevelt and other notables, and meeting such varied types as Lord Curzon and Henry James, the Bishop of London and John Sargent, dining at Burdett-Coutts' palatial home in Piccadilly and discussing its art treasures and manuscripts, and reckoning the wealth of nations with Sir George Paish, of the *Statist*.

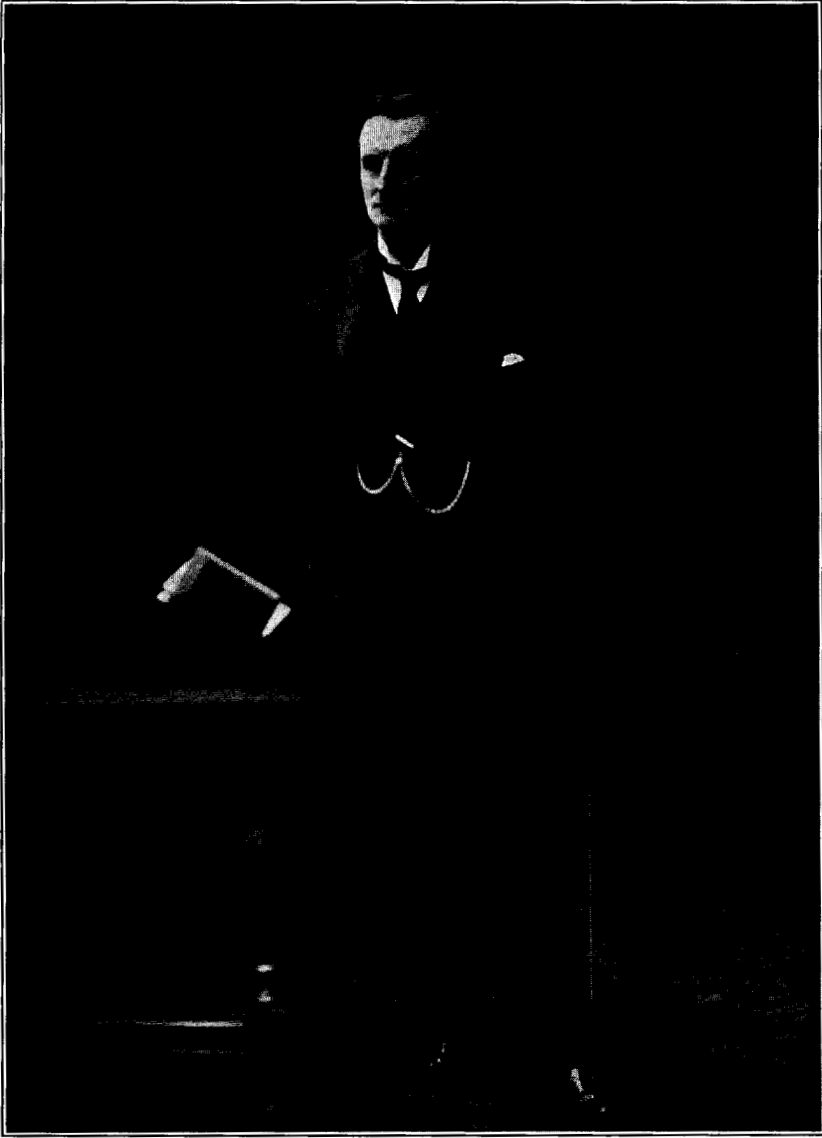
On June 17, House, Sir Edward Grey, Sir William Tyrrell, and Page had lunch together. The Colonel told of his visit to Germany and his proposition to the Kaiser.

'Sir Edward was visibly impressed [recorded Colonel House], and we discussed every phase of the European situation, particularly as it applied to Germany and England. He agreed with me that the French statesmen had given up all idea of revenge and of the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine, and that they would be content with the position of France as it now is. . . .

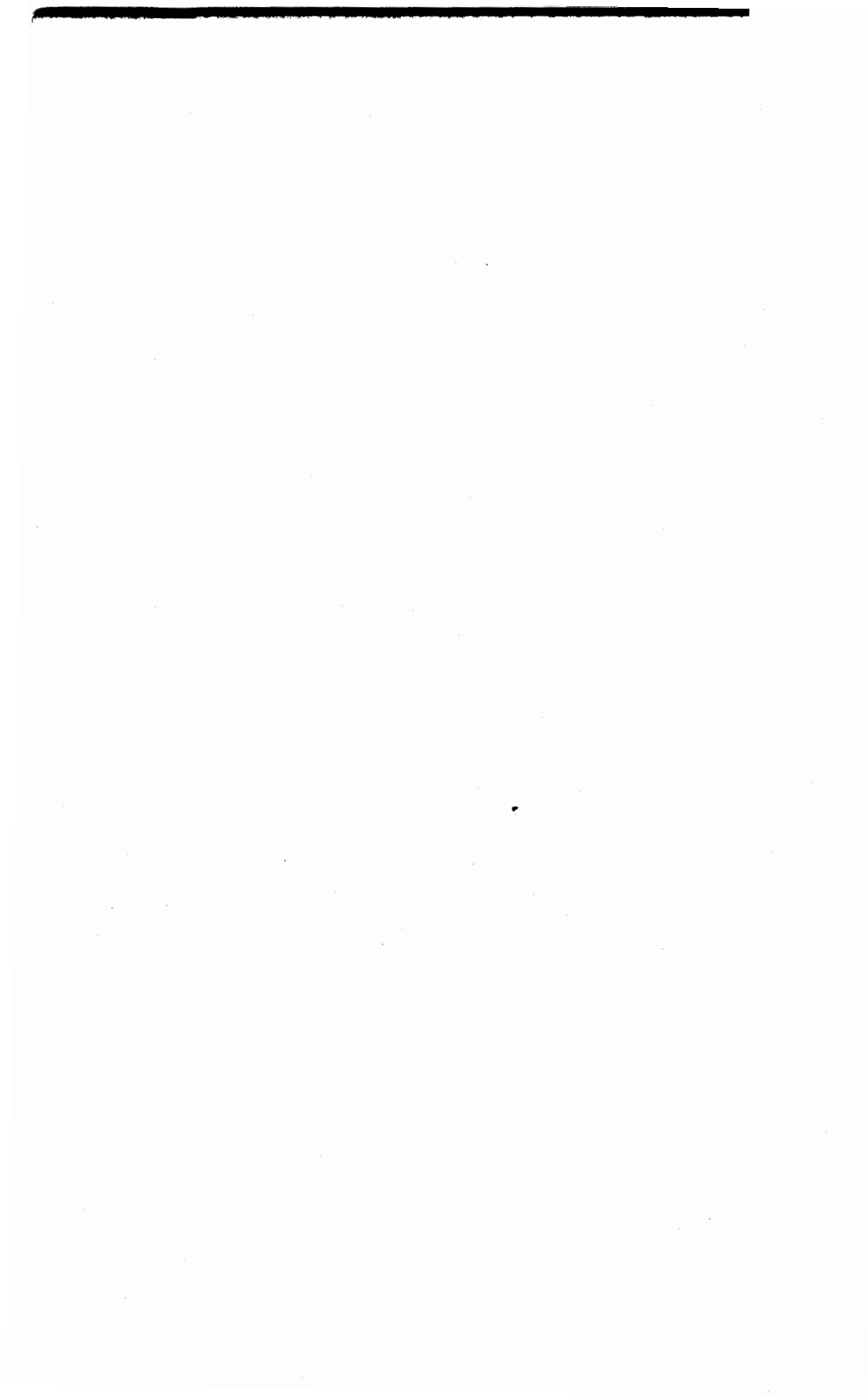
'We spoke of the difficulties of bringing about negotiations. I suggested that the Kaiser, he, and I meet at Kiel in some way; but this was not gone into further.

'The relations between Russia and the British Empire were talked of freely and with the utmost candor. Sir Edward explained that Great Britain and Russia touched at so many points in the world that it was essential for them to have some sort of good understanding.

'I thought they should permit Germany to aid in the development of Persia. He said it might be a good move to play the one against the other, and yet the Germans were so aggressive it might be dangerous. Sir Edward was very fair concerning the necessity for Germany to maintain a navy commensurate with her commerce, and sufficient to protect herself from Russia and France. I told of the militant war



R. Grey.



spirit in Germany and of the high tension of the people, and I feared some spark might be fanned into a blaze. I thought Germany would strike quickly when she moved; that there would be no parley or discussion; that when she felt that a difficulty could not be overcome by peaceful negotiation, she would take no chances but would strike. I thought the Kaiser himself and most of his immediate advisers did not want war, because they wished Germany to expand commercially and grow in wealth, but the army was militaristic and aggressive and ready for war at any time.

'I told him there was a feeling in Germany, which I shared, that the time had come when England could protect herself no longer merely because of her isolated position; that modern inventions had so changed conditions that the Germans believed she would be within striking distance before long, just as were her Continental neighbors. Sir Edward replied, "The idea, then, is that England will be in the same position as the Continental Powers." I said, "Quite so."

'I gave my opinion of the German aërial strength and what they might accomplish even now. I explained the part we desired to play as pacificators and why I felt we could do this better than they could do it themselves. I warned him that the present Chancellor of Germany might go at any time and be replaced by von Tirpitz, and a solution would then be a much more difficult undertaking.

'I feel that my visit has been justified, even if nothing more is done than that already accomplished. It is difficult for me to realize that the dream I had last year is beginning to come true. I have seen the Kaiser, and now the British Government seem eager to carry on the discussion. It is hard to realize, too, that every government in the world may be more or less affected by the moves we are making and every human being may be concerned in the decisions reached from day to day.

'I told Sir Edward the Kaiser had said when his name was

mentioned that he, Sir Edward, had never been on the Continent and therefore could not understand Germany. Sir Edward replied that while this was not literally true, it was nearly so; a great many years ago he went to India and crossed the Continent of Europe, though practically without stopping, and the other day he was in Paris with the King for several days.'

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, June 17, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I found Sir Edward a willing listener and very frank and sympathetic. I am to stay the week-end with Tyrrell, and lunch with Sir Edward next Wednesday. In the meantime he will doubtless discuss the matter with his colleagues. . . .

I find here everything cluttered up with social affairs, and it is impossible to work quickly. Here they have their thoughts on Ascot, garden parties, etc., etc. In Germany their one thought is to advance industrially and to glorify war. In France I did not find the war spirit dominant. Their statesmen dream no longer of revenge and the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine. The people do, but those that govern and know, hope only that France may continue as now. Germany already exceeds her in population by nearly fifty per cent, and the disparity increases year by year. It is this new spirit in France which fills me with hope, and which I used to-day to some advantage. France, I am sure, will welcome our efforts for peace.

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

LONDON, *June 26, 1914*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I had a very interesting luncheon with Sir Edward Grey Wednesday. The other guests were the Lord Chancellor,¹ the Earl of Crewe, and Sir William Tyrrell. Page had to go to Oxford to take his degree and could not be with us.

I did not go into the details of my trip to Germany again, for I took it for granted that Sir Edward had given them to both Haldane and Crewe.

I gave it as my opinion that international matters could be worked out to advantage in much the same way as individuals would work out private affairs, and I thought that most of the misunderstandings were brought about by false reports and mischief-makers, and if the principals knew of the facts, what appeared to be a difficult situation became easy of solution.

I illustrated this by mentioning the service Sir William Tyrrell performed in America last autumn and the consequent cordial relations between our two countries.

The conversation lasted two hours, and it was agreed that it should be renewed at a later date. In the meantime, the general idea was accepted; that is, that a frank and open policy should be pursued between all the parties at interest.

They told me that there was no written agreement between England, France, and Russia, and their understanding was one merely of sympathy and the determination to conserve the interests of one another. . . .

Sir Edward was in a most delightful mood and paid you a splendid tribute. At our last meeting, he said it was his purpose, at the proper time, in the House of Commons to say publicly what he thought you had done for international morals.²

I breakfasted with Lloyd George yesterday and had a

¹ Lord Haldane.

² A reference to the repeal of the Panama tolls exemption.

most interesting conversation with him. I found him peculiarly ill-informed regarding America and its institutions. I will tell you more of this when we meet.

I am lunching with the Prime Minister on Thursday of next week, and I will write you again when anything further of importance follows. . . .

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

House not merely emphasized the negative aspect of the problem, the necessity of removing the factors that threatened war in Europe, but also urged the importance of a positive policy of international coöperation with a constructive purpose. It was the same plan he had discussed with Page and Bernstorff, a plan designed to bring the Great Powers of the world into a general undertaking for the development and protection of the backward regions of the world, and it contained the germ of the mandatary scheme later worked out in the League of Nations. He suggested the plan one cool evening as he sat with Sir Cecil Spring-Rice and Sir William Tyrrell before the open fire in Tyrrell's country home. Spring-Rice and Tyrrell approved, and House carried his plan to Grey.

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, June 26, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

There is another matter I have taken up, which I hope may have your approval. I have suggested that America, England, France, Germany, and the other money-lending and developing nations, have some sort of tentative understanding among themselves for the purpose of establishing a plan by which investors on the one hand may be encouraged to lend money at reasonable rates and to develop, under favorable terms, the waste places of the earth, and on the other

hand to bring about conditions by which such loans may be reasonably safe.

I suggested that each of these countries should tell its people that in the future usurious interest and concessions which involve the undoing of weak and debt-involved countries would no longer be countenanced; that the same rule must hereafter prevail in such investments as is now maintained in all civilized lands in regard to private loans.

I brought this matter up at luncheon on Wednesday, and Grey, Haldane, and Crewe were equally cordial in their discussion of it. I told them I wanted to get their views so that they might be laid before you when I returned.

If this can be brought about, it will not only do away with much of the international friction which such things cause, but it will be a step forward towards bringing about a stable and healthful condition in those unhappy countries which are now misgoverned and exploited both at home and abroad.

Your faithful and devoted

E. M. HOUSE

When Colonel House put a project before President Wilson, he did not expect affirmative commendation. He evidently took the President's silence for consent, for, as he once said, 'If the President did not object, I knew that it was safe to go ahead, for he rarely agreed in words; while if he disagreed, he always expressed himself.' With House the opposite was true; we find many phrases, in his memoranda, such as 'I showed by my silence that I did not agree.'

In the present case, receiving no dissenting cable from Wilson, the Colonel proceeded to elaborate his plan. On July 3 he gathered the American Ambassadors to St. James's and Italy, the British Ambassador to the United States, and Sir William Tyrrell. Spring-Rice had prepared a memorandum for Sir Edward Grey, giving the main points of House's

proposal, so that the Foreign Office might be fully informed of its bearing.

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, July 4, 1914

MY DEAR FRIEND:

. . . Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, Sir William Tyrrell, Walter Page, and Thomas Nelson Page, who is now here, took lunch with me yesterday to go into a more detailed discussion. . . .

Tyrrell told me that Sir Edward Grey was deeply interested [in the suggestion] and approved entirely its general purpose, and that you could count upon this Government's coöperation.

It was the general consensus of opinion that a great deal of friction in the future would be obviated if some such understanding could be brought about in this direction, and that it would do as much as any other one thing to ensure international amity.

The idea, of course, is based entirely upon your Mobile speech, and it is merely that we are trying to mould something concrete from what you have already announced in general as your policy. I suggested that it would be well to keep the matter absolutely confidential until after I had talked it out with you and you had decided how best to bring all the other Governments into agreement, if at all. I do not think it wise to have it known that England was the first to accept the proposal.

Tyrrell thought that after we had worked out a plan here which was acceptable to this Government, I could take it to you for your approval and further suggestion. You could then, if your judgment approved, take it to the other Governments through Jusserand — ostensibly because he is the dean of the Diplomatic Corps at Washington, but really because the Central and South American republics would feel more kindly towards a proposal coming from a Latin nation.

Tyrrell, Spring-Rice, and I meet again on Wednesday to bring the matter into final form. Page may or may not be present. I think perhaps he had better not be, for the reason that it would lend something of an official character to it, which we wish to avoid.

I touched lightly upon this subject to the Kaiser and I feel sure he, too, will approve. This was fortunate, for the reason that it can be said it was brought to his attention first.

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. As Page puts it, this is a concrete example of what may be accomplished if a better international understanding can be brought about.

Sir Edward Grey's personal response to the suggestions of House was enthusiastic, for he was as sincerely anxious to do all that lay in his power to convince Germany of the peaceful intentions of the British, as he was to lay the foundations for a permanent system of international coöperation. He may or may not have realized that quick action was desirable. Unfortunately quick action did not seem possible. He had to consider the sensibilities of the French and Russians, and Tyrrell reported to House that Grey was meditating methods of coming into touch with the Germans without offending the other members of the Entente. Such were the vices of the pre-war system of alliances which made impossible straightforward conversations. Grey was evidently not willing to go to Kiel as House had suggested. Furthermore, the major interest of the Cabinet lay in the Irish crisis, and it was difficult to persuade them that the international situation demanded immediate attention if the explosion were to be prevented.

House chafed at the delay, but philosophically continued

his round of social engagements which might later be turned to diplomatic advantage. Sidney Brooks, of the *Times*, asked him whether he wished to meet 'politicians or gentlemen,' and it was with him that House breakfasted with Lloyd George.

'June 25, 1914: Sidney Brooks called at nine o'clock this morning [recorded House], and we went to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's for breakfast. We were a trifle late and Lloyd George was waiting for me. There were also at breakfast Governor Clifford of the Gold Coast country, and Lloyd George's daughter. It was a most informal affair, each of us going to a side table and helping himself to whatever desired, as is the usual English custom. The choice of food consisted of fried sole, sausage, ham, eggs, fruit, coffee and tea. George ate a very hearty breakfast. . . .'

A week later he lunched with the Prime Minister and Mrs. Asquith.

'July 2, 1914: After the ladies left the table, Asquith asked me to come and sit by him so that we might talk, which we did earnestly for fifteen or twenty minutes. I did nearly all the talking. We first discussed the merits of Cabinet officers sitting in Parliament or Congress, as the case may be. . . . I expressed the feeling that it was better they should have seats, and he also was inclined to this view. . . . I felt very much at home in London now, for the reason that his Government was being abused in exactly the same terms and by the same sort of people as were abusing the Wilson Administration in the United States. This amused him. I thought the purposes of the Liberal Government and of the Democratic Party were quite similar; that we were striving for the same end, but if the Conservatives of the two countries had their way, the end would probably

be that many of them would be stripped of their wealth and hanged to lamp-posts. He agreed to this.

'Mr. Asquith cast the usual slur upon Mr. Bryan. I explained why the President had taken him into his Cabinet. He understood that the President had acted wisely and yet he considered it extremely unfortunate that the necessity existed. This is the usual comment I hear everywhere, in Germany, in France, and here. They do not do Mr. Bryan justice, but it is absolutely useless to fight his battles, because in doing so you discredit the purpose you are striving for.'

VI

While House waited for Grey to give some definite word which he might pass on to the Kaiser, the spark was struck that ignited the pile of combustible material which the diplomatic conflict of a decade had heaped up. On June 28, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir apparent to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was murdered by a Serb nationalist in Serajevo, chief city of Bosnia. Presumably few Englishmen had ever heard of the Archduke and fewer still could locate the provincial capital on a map, yet such was the diplomatic net in which Europe was caught that within six weeks British soldiers were meeting death on the Belgian border.

The news of the Archduke's assassination reached London at the height of the Irish crisis and the feminist agitation, and it created no more audible effect than a tenor solo in a boiler-shop. Some days later the Foreign Secretary expressed a sense of anxiety as to the situation in Southeastern Europe, but domestic politics continued to hold the attention of the Cabinet. In Berlin the danger of a political crisis was openly discussed in the papers, and privately the sanction of the German Government was given to Austria for any retaliatory and repressive measures that Vienna might choose to put into effect against Serbia. But apparently there was

little suspicion that the *carte blanche* so carelessly vouchsafed would end in world war and the destruction of the Empire. The higher officials of the army and navy were not recalled to Berlin; the Foreign Secretary remained on his honeymoon; plans for the Kaiser's cruise were not interrupted. Ambassador Gerard wrote cheerfully to House of his return to the United States in August.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, July 7, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . Have been on A.'s yacht at Kiel, and Mrs. Gerard is still there. I came up for our Colony celebration of the 4th of July.

Dined with the Kaiser and lunched with von Tirpitz before the news of the murder of Franz Ferdinand came. They were both most enthusiastic about you. Von Tirpitz thanked me for giving him the opportunity to meet you. We have about decided to go to U.S.A., sailing August 12th on *Vaterland* — and I shall certainly report to you, wherever you are, before my return.

Kaiser had asked me to sail a race on his racing yacht with him at Kiel, but the murder in Bosnia prevented my thus spending a day with him.

Tennis is responsible for this almost illegible handwriting.

When do you sail? . . .

Berlin is as quiet as the grave. . . .

Yours ever

JAMES W. GERARD

What more sinister, in the light of after events, than the last sentence: 'Berlin is as quiet as the grave.' It was the eve of Armageddon.

Ironically enough, precisely at this moment when Austria

planned her attack upon Serbia, and Germany blindly approved, while the wheels of war were already being geared, the British Foreign Office made definite albeit rather belated response to the suggestions of House. On July 3 the Colonel heard from Tyrrell that Grey wanted him to let the Kaiser know of the peaceable sentiments of the British in order that further negotiations might follow. House at once wrote a long letter to His Imperial Majesty.

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, July 3, 1914

MY DEAR FRIEND:

... Tyrrell brought word to me to-day that Sir Edward Grey would like me to convey to the Kaiser the impressions I have obtained from my several discussions with this Government, in regard to a better understanding between the nations of Europe, and to try and get a reply before I leave. Sir Edward said he did not wish to send anything official or in writing, for fear of offending French and Russian sensibilities in the event it should become known. He thought it was one of those things that had best be done informally and unofficially.

He also told Page that he had a long talk with the German Ambassador here in regard to the matter and that he had sent messages by him directly to the Kaiser.

So you see things are moving in the right direction as rapidly as we could hope.

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

*Colonel House to the Kaiser*AMERICAN EMBASSY
LONDON, July 7, 1914

His Imperial Majesty,
Emperor of Germany,¹ King of Prussia,
Berlin, Germany.

SIR:

Your Imperial Majesty will doubtless recall our conversation at Potsdam and that with the President's consent and approval I came to Europe for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not it was possible to bring about a better understanding between the Great Powers, to the end that there might be a continuation of peace, and later a beneficent economic readjustment, which a lessening of armaments would ensure.

Because of the commanding position Your Majesty occupies, and because of your well-known desire to maintain peace, I came, as Your Majesty knows, directly to Berlin.

I can never forget the gracious acceptance of the general purpose of my mission, the masterly exposition of the worldwide political conditions as they exist to-day, and the prophetic forecast as to the future which Your Majesty then made.

I received every reasonable assurance of Your Majesty's cordial approval of the President's purpose, and I left Germany happy in the belief that Your Majesty's great influence would be thrown in behalf of peace and the broadening of the world's commerce.

In France I tried to reach the thoughts of her people in regard to Germany and to find what hopes she nursed. My

¹ The Kaiser was 'German Emperor' and not 'Emperor of Germany.' He always aspired to the latter title, which the jealousy of the German Princes forbade. Is this unconscious or intentional flattery on the part of Colonel House? On the copy of the letter is an endorsement in House's handwriting: 'I wrote this letter and submitted it to Irwin Laughlin, Counsellor of the Embassy, and he advised its stilted style, which I very much dislike. E. M. H.'

conclusion upon leaving was that her statesmen have given over all thought of revenge, or of recovery of the two lost provinces. Her people in general still have hopes in both directions, but her better-informed rulers would be quite content if France could be sure of her autonomy as it now exists.

It was then, Sir, that I came to England and with high hopes, in which I have not been disappointed.

I first approached Sir Edward Grey, and I found him sympathetic to the last degree. After a two hours' conference, we parted with the understanding that we should meet again within a few days. This I inferred to mean that he wished to consult with the Prime Minister and his colleagues.

At our next conference, which again lasted for two hours, he had, to meet me, the Lord Chancellor, Earl Crewe, and Sir William Tyrrell. Since then I have met the Prime Minister and practically every important member of the British Government, and I am convinced that they desire such an understanding as will lay the foundation for permanent peace and security.

England must necessarily move cautiously, lest she offend the sensibilities of France and Russia; but, with the changing sentiment in France, there should be a gradual improvement of relations between Germany and that country which England will now be glad to foster.

While much has been accomplished, yet there is something still to be desired in order that there may be a better medium created for an easy and frank exchange of thought and purposes. No one knows better than Your Majesty of the unusual ferment that is now going on throughout the world, and no one is in so fortunate a position to bring about a sane and reasonable understanding among the statesmen of the Western peoples, to the end that our civilization may continue uninterrupted.

While this communication is, as Your Majesty knows,

quite unofficial, yet it is written in sympathy with the well-known views of the President, and, I am given to understand, with the hope from His Britannic Majesty's Government that it may bring a response from Your Majesty which may permit another step forward.

Permit me, Sir, to conclude by quoting a sentence from a letter which has come to me from the President:

'Your letter from Paris, written just after coming from Berlin, gives me a thrill of deep pleasure. You have, I hope and believe, begun a great thing and I rejoice with all my heart.'

I have the honor to be, Sir, with the greatest respect,
Your Majesty's

Very obedient servant,

EDWARD M. HOUSE

Thus was a last opportunity given to the Kaiser, who had the assurance of a disinterested outsider that if Germany sincerely desired peace she would have the active assistance of the United States and the coöperation of Great Britain. It was a definite answer to the allegation that Grey's policy aimed at the encirclement and isolation of the Germans. Alas! By the time Colonel House's letter reached Germany, Wilhelm II was already on his cruise in Norwegian waters whence he was recalled by the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia and the war-clouds that immediately gathered.

The Great Adventure had ended in failure. But House's attempt to prevent the war was perhaps less barren of consequences than superficial consideration would suggest. His experience during these months in Europe that ended with the sudden descent of the horror he feared, taught him the need of international organization and confirmed his belief in the necessity of some positive purpose to be followed by this organization. He was already, in essence, an advocate of a league of nations, and his influence with Wilson in this

respect was to be an historical factor of vital importance. Among House's papers there is a significant memorandum which he made of a conversation with the President soon after the beginning of the war.

'August 30, 1914: I explained my plan about the backward nations and how enthusiastically it was received by the British Government, and how much they thought it would do toward bringing about a better understanding between the Great Powers. I believed if we had had an opportunity to put this into effect, in all human probability such a war as this would not have occurred — because with the Powers meeting at regular intervals, and with such a concrete example of the good that might be accomplished by concerted action, a conflagration such as was now going on would have been impossible.'

NOTE. — "The visit of Colonel House to Berlin and London in the spring of 1914," Emperor William remarked to me at Doorn, "almost prevented the World War." — GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.

CHAPTER X

WILSON AND THE WAR

He [Wilson] goes even further than I in his condemnation of Germany's part in this war. . . .

Extract from Diary of Colonel House, August 30, 1914

I

COLONEL HOUSE sailed on July 21 and arrived in Boston eight days later. Immediately before he left, word was carried to him that the British Foreign Office had awakened to the serious character of the international situation.

'July 20, 1914: Tyrrell brought me another message from Sir Edward Grey, which was to the effect that he wished me to know before I sailed that the Austro-Serbian situation was giving him grave concern.'

The forebodings which the Colonel had experienced in Berlin were indeed in process of realization. On July 23, Austria sent to Serbia an ultimatum designed to provoke war, and five days later, brushing aside the Serbian reply as unsatisfactory, began the bombardment of Belgrade. The civil rulers of Germany appreciated suddenly the peril of the path down which they were being dragged by their Austrian ally and their own military clique; stupidly, they refused to accept the conference suggested by Grey, which would have permitted a cooling-off period; and as the crisis intensified with the mobilization of Russia in support of Serbia, the army leaders seized control at Berlin. As House had prophesied, they wasted no time but struck immediately. Diplomatic and military complexities produced this paradox: that a Russo-German war set in motion by an Austro-Serbian

quarrel must begin with a German attack upon France, prefaced by the cynical and brutal onslaught upon Belgium. Great Britain, committed to the defence of Belgium by legal, and to that of France by moral, engagements, impelled by her own national interest, could not stand aside. It was the general war.

House reached Boston and went up to the North Shore while the issue of the crisis was yet undetermined. He still hoped that the assurances he had sent William II of British good feeling might strengthen the Kaiser's peaceful inclination, and that England and Germany might work together for a pacific solution, as they had in 1913. If only the British had been less deliberate in their consideration of House's proposals, an understanding might have been reached before the murder of the Archduke.

Colonel House to the President

PRIDE'S CROSSING, MASSACHUSETTS
July 31, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

When I was in Germany, it seemed clear to me that the situation, as far as a continuation of peace was concerned, was in a very precarious condition; and you will recall my first letter to you telling of the high tension that Germany and southern Europe were under.

I tried to convey this feeling to Sir Edward Grey and other members of the British Government. They seemed astonished at my pessimistic view and thought that conditions were better than they had been for a long time. While I shook their confidence, at the same time I did not do it sufficiently to make them feel that quick action was necessary; consequently they let matters drag until after the Kaiser had gone into Norwegian waters for his vacation, before giving me any definite word to send to him.

It was my purpose to go back to Germany and see the

Emperor, but the conservative delay of Sir Edward and his confrères made that impossible.

The night before I sailed, Sir Edward sent me word that he was worried over conditions, but he did not anticipate what has followed. I have a feeling that if a general war is finally averted, it will be because of the better feeling that has been brought about between England and Germany. England is exerting a restraining hand upon France and, as far as possible, upon Russia; but her influence with the latter is slight.

If the matter could have been pushed a little further, Germany would have laid a heavy hand upon Austria and possibly peace could have been continued until a better understanding could have been brought about.

Russia has a feeling, so I was told in England, that Germany was trying to project Austrian and German influence deep into the Balkan States in order to check her. She has evidently been preparing for some decisive action since the Kaiser threw several hundred thousand German troops on his eastern frontier two years ago, thereby compelling Russia to relinquish the demands that she had made in regard to a settlement of Balkan matters. . . .

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

PRIDE'S CROSSING, MASSACHUSETTS
August 1, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

There are one or two things that would perhaps be of interest to you at this time and which I shall tell you now and not wait until I see you.

Sir Edward Grey told me that England had no written agreement with either Russia or France, or any formal alliance; that the situation was brought about by a mutual desire for protection and that they discussed international

matters with as much freedom with one another as if they had an actual written alliance. . . .

The great danger is that some overt act may occur which will get the situation out of control. Germany is exceedingly nervous and at high tension, and she knows that her best chance of success is to strike quickly and hard; therefore her very alarm might cause her to precipitate action as a means of safety.

Please let me suggest that you do not let Mr. Bryan make any overtures to any of the Powers involved. They look upon him as absolutely visionary, and it would lessen the weight of your influence if you desire to use it yourself later. . . .

If I thought I could live through the heat, I would go to Washington to see you; but I am afraid if I reached there, I would be utterly helpless. I wish you could get time to take the *Mayflower* and cruise for a few days in these waters so that I might join you.

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

Even as House was writing these letters, the act which he feared took place. Assailed by technical arguments which he could not controvert, the Chancellor was carried away by the military influence and threw up his hands. Germany despatched to Russia the ultimatum that made war inevitable and flung into Belgium the vanguard of the army designed to conquer France.

Herr Zimmermann to Colonel House

BERLIN, August 1, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I beg to inform you that I laid the letter which you addressed to His Majesty the Emperor from London before His Majesty. I am directed to convey to you His Majesty's sincere thanks.

The Emperor took note of its content with the greatest interest. Alas, all His strong and sincere efforts to conserve peace have entirely failed. I am afraid that Russia's procedure will force the old world and especially my country in the most terrible war! There is no chance now to discuss the possibility of an understanding, so much desired, which would lay the foundation for permanent peace and security.

With assurances of my high regard, I remain, my dear Colonel,

Sincerely yours

ZIMMERMANN

From Ambassador Page in London there came a veiled but emphatic reference to the efforts which House had made to prevent the war. Mr. Page issued the following announcement to the press:

'One thing I want to make clear that a great many people have talked to me about. Many seem to have the impression that the United States missed a great opportunity. The United States did everything possible to avert war. If ever a job was done right up to the hilt, it was that.'

On the other hand, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British Ambassador in Washington, went so far as to intimate that, while it was the information that House brought from Berlin which had opened Grey's eyes to the seriousness of the situation, the Colonel's endeavors might have been one of the causes which precipitated that crisis. 'You came so near making a general war impossible,' he told House, 'that the war party in Berlin and Vienna became alarmed. They probably knew why you were in Berlin and what you said to the Kaiser. They also probably knew why you went to England, and they undoubtedly knew the contents of your letter to the Kaiser. That, together with Sir Edward Grey's

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conversations with the German Ambassador in London, alarmed the war party and they took advantage of the Archduke's murder and the Kaiser's absence to precipitate matters, believing they were coming to the end of the passage and that it was now or never.'

The hypothesis is interesting, not entirely conclusive.

Eight months afterwards House made a private memorandum, the gist of which accords in general with the opinions of later historians who were able to study the German official documents.

'April 15, 1915: I am often asked my views as to the cause of the war [he wrote], and, while I never give them, I might as well record them here.

'It is clear to me that the Kaiser did not want war and did not actually expect it. He foolishly permitted Austria to bring about an acute controversy with Serbia, and he concluded that by standing firm with his ally, Russia would do nothing more than make a vigorous protest, much as she did when Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. The rattling of the scabbard and the shining armor were sufficient in that case and he thought they would be in this, for the reason that he did not believe Great Britain would go to war concerning such a happening in the Southeast. He had tried England twice in the West and had found that he himself must give way, and there was not much danger of his trying it again where England was involved. But in this instance he thought Germany's relations with England had improved to such an extent that she would not back Russia and France to the extent of making war on Germany.

'And he went so far in what might be termed "bluff" that it was impossible at the last moment to recede because the situation had gotten beyond him. He did not have the foresight to see the consequences, neither did he have the foresight to see that the building up of a great war machine

must inevitably lead to war. Germany has been in the hands of a group of militarists and financiers, and it has been to conserve their selfish interests that this terrible situation has been made possible.'

II

Wilson had to meet the political crisis at a moment when he was overwhelmed with domestic trouble, for his wife was at the point of death. 'His burdens are heavier than any President's since Lincoln,' wrote House to Page on August 6. 'He has grown enormously in popularity within the last ten days and there is scarcely a dissenting note throughout the country. I believe he will live in history as one of the greatest Presidents, if not the greatest, that this country has brought forth.'

Such eulogistic phrases must have been inspired by House's general feeling of admiration for the President rather than by what he did in the crisis, for there was little he could do. Urged by the Senate resolution and against House's judgment, Wilson issued a formal appeal to the belligerents, offering his services in the cause of mediation. But it was, as might have been expected, without effect.

Colonel House to the President

PRIDE'S CROSSING, MASSACHUSETTS
August 5, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... If a statement is made, let me suggest that you make it clear that what you have done was at your own instance. If the public either here or in Europe thought that Mr. Bryan instigated it, they would conclude it was done in an impracticable way and was doomed to failure from the start.

I hate to harp upon Mr. Bryan, but you cannot know as I do how he is thought of in this connection. You and I understand better and know that the grossest sort of injustice is

done him. Nevertheless, just now it is impossible to make people think differently.

It may interest you to hear that Olney expressed regret that he did not accept your tender of the Ambassadorship to London. He said he had no idea it would mean anything more than social activity.

My heart is full of deep appreciation for your letter of August 3. I never worry when I do not hear from you. No human agency could make me doubt your friendship and affection. That my life is devoted entirely to your interests, I believe you know, and I never cease from trying to serve you.

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

The President's offer of mediation was merely an expression of willingness to act. As sent to the monarchs of the belligerent Powers, it read:

SIR:

As official head of one of the Powers signatory to the Hague Convention, I feel it to be my privilege and my duty under Article 3 of the Convention to say to Your Majesty in a spirit of most earnest friendship, that I should welcome an opportunity to act in the interest of European peace either now or at any time that might be thought more suitable as an occasion, to serve Your Majesty and all concerned in a way that would afford me lasting cause for gratitude and happiness.

WOODROW WILSON

A fortnight after this offer, President Wilson issued an appeal to the citizens of the Republic, requesting their assistance in maintaining a state of neutrality. It was later to draw upon the President the virulent attacks of pro-

Entente elements, especially on the Atlantic seaboard, but at the moment, as Colonel House indicates, general articulate opinion seemed to approve it heartily. Wilson based the appeal, not upon indifference to the war, but upon the danger that might arise for the United States if factions should take form supporting the one or the other of the belligerent groups.

‘It will be easy to excite passion [said the President], and difficult to allay it. Those responsible for exciting it will assume a heavy responsibility, responsibility for no less a thing than that the people of the United States, whose love of their country and whose loyalty to its Government should unite them as Americans all, bound in honor to think first of her and her interests, may be divided in camps of hostile opinion, hot against each other, involved in the war itself in impulse and opinion if not in action. . . . Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned.’

Colonel House to the President

PRIDE'S CROSSING, MASSACHUSETTS
August 22, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Thinking that I might see you soon has caused me to hope that I might tell you in person of how splendidly I think you are meeting the difficult situations that come to you day by day.

Your Address on Neutrality is one of the finest things you have ever done, and it has met with universal approbation. Every day editorials of the Republican press speak of you as if you were of their party instead of being the idol of ours.

The food investigation, the shipping bill, the war risk insurance bill, and everything else that you are doing give

the entire nation cause for constant congratulation that you are at the helm and serving it as no other man could.

Of course the war continues to be a most disturbing and uncertain element. I am sorry that Japan injected herself into the general *mêlée*, for it will place an additional strain upon us not to become involved.

The saddest feature of the situation to me is that there is no good outcome to look forward to. If the Allies win, it means largely the domination of Russia on the Continent of Europe; and if Germany wins, it means the unspeakable tyranny of militarism for generations to come.

Fundamentally the Germans are playing a rôle that is against their natural instincts and inclinations, and it shows how perverted men may become by habit and environment.

Germany's success will ultimately mean trouble for us. We will have to abandon the path which you are blazing as a standard for future generations, with permanent peace as its goal and a new international ethical code as its guiding star, and build up a military machine of vast proportions.

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

President Wilson was harshly criticized in the following year for not having adopted a more positive policy at this time. As signatory to the Hague Convention, his critics averred, the United States should have protested against the German invasion of Belgium and the President should have made plain that in sympathy, at least, the country stood on the side of the Entente Allies. Such criticism disregards the fact that the opinion of the whole country was by no means crystallized at this time, and that the issuance of protests or expressions of sympathy would be worse than futile, unless the Government intended to abandon its attitude of neutrality.

Few persons dared to suggest at that time that the United

States should enter the war. Theodore Roosevelt, who was to become one of the most outspoken of those who later demanded participation, writing in the *Outlook*, congratulated the country on the separation from Europe which permitted its neutrality.¹ Ambassador Page, who himself a few months later insisted that the United States must break relations with Germany, wrote to House on August 28, 1914: '... What a *magnificent* spectacle our country presents! We escape murder, we escape brutalization; we will have to settle it; we gain in every way.' And the British Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, wrote to the Colonel on September 12, 'I hope and believe that at any rate *one* part of the world will keep out of it.'

One of the rare Americans who at the moment had the courage to suggest that the United States should adopt a positive policy in order to ensure the defeat of Germany, was President Charles W. Eliot. His suggestion is the more interesting in that Dr. Eliot displayed then, as always, a mental poise which prevented him from criticizing Wilson when the latter refused to take action. Eliot admitted that neither he nor any American could know enough of the facts to insist upon the course he first advised, and he also admitted that Wilson could not be sure that public opinion in the United States would support positive action. It even appears that Eliot himself, after second thought, reached the same conclusion as the President.

The historian may well ask, however, whether the policy first advised by Dr. Eliot would not have shortened the war

¹ 'Our country stands well-nigh alone among the great civilized Powers in being unshaken by the present world-wide war. For this we should be humbly and profoundly grateful. All of us on this continent ought to appreciate how fortunate we are that we of the Western world have been free from the working of the causes which have produced the bitter and vindictive hatred among the great military Powers of the Old World. . . . It is certainly eminently desirable that we should remain entirely neutral and nothing but urgent need would warrant breaking our neutrality and taking sides one way or the other.' — *Outlook*, September 23, 1914.

by many months and perhaps have saved the need of an American expeditionary force. Would it not also have been a direct step toward a league of nations? President Wilson was so far impressed by his arguments that he read the earlier letter to his Cabinet and discussed the suggestion carefully with House. He wrote to Eliot, however, that he did not regard it as practicable.

Dr. Eliot to the President

ASTICOU, MAINE, August 8, 1914

DEAR PRESIDENT WILSON:

I have hesitated three days to mail the enclosed letter to you, and should still hesitate to forward it while you are overwhelmed with sorrow, did I not recall that under such circumstances there is comfort and relief for the sufferer in resolving that he will thereafter do everything in his power to help other people who are suffering or bereaved.

At this moment millions of men are apprehending death or agonies for themselves or poverty and desolation for their families, and millions of women are dreading the loss of lovers, supporters, and friends; and perhaps you have the power to do something to stop these miseries and prevent their recurrence.

In such an effort you would find real consolation.

With deepest sympathy in your affliction, I am

Sincerely yours

CHARLES W. ELIOT

ASTICOU, MAINE, August 6, 1914

DEAR PRESIDENT WILSON:

Has not the United States an opportunity at this moment to propose a combination of the British Empire, the United States, France, Japan, Italy, and Russia in offensive and defensive alliance to rebuke and punish Austria-Hungary and Germany for the outrages they are now committing, by

enforcing against those two countries non-intercourse with the rest of the world by land and sea? These two Powers have now shown that they are utterly untrustworthy neighbors, and military bullies of the worst sort — Germany being far the worse of the two, because she has already violated neutral territory.

If they are allowed to succeed in their present enterprises, the fear of sudden invasion will constantly hang over all the other European peoples; and the increasing burdens of competitive armaments will have to be borne for another forty years. We shall inevitably share in these losses and miseries. The cost of maintaining immense armaments prevents all the great Powers from spending the money they ought to spend on improving the condition of the people, and promoting the progress of the world in health, human freedom, and industrial productiveness.

In this cause, and under the changed conditions, would not the people of the United States approve of the abandonment of Washington's advice that this country keep out of European complications?

A blockade of Germany and Austria-Hungary could not be enforced with completeness; but it could be enforced both by sea and by land to such a degree that the industries of both peoples would be seriously crippled in a short time by the stoppage of both their exports and their imports. Certain temporary commercial advantages would be gained by the blockading nations — a part of which might perhaps prove to be permanent.

This proposal would involve the taking part by our navy in the blockading process, and, therefore, might entail losses of both life and treasure; but the cause is worthy of heavy sacrifices; and I am inclined to believe that our people would support the Government in taking active part in such an effort to punish international crimes, and to promote future international peace.

Is it feasible to open *pourparlers* by cable on this subject? The United States is clearly the best country to initiate such a proposal. In so doing this country would be serving the general cause of peace, liberty, and good will among men.

This idea is not a wholly new one to me. The recent abominable acts of Austria-Hungary and Germany have brought to my mind again the passages on the 'Fear of Invasion,' and the 'Exemption of Private Property from Capture at Sea,' which I wrote a year ago in my report to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, entitled *Some Roads Toward Peace*, pp. 16-17. The outrageous actions of the last fortnight have reënforced the statements I then made, and have suggested a new and graver application of the doctrines therein set forth.

I offer this suggestion in entire submission to your judgment as to its present feasibility and expediency. It seems to me an effective international police method, suited to the present crimes, and the probable issues of the future, and the more attractive because the European concert and the triple alliances have conspicuously failed. It, of course, involves the abandonment by all the European participants of every effort to extend national territory in Europe by force. The United States has recently abandoned that policy in America. It involves also the use of international force to overpower Austria-Hungary and Germany with all possible promptness and thoroughness; but this use of force is indispensable for the present protection of civilization against a savagery, and for the future establishment and maintenance of federal relations and peace among the nations of Europe.

I am, with highest regard,

Sincerely yours

CHARLES W. ELIOT

ASTICOU, MAINE, August 20, 1914

DEAR PRESIDENT WILSON:

In revising a letter I had written you on August 17th, amplifying the proposal contained in my letter of August 6th, I have come to the conclusion that it would not be desirable 'to open *pourparlers* by cable on this subject' at the present moment, even if it were feasible. Two considerations have led me to this conclusion: (1) We apparently do not possess full information on the real purposes and objects of either Russia or Germany; at least the thinking American public does not possess this information, and therefore cannot justly fix on Germany the chief responsibility for the present cataclysm. The extreme rashness of Germany's action cannot but suggest that elements of the situation, still unknown to the rest of the world, were known to her. I do not feel the confidence I then felt in the information accessible when I wrote my letter to you of August 6th. (2) Communications between our Government and the Governments of France and Great Britain, which would necessarily be secret, are undesirable at the present stage of the conflict. Indeed secret diplomacy is always to be disliked, whether used by free governments or despotic. These are sufficient objections to the *pourparlers* I suggested.

I am inclined to give new weight to certain reasons for holding to our traditional policy of neutrality in conflicts between other nations: (1) It seems probable that Russia, Great Britain, and France together can inflict ultimate defeat on Germany and Austria-Hungary — the only tolerable result of this outrageous war. (2) It seems possible that the seven nations now at war can give the much-needed demonstration that the military machinery which the last half of the nineteenth century created all over Europe cannot be set in motion on a large scale without arresting production to a very dangerous degree and causing an intolerable amount of suffering and misery. The interruption of

production and commerce which has already taken place since July 31st is unexampled in the history of the world; and yet the destruction of life and property has hardly begun. If seven nations can give this demonstration, the other nations had better keep out of the conflict.

On reflection, I have also come to think that much public discussion of the interest of free governments in the reformation of the military monarchies of Europe will be necessary before American public opinion will sanction forcible opposition to outrages committed by those monarchies on weaker and freer neighbors.

I remain of the opinion that, in the interests of civilization and peace, neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary should be allowed to succeed in its present undertakings.

Your address to your countrymen on the conditions of real neutrality is altogether admirable in both form and substance.

Sincerely yours

CHARLES W. ELIOT

ASTICOU, MAINE, *August 22, 1914*

DEAR PRESIDENT WILSON:

My letter to you of August 20th crossed in the mails yours of August 19th to me. Yours came to hand yesterday, the 21st. I had already come to your conclusion. . . .

I am, with highest regard and confidence,

Sincerely yours

CHARLES W. ELIOT

III

That President Wilson adopted a policy of neutrality from a feeling of tenderness for Germany and from a failure to appreciate the moral issues involved in the war and in the German attack upon Belgium, is an assertion which has

been frequently put forward. It rests upon supposition or prejudice, and not upon evidence. So much is plain from House's account of his visit to the President's summer home at Cornish at the end of August, 1914.

'*August 30, 1914*: I was glad to find the President situated so delightfully [recorded the Colonel]. The house reminds one of an English place. The view is superb, and the arrangement and furnishings are comfortable and artistic. The President showed me my room himself. It was the one Mrs. Wilson used to occupy and was next to his, with a common bathroom between. We are in one wing of the house and quite to ourselves. A small stairway leads down to his study, and it was there that we sat and discussed matters until after one o'clock when lunch was announced.

'I told of my experiences in Europe and gave him more of the details of my mission. He was interested in the personalities of the people who are the Governments' heads, and later said my knowledge of these men and of the situation in Europe would be of great value to him.

'The President spoke with deep feeling of the war. He said it made him heartsick to think of how near we had come to averting this great disaster, and he thought if it had been delayed a little longer, it could never have happened, because the nations would have gotten together in the way I had outlined.

'I told in detail of my suggestion to Sir Edward Grey and other members of the Cabinet, that the surest guaranty of peace was for the principals to get together frequently and discuss matters with frankness and freedom, as Great Britain and the United States were doing. He agreed that this was the most effective method and he again expressed deep regret that the war had come too soon to permit the inauguration of such procedure. He wondered whether things might have been different if I had gone sooner. I

thought it would have made no difference, for the reason that the Kaiser was at Corfu and it was impossible for me to approach him sooner than I did. . . .

'I was interested to hear him express as his opinion what I had written him some time ago in one of my letters, to the effect that if Germany won it would change the course of our civilization and make the United States a military nation. He also spoke of his deep regret, as indeed I did to him in that same letter, that it would check his policy for a better international ethical code.

'He felt deeply the destruction of Louvain, and I found him as unsympathetic with the German attitude as is the balance of America. He goes even further than I in his condemnation of Germany's part in this war, and almost allows his feeling to include the German people as a whole rather than the leaders alone. He said German philosophy was essentially selfish and lacking in spirituality. When I spoke of the Kaiser building up the German machine as a means of maintaining peace, he said, "What a foolish thing it was to create a powder magazine and risk some one's dropping a spark into it!"

'He thought the war would throw the world back three or four centuries. I did not agree with him. He was particularly scornful of Germany's disregard of treaty obligations, and was indignant at the German Chancellor's designation of the Belgian Treaty as being "only a scrap of paper."

'I took occasion here to explain to him Sir Edward Grey's strong feeling upon the question of treaty obligation, and his belief that he, the President, had lifted international ethics to a high plane by his action in the Panama tolls question.'

But although the personal feeling of the President was with the Allies, he insisted then and for many months after, that this ought not to affect his political attitude, which he

intended should be one of strict neutrality. He felt that he owed it to the world to prevent the spreading of the conflagration, that he owed it to the country to save it from the horrors of war. There was also some truth in the popular impression that he looked upon the war as a distant event, terrible and tragic, but one which did not concern us closely in the political sense. He had not yet come to realize that his great opportunity was to lie in foreign affairs.

Colonel House saw in the war a great chance to bring about a revolution in international organization by impressing upon the public mind the need of a new standard of international morals. The code of conduct for nations should be as high as that for individuals and, if public opinion could be brought to realize this necessity, House believed that a new spirit would inform international affairs. He tried to show the President how much he might do by preaching this doctrine, which later became the soul of Wilson's international policies. 'He did not have a hopeful outlook,' recorded House, August 30. 'I tried to make him see that reforms were going forward with much more celerity than heretofore, for man desired the commendation of his fellow man more than anything else, and with public opinion set toward higher purposes, individuals would naturally strive to obtain the good opinion of society.'

Some weeks later House expounded his creed to his friend Edward S. Martin, in whom he found a sympathetic auditor. It was henceforth the *leit-motiv* running through all his diplomatic experiences.

'I lunched with Martin to-day at the Century Club [wrote House]. He had just written one of his illuminating editorials for *Life*, and we fell to philosophizing upon international morals and governmental affairs. I did most of the talking, trying to point out the fundamental error in international morals, inasmuch as they are upon a different level from

individual morals. No high-minded man would think of doing as an individual what he seems perfectly ready to do as a representative of a State. It has been thought entirely legitimate to lie, deceive, and be cruel in the name of patriotism. I endeavored to point out that we could not get very far toward a proper international understanding until one nation treated another as individuals treat one another. We see the wreck individuals make of themselves by devoting all their time to selfish interests, and, while they may acquire things that seem to them worth while, in the end they lose the regard of their fellow men and find themselves unhappy because of them.'

House believed that the United States should lead in a crusade for such a revolution in international morals. He found the President difficult to stir. Wilson was profoundly interested in domestic problems and was still slow to formulate a positive foreign policy. He seemed to feel that he had already accomplished his great work.

'*September 28, 1914*: The President [House noted] declared if he knew he would not have to stand for reëlection two years from now, he would feel a great load lifted from him. I thought he need not accept the Presidency unless he wished to, even if the Democratic Party demanded it, though I could understand why he would feel it a duty to do so provided his health permitted. I could not see what else he could do in life that would be so interesting. He replied that the thing that frightened him was that it was impossible to make such an effort in the future as he had made in the past, or to accomplish anything like what he had accomplished in a legislative way. He feared the country would expect him to continue as he had up to now, which would be impossible. I thought the country would neither expect it nor want it. There were other things he could do which would be far

more delightful in accomplishment, and would add even more to his fame. I referred particularly to his foreign policy which, if properly followed, would bring him world-wide recognition.

'I find the President singularly lacking in appreciation of the importance of this European crisis. He seems more interested in domestic affairs, and I find it difficult to get his attention centred upon the one big question.

'Congress will adjourn now within a few days, and when it is out of the way it is my purpose to make a drive at the President and try to get him absorbed in the greatest problem of world-wide interest that has ever come, or may ever come, before a President of the United States.'

A month later House noted again:

'*October 22, 1914*: I am sorry to say, as I have said before, that the President does not seem to have a proper sense of proportion as between domestic and foreign affairs. I suppose it is the Washington atmosphere that has gripped him as it does every one else who lives there, and the work of the day largely obscures the tremendous world issues that are now before us.'

Wilson's lack of appreciation of the opportunity for a positive policy in foreign affairs accounts in some measure, perhaps, for his failure to perceive the immediate necessity of developing the military and naval strength of the nation. Colonel House, on the other hand, had taken great interest in what came to be called 'preparedness,' even before the outbreak of the European war, and he seems to have been on terms of intimacy with the outstanding apostle of the movement, Leonard Wood.

'*April 16, 1914*: I had a long talk with General Wood

about the army's preparedness. We discussed the international situation, particularly regarding Japan and the possibility of trouble there, and what would be necessary to be done. He said Manila was now so fortified that we could hold it for a year at the minimum, and that within a short while Hawaii would be in a similarly impregnable position. He thought the Panama Canal was so near completion that it could be used in twenty days in the event of an emergency. We promised to keep in close touch with one another from now on.'

If, as House hoped, the United States were to take the lead in an international movement to prevent future war or to render it less likely, it was of vital importance that the moral influence of America should be based upon an adequate material force, especially a strong army and navy. There was even the possibility that if the nation were placed on a war footing as rapidly as possible, the United States would be in a position to insist that the belligerents stop fighting, by a threat of entering the war against the side that refused reasonable terms. And with Europe on the road to exhaustion, the combined economic and military strength of America would permit her to decide what were reasonable terms.

There was also the danger of a German victory, in which case the United States, if unarmed, would find herself facing an aggressive power capable of carrying through by force an expansive policy in South and Central America that might touch closely and adversely our most important interests. In any event, it seemed the part of wisdom to prepare a force sufficient to support the diplomatic demands we might be compelled to make upon the belligerents, should either side disregard our rights as a neutral.

Because of such factors Colonel House found himself in complete agreement with the preparedness crusade, and he

urged that immediate steps be taken to strengthen both army and navy. He found the President cold. Wilson did not visualize the rôle America might play in the same fashion as House; he believed that the United States should give an example of pacific idealism which was at the other pole from military preparation, and he felt himself supported by the mass of public opinion which, until aroused by the peril and the opportunity of the situation, opposed the sacrifices necessary to preparedness.

'November 3, 1914: Loulie and I [recorded House] lunched with General and Mrs. Leonard Wood at Governor's Island. I wished to see the General before I went to Washington. I am strongly of the opinion that it is time for this Government to adopt some system, perhaps the Swiss, looking toward a reserve force in the event of war. I found General Wood receptive. He is to send me, at the White House, memoranda and data to hand the President for his information.

'Wood is desirous of going to the war zone, and I told him I would try to arrange it for the reason that we have no military man who has had any experience in the handling of large bodies of troops. . . .

'November 4, 1914 [conference between Wilson and House]: We passed to the question of a reserve army. He balked somewhat at first and said he thought the labor people would object because they felt that a large army was against their interests. He did not believe there was any necessity for immediate action; he was afraid it would shock the country. He made the statement that no matter how the great war ended, there would be complete exhaustion; and, even if Germany won, she would not be in a condition seriously to menace our country for many years to come. I combated this idea, stating that Germany would have a large military force ready to act in furthering the designs

which the military party evidently have in mind. He said she would not have the men. I replied that she could not win unless she had at least two or three million men under arms at the end. He evidently thought the available men would be completely wiped out.

'I insisted it was time to do a great constructive work for the army and one which would make the country too powerful for any nation to think of attacking us. He told me there was reason to suspect that the Germans had laid throughout the country concrete foundations for great guns, similar to those they laid in Belgium and France. He almost feared to express this knowledge aloud, for, if the rumor got abroad, it would inflame our people to such an extent that he would be afraid of the consequences. General Wood has the matter under investigation, and he asked me to caution Wood to be very discreet.¹

'I spoke of General Wood's desire to be sent abroad and asked him to let him go in order that we might have at least one man in our army with some experience. He said they would not accept him. I replied that Wood thought otherwise and it was something for him to work out in his own way.

'In speaking of the building-up of our army, I thought if the Allies were successful there would be no need for haste; but if the Germans were successful and we then began our preparations, it would be almost equivalent to a declaration of war, for they would know we were directing our preparations against them. I therefore urged that we start without delay, so that we might be ready and avoid being placed in such a position. . . .

'*November 8, 1914:* The President desired me to go to church with him, but I compromised by having Louie go. Mr. Bryan had just arrived from the West and I felt it

¹ Probably neither Wilson nor House took such suspicions very seriously; the investigation proved them to be without basis.

necessary to see him. I wanted to find out what his views were regarding the army. I found him in violent opposition to any kind of increase by the reserve plan. He did not believe there was the slightest danger to this country from foreign invasion, even if the Germans were successful. He thought *after war was declared* there would be plenty of time to make any preparations necessary. He talked as innocently as my little grandchild, Jane Tucker. He spoke with great feeling, and I fear he may give trouble. . . .

'November 25, 1914 [conversation with Wilson]: We spoke of the ever-present topic of the war. I have gotten from good authority that Italy would now be with the Allies if she had been prepared. She found her equipment was not sufficient to be effective, but she is putting herself in shape to get into the war just as soon as she is ready and can make her forces worth while. I thought Roumania would also join the Allies. He expressed pleasure at this, and hoped these two countries would not delay too long.

'I again insisted that Germany would never forgive us for the attitude we have taken in the war and, if she is successful, she will hold us to account. . . .

'I spoke again of our unpreparedness and how impractical Mr. Bryan was. I urged the need of our having a large reserve force, and he replied, "Yes, but not a large army," an amendment which I accepted. I particularly emphasized the necessity for greater artillery plants and more artillery.'

The arguments of House produced no immediate effect upon the President, who in his annual message to Congress refused to approve plans for a large reserve force and the principle of compulsory training; Wilson insisted that any revolution in our established military policy (if policy it might be called) would indicate that we had been 'thrown off our balance by a war with which we have nothing to do, whose causes cannot touch us.' Left thus without guidance,

except of a negative sort, public opinion was slow to perceive the need of military efficiency, and in some quarters, as the following letter indicates, Wilson's attitude received the most enthusiastic approval.

Mr. George Foster Peabody to Colonel House

NEW YORK, *December 16, 1914*

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

As I am writing to you at the White House, I shall venture to say to you that I think General Leonard Wood's address to the Merchants' Association and others respecting unpreparedness of our army most unsuitable and also reflecting upon the President's magnificent presentation of the whole situation in his address to Congress.

I hope that he may be promptly called down.

I cannot tell you how profoundly I was stirred by the President's address and by the deep and widespread impression it made. I should have liked to write to him to gratify my enthusiasm, but I have the impression that in the press of such vitally important state problems he has not had the time to see the later letters I wrote. I should not want to burden him, much less intrude. . . .

Very truly yours

GEORGE FOSTER PEABODY

Colonel House himself was not blind to the high cost of military preparation, in the moral as well as in the material sense, nor was he unaware of the evils which its extravagance had brought upon Europe. Lord Grey, in his memoirs, says: 'Every country [in Europe] had been piling up armaments and perfecting preparations for war. The object in each case had been security. The effect had been precisely the contrary of what was intended and desired. Instead of a sense of security there had been produced a sense of fear, which was yearly increasing. . . . Such was the general condition of

Europe; preparations for war had produced fear, and fear predisposes to violence and catastrophe.'¹ All this House appreciated, and he sympathized with Wilson's dread that military preparation in the United States might destroy the calm spirit necessary to the rescue of the world from a spell of madness.

But although to this degree, and because of his horror at the idea of mass slaughter, House regarded himself as a pacifist, he could not avoid the fact that international pacifism becomes mere anæmia unless organized to include in its influence all the great Powers. In the greatest crisis of history the United States was helpless to play any rôle except that of passivity. To protect our rights effectively, to aid the world to escape from the nightmare in which it was caught, there was need of a positive organization of our potential strength. This House, as we shall see, did not fail to urge upon the President.

Twelve months afterwards, in the autumn of 1915, Wilson yielded to the logic of events and did not lack the courage to confess that he had changed his mind; in a series of magnificent speeches he demanded vigorous military preparation and he led through Congress the largest naval bill of our history. But a precious year had been lost and the President encountered a pacifistic opposition which he himself had originally done something to foster. He paid a heavy price, for without the material force necessary to the support of his diplomacy, Wilson was destined later to miss the opportunity, if not of ending, at least of shortening, the war.

IV

Wilson's sense of aloofness from Europe and the war was quickly shattered by the march of circumstances, and he was soon to learn that the war could touch us very closely.

¹ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years* (Frederick A. Stokes Company), II, 279.

Ironically enough, in view of later developments, it was a dispute with the British over their control of trade which first awakened a general sense of our national proximity to the fighting front. British supervision of war-time neutral trade has always been strict, and its interpretation of the meaning of 'contraband' broad. From the British point of view it would have been flying in the face of Providence to surrender the opportunities offered by the mastery of the sea. The Entente Allies were naturally interested in preventing the arrival in Germany, directly or indirectly, of any articles that might help the enemy to prolong the war, for in a modern war almost any article of common necessity, such as cotton, oil, copper, or foodstuffs, may be of as much military value as what was formerly declared contraband of war. It was inevitable that the Allies, under British leadership because of the strength of the British navy, should seize and search neutral vessels which might carry contraband; it was equally certain that they would extend the definition of contraband.

On the other hand, as the largest of the neutral Powers the United States was vitally concerned in preserving open routes to the neutral countries of Europe and an open market in Europe for non-contraband goods.

The situation contained dynamite, and it is not pleasant to reflect that under existing international usages it is one which the United States must confront whenever Great Britain is at war with a Continental Power.

'September 30, 1914 [conference between Wilson and House]: When we were discussing the seizure of vessels by Great Britain, he read a page from his "History of the American People," telling how during Madison's Administration the War of 1812 was started in exactly the same way as this controversy is opening up. The passage said that Madison was compelled to go to war despite the fact that he was a

peace-loving man and desired to do everything in his power to prevent it, but popular feeling made it impossible.

'The President said: "Madison and I are the only two Princeton men that have become President. The circumstances of the War of 1812 and now run parallel. I sincerely hope they will not go further."

'I told the British Ambassador about this conversation. He was greatly impressed, and said that in his cablegram to Sir Edward Grey he would call attention not only to the passage in the President's book, but to his comment to me upon it.'

In view of the strong sympathy for the Entente cause in the United States, the danger of an actual break was remote. Both Wilson and Grey were convinced that the future welfare of the world depended upon Anglo-American friendship, and each was anxious to yield as much to the other as might be necessary to assure it. But unless care were taken, a point might be reached beyond which neither could yield.

Ambassador Page in London had fortunately won the respect and affection of the British, and negotiations were always facilitated by the cordiality of the relations he maintained with the Foreign Office. On the other hand, he suffered from the defects of his virtues, placing such value upon Anglo-American friendship that he was not inclined to present American protests with the emphasis desired at Washington. Both Wilson and the State Department were convinced that the avoidance of future trouble could best be secured by letting the British understand clearly at the very beginning that we regarded British Admiralty policy as infringing our neutral rights and material interests.

Mr. Page looked at the problem in a different light. He was willing to make allowance for the British restrictions on trade, and he evidently felt that in comparison with the

defeat of Germany and the maintenance of good feeling between Great Britain and America, the losses and inconveniences of neutrals did not count. 'Everything is going well here, I think,' he wrote to House, September 15, 1914. 'The British Government is most considerate of us in all large ways. The smaller questions of ships and prizes, etc., are really in the hands of the Admiralty — really, tho' not nominally — and they are conducted on a war basis.'

It was with some irritation that the Ambassador discovered that in the United States British seizure of ships and prizes was not regarded as a 'smaller question,' and he did not conceal his lack of sympathy with the arguments drafted by the legal advisers to the State Department in protection of American rights on the seas.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, October 21, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have received the following cablegram from Page, through his son Arthur.

'God deliver us, or can you deliver us, from library lawyers. They often lose chestnuts while they argue about burns. See our friend [President Wilson] and come here immediately if the case be not already settled.¹ Of utmost importance.' . . .

I hardly know to what he refers, but perhaps you do. It may be the Declaration of London matter.

I notice that Northcliffe, in his papers, and the *London Post* are demanding that the Government seize neutral vessels carrying reservists or contraband cargoes.

If you think I can be of any service, please wire me and I

¹ The British had refused the American demand that the Declaration of London be generally accepted. The Declaration of London (1909), which Great Britain had never ratified, left among other articles copper and rubber on the non-contraband list and would have permitted the importation of foodstuffs by Germany.

will come to Washington immediately. Page is evidently disturbed.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The President replied that if Page was disturbed by the attitude of the State Department, he, Wilson, was a little disturbed by that of the Ambassador. If Page were to represent the American Government, he must see the matters under discussion in the light in which they were seen in the United States. Wilson insisted that Page's advice was of great value, but he expressed the fear that Page's intense feeling for the British case might prove a danger. Wilson himself was sometimes disparaging in his remarks about professional diplomats, but he did not enjoy having the work of the State Department, which emphasized the American point of view, referred to as that of 'library lawyers.'

Colonel House shared Mr. Page's conviction that too much depended upon the friendship of Great Britain and the United States to permit a quarrel over anything that was not vital; but he appreciated, as the Ambassador did not, the irritation caused in the United States by the British methods of holding up American cargoes, and he also realized that unless the United States maintained her rights as a neutral with vigor in the case of the seizure of cargoes, she would not be able to protest effectively should more serious attacks follow.

On the other hand, he believed that through the exercise of care in the drafting of protests and by maintaining close personal relations with the British Ambassador in Washington, much friction could be avoided.

'September 27, 1914: I took the 12.08 train to Washington and was met at the station by McAdoo and Eleanor. They went to the White House with me and took dinner with us.

After dinner we talked for a while, until a large package of papers came from the State Department marked "urgent." This was the signal for . . . the family to leave, and the President and I immediately got down to work.

'X had written a long letter to Page, concerning the Declaration of London and its effect upon neutral shipping. X's letter of instruction to Page was exceedingly undiplomatic, and I urged the President not to permit it to be sent. . . .

'I then suggested that he permit me to have a conference with Sir Cecil Spring-Rice and get at the bottom of the controversy. He expressed warm approval of this plan. After this we went to bed, pretty tired and somewhat worried.

'September 28, 1914: I had Hoover¹ arrange with Billy Phillips² for the use of his home, and I asked Sir Cecil Spring-Rice over the telephone to meet me there at ten o'clock. The conference was a most interesting one.

'I showed the Ambassador the letter X had prepared to send Page. He was thoroughly alarmed over some of the diplomatic expressions. One paragraph in particular he thought amounted almost to a declaration of war. He said if that paper should get into the hands of the press, the headlines would indicate that war with Great Britain was inevitable, and he believed one of the greatest panics the country ever saw would ensue, for it was as bad or worse than the Venezuela incident. He said he did not know what I had accomplished in a busy life, but he felt sure I had never done as important a piece of work as in this instance. . . .

'We discussed the best ways and means of getting out of

¹ Chief usher at the White House.

² Mr. William Phillips was at this time Third Assistant Secretary of State; his ability and diplomatic qualifications enabled him to perform services as important as they were unheralded. He was on terms of close friendship with Sir Cecil and it was at his house that House usually met the British Ambassador. Phillips became First Assistant Secretary in 1915, and later Minister to Holland and Ambassador to Belgium.

the difficulty, which he said would never have arisen if the State Department had talked the matter over with him frankly in the beginning. His Government's attitude had been known at the State Department for a month, and yet not a word of objection had been raised. If he had known what the feeling of this country was, he would have taken it up with his Government and their attitude would have been modified. As it was, they had already published their intention of doing the things to which our Government objected, and it would be difficult to handle it now in a way to save the *amour-propre* of his Government.

'We outlined a despatch for this Government to send to Page, and then we outlined the despatch which we thought he should send Sir Edward Grey. We agreed to be absolutely frank with one another, letting each know just what was being done, so there could be no subterfuge or misunderstanding.'

It would be difficult to find in all history another instance of diplomacy so unconventional and so effective. Colonel House, a private citizen, spreads all the cards on the table and concerts with the Ambassador of a foreign Power the despatches to be sent the American Ambassador and the Foreign Minister of that Power. If there is criticism of the method, it is stifled by its success.

As a result of this intervention, the threatened crisis was tided over; and during the next five weeks it proved possible to approach the problem of neutral shipping with equanimity, although no fundamental solution was discovered. House himself said nothing of what he had done.

Colonel House to Ambassador W. H. Page

NEW YORK, October 29, 1914

DEAR PAGE:

When your cablegram came, I communicated with the President, but found that everything was in process of ad-

justment. I cannot see how there can be any serious trouble between England and America, with all of us feeling as we do; but of course we must needs be careful in the manner of doing things — for the American people, as you know, are exceedingly sensitive regarding certain questions, and it would not be advisable for the President, with all his power and popularity, to go counter to this sentiment. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, *November 9, 1914*

MY DEAR HOUSE:

. . . I want to thank you for what I suppose you did when I telegraphed you thro' Arthur. I sent the telegram thro' Arthur so that your name and mine shd. not be on the same telegram and thereby possibly excite suspicion. The situation is safe, but it can at any time be made critical by a captious manner. I did not and do not mean to criticize Lansing or anybody else — only to make sure that things are seen in their proper perspective.

Sir Edward values American friendship more than anything else of that kind. He is not going to endanger it. To this day, he hasn't confiscated a single American cargo, tho' there are many that he might have confiscated within his rights. Our continued good relations[hip] is the only thing that now holds the world together. That's the big fact. A cargo of copper, I grant you, may be important; but it can't be as important as our friendship. It's the big and lasting things that count now. I think of the unborn generations of men to whom the close friendship of the Kingdom and of our Republic will be the most important political fact in the world. — Have stiff controversies? Yes; I'm for them whole-heartedly, when we have a good reason. But there's no reason now; and, if there were, this is the time to be

patient. There'll be plenty of time left to quarrel when this dire period is past. . . .

It's no time, then, to quarrel or to be bumptious about a cargo of oil or of copper, or to deal with these Gov'ts as if things were normal. Thank God, you are 3000 miles from it. I wish I were 30,000. . . .

Yours heartily

W. H. P.

Unfortunately, the oil and the copper exporters in the United States felt differently and protests poured in upon the State Department in Washington. For Mr. Page, who was in vital sympathy with the Allied cause, the situation was worse than trying. His nerves became taut. As usual, the minor questions were the more vexatious. What was dangerous was that, in his misunderstanding and irritation with the State Department, he should lose sight of the Washington point of view, which he was sent to London to represent. It was the more difficult to warn Mr. Page to be careful not to display pro-Ally feeling in that he looked upon himself as falling over backward in his neutrality, and was not in a frame of mind to receive criticism philosophically.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, *December 12, 1914*

MY DEAR HOUSE:

. . . I am trying my best, God knows, to keep the way as smooth as possible; but neither Government helps me. Our Government merely sends the shippers' *ex-parte* statement. This Government merely uses the Navy's excuse.

Oh, well, praise God it goes as well as it does. I get my facts as best I can — from other neutrals, from ship-captains, etc. — and I do the best I can, getting thanks for nothing, getting lectures for — nothing. I happened a little

while ago to telegraph that I 'conferred' with the neutral Ministers, meaning, of course, that I talked with them and found out what facts I could. It was *their* ships that were stopped, with American cargoes. I got back a despatch from Washington saying I had no authority to be making shipping and trade agreements with neutral Powers — they did that themselves at Washington! Now what damfool in the State Department supposed that I was making agreements with any Govt. or that I was doing anything but trying day and night to get an American cargo released and to prevent more from being stopped — I don't know, nor care to know; and I haven't a trace of a shade of a dream of feeling about it. Anybody's at liberty to think anything about me he pleases; I've long since ceased to care a fig. A man in a difficult public place must turn heaven and earth to do his very uttermost duty — must try doubly and trebly hard at any cost and must absolutely exhaust every possible effort and resource and satisfy his most exacting conscience. He will be blamed then. He will be misunderstood. He will be misjudged. He must accept that and go on without paying the least heed to it. I can do that easily. I don't care a fig. I'm incapable of resenting any misunderstanding. *But* — BUT, you can't help doubting the *intelligence* of a man (whoever he is) that breaks loose with a sermon about my making 'agreements with other governments'; and you don't know just how much dependence to put in the next telegram about something else, that comes from the same source. . . .

Everybody here, so far as I have heard (and I shd hear, you may be sure), regards us all as neutral of course, and so treats us — English, Germans, Austrians, French, and neutrals. Of the neutral members of the diplomatic corps I see much (in spite of my inability to make 'agreements with other countries'); and I can't tell you to save my life what the leanings are of any of them! I have felt no suspicion from

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any quarter but Washington. Suspicion, I have noticed, generally sleeps in the bed with Ignorance. . . .

Heartily yours

WALTER H. PAGE

Colonel House to Ambassador W. H. Page

NEW YORK, *December 4, 1914*

DEAR PAGE:

I have just returned from Washington. . . .

The President wishes me to ask you please to be careful not to express any unneutral feeling, either by word of mouth, or by letter, and not even to the State Department. He said that both Mr. Bryan and Mr. Lansing had remarked upon your leaning in that direction, and he thought it would materially lessen your influence.

He feels very strongly about this, and I am sending the same message to Gerard.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, *December 15, 1914*

DEAR HOUSE:

I'll tell you a story: Within a week two Americans who have lately come here have criticized me and the Embassy for being pro-German, and I often hear such remarks that come from the English.

And I'll ask you a question:

Is an Ambassador a man sent to keep another Government friendly and in good humor with your Government so that you can get and give all sorts of friendly services and make the world better?

Or is his business to snap and snarl and play 'smart' and keep 'em irritated — damn 'em! — and get and give nothing?

These I send you by Mrs. Page as my Xmas greeting.

W. H. P.

If the State Department had difficulties in impressing its point of view upon the American Ambassador in London, there was also cause for some anxiety because of petty misunderstandings with the British Ambassador in Washington. Sir Cecil Spring-Rice was a diplomatist of distinction and a scholar of charm. During the early weeks of the war, his relations with our Government were of the most cordial sort. House kept in close touch with him, and the following letter indicates the tone of their intercourse:

Ambassador Spring-Rice to Colonel House

BRITISH EMBASSY
WASHINGTON, November 5, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I hear you have come. How are you? . . .

We hope that the exports will continue as at present. But the evident intentions of the Germans are to get some fast cruisers out of the North Sea and effect a junction with those in the Atlantic, and so control for a short time the trade routes. We suspect the ships in United States ports of an intention to run out and get converted into commerce destroyers, which would be awkward. For this reason I am asking that ships in New York harbour should be periodically inspected and not allowed to leave unless their cargoes are innocent.

Do you gather that an attack will be made on the Administration in Congress for remissness about contraband matters? As a matter of fact, no American exporter has suffered any loss and all the protests of the Administration have been successful. But owing to changed conditions of modern war it is evident that the definition of contraband must be changed — i.e., for instance, it must include petroleum and copper (which in Germany is entirely used for cartridges, bombs, etc.); and the American doctrine of 'continuous voyage,' or that the character of the goods is

determined by its ultimate destination, and not the port where it is landed, is evidently applicable to certain ports like Genoa, Rotterdam, and Copenhagen which are the back doors of Germany. A *just* cause of complaint would be the seizure of goods really destined for neutrals and we are making arrangements by which such goods will be hall-marked by the sender here if he wishes it. I hope by December these arrangements will be in working order and no further inconvenience suffered. I am telegraphing about this now and a man is arranging with the copper men here for an amicable understanding. A protest, reserving all rights, could be made at once in cases of unreasonable or prolonged detention.

Yours sincerely

CECIL SPRING-RICE

Unfortunately, Sir Cecil was in wretched health, and his nerves, even more than those of Page, were prone to become frazzled as unpleasant incidents arose. The following excerpts from House's memoranda indicate the delicacy of the situation as well as the extraordinary activity of the Colonel, for those were the days in which he was negotiating with the South American Ambassadors the first draft of the Pan-American Pact.

'December 29, 1914: I went from Naon to the home of Billy Phillips to meet the British Ambassador. I found him nervous and excited because of the premature publication and a garbled account of the protest made by the President to the British Government concerning the holding-up of neutral vessels. He did not mind the note, for he and I had already threshed that out and settled it long before it was sent. He had even received a reply from Sir Edward Grey indicating that the President's request would be granted. The note was merely a formal matter of routine after the real issue had

been met, but what he objected to was the way in which it had been given publicity and the manner in which our press had treated it. . . .

I tried to explain to Spring-Rice how badly the President felt. He accepted that part, but blamed the State Department most unreservedly and said it was impossible to conduct diplomatic negotiations of a delicate nature through the newspapers. He claimed that it was not the first time and that he hesitated to take up further matters with them; in fact, he intended to absent himself from the Department in future. He had no doubt we would all be pro-Germans within six months, that the Germans were strong and had a thorough organization, and they would finally break down any anti-German sentiment which now existed. . . .

'He talked so many different ways, in almost the same sentence, that I concluded he was too upset for me to have any profitable discussion with him, and I therefore took my leave.'

As it turned out, the State Department was quite guiltless of any indiscretion, but then, as generally, it was made the scapegoat for the sins of others.

'December 30, 1914: I called up Phillips at the State Department [recorded House] and told him I was sorry Mr. Bryan was out of town, because I desired to suggest to him that he soothe the ruffled feelings of the British Ambassador. I asked Phillips to take part in this laudable endeavor. I said my trip to Washington had been largely nullified by the premature publication of the President's protest to the British Government and I hoped they would get the Ambassador in a normal frame of mind before I returned, for he blamed the State Department for the leak. Phillips said they had found exactly where the leak was, that it was not in the State Department, and indicated as nearly as he could over the tele-

phone that it was —, a fact which I already knew as well as I could know anything that had not happened under my own eyes. . . .

'December 31, 1914: I received the accompanying letter from Spring-Rice a few minutes ago. He is evidently in good humor again. I am exceedingly glad. . . .'

*Ambassador Spring-Rice to Colonel House*¹

I have just received copy of the note that is the telegram to Page and it seems to me a very fair just courteous and firm presentment of the case to which no objection whatever could be raised on the ground of its form. I am sure it will create a very lasting impression and will remain on the records as an honourable effort to solve in an amicable manner the question at issue.

Such crises, flaring up and flickering down, wearied the President beyond anything else, and were not conducive to prompt settlement of the points at issue. When House brought to Mr. Wilson the gist of his various interviews, the President's face, he recorded, 'became grey.' The Ambassadors might have been recalled, but there were strong arguments against such a step. However unfortunate Mr. Page's relations with the State Department, it would have been impossible to find any one more capable of holding close personal relations with Sir Edward Grey. Nor would it have been easy to suggest to the British that they recall Spring-Rice. Wilson's solution was to send House to England to explain personally the American case on the holding-up of cargoes. He sympathized with the British, and at the same time realized the force of the view taken by the State Depart-

¹ Sir Cecil's letters to Colonel House were frequently unsigned and, as in this case, without any superscription. When they carried a superscription he generally addressed Colonel House as 'Mr. Beverly.' His manner, both personal and epistolary, was sometimes apt to suggest the mysterious.

ment. He was on terms of intimacy with Sir Edward Grey and Sir William Tyrrell.

Wilson's decision was hastened by another factor which assumed the first importance at the close of the year. All through the autumn Colonel House had engaged in frequent conferences with the German and British Ambassadors concerning the possibility of American mediation. The question asked by the President was whether this possibility might be changed to a probability, and he saw no means of answering it except through the European mission which House agreed to undertake.

CHAPTER XI

PLANS OF MEDIATION

The most serious difficulty . . . is the deep-rooted distrust England has for German diplomacy and promises. Something of this is also felt by the Germans for England.

House to Wilson, September 22, 1914

I

COLONEL HOUSE was not one of the multitude which, so long as the war lasted, believed the crippling of Germany as a great economic and political Power to be an essential element of future peace. On the contrary, he was convinced that a strong, albeit demilitarized, Germany was necessary to the economic stability of Europe and the welfare of the world. He consistently opposed the political disintegration of Germany which was openly or secretly advocated by her Continental enemies. In the opening week of the war House foresaw Germany's defeat, and he feared the consequences if this defeat should prove overwhelming. To his mind the greatest menace to civilization lay in the possibility of the domination of Europe by Tsarist Russia.

'August 6, 1914: It looks to me as if Germany was riding for a fall [he wrote], and it also seems to me that, if this should happen, France and Russia will want to rend her in twain. It is clearly to the interest of England, America, and civilization to have her integrity preserved, shorn, however, of her military and naval power.

'I expect to see the British Ambassador and outline this to him.'

Ten days later, in a message to Ambassador Gerard, House suggested the possibility of stopping the war before passions became so inflamed that neither side would consider laying

down arms. It was no more than a suggestion, and House himself did not believe that it would lead to practical results. But the message is significant, for it sketched what was, four years later, to be the American plan for lasting peace and in it, as in the Pan-American Pact, is the principle of the League of Nations Covenant — an organization to guarantee territorial integrity and to provide for disarmament.

Colonel House to Ambassador Gerard

PRIDE'S CROSSING, MASSACHUSETTS
August 17, 1914

DEAR JUDGE:

. . . The Kaiser has stood for peace all these years, and it would not be inconsistent with his past life and services to be willing now to consider such overtures. If peace could come at this hour, it should be upon the general proposition that every nation at war should be guaranteed its territorial integrity of to-day. Then a general plan of disarmament should be brought about, for there would be no need under such an arrangement for larger armies than were necessary for police purposes.

Of course, this matter would have to be handled very delicately; otherwise sensibilities might be offended.

As far as I am concerned, I would view with alarm and genuine regret any vital disaster to the German people. The only feeling in America that has been manifested against Germany has not been directed against her as a nation, but merely against her as the embodiment of militarism. Our people have never admitted that excessive armaments were guaranties of peace, but they have felt, on the contrary, that in the end they meant just such conditions as exist to-day. When neighboring nations with racial differences and prejudices vie with one another in excessive armaments, it brings about a feeling of distrust which engenders a purpose to strike first and to strike hard.

With Europe disarmed and with treaties guaranteeing one another's territorial integrity, she might go forward with every assurance of industrial expansion and permanent peace.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

The difficulty was that the victorious advance of the German armies through Belgium and northern France, during the month of August, prevented any consideration of peace in Berlin; on the other hand, the treatment they meted out to the invaded regions inflamed the French, Belgians, and British and crystallized their determination never to cease fighting until the damage had been repaired and Teutonic war methods punished. On the eastern front there was the same situation with reversed rôles. The Russians advanced triumphantly, while their devastation of East Prussia convinced the Germans that the menace of the barbarous Slav must be ended once for all.

But in September the Russians, while they were able to continue the invasion of Galicia, were driven out of East Prussia by Hindenburg, who immediately proceeded to threaten an attack upon Russian Poland. In the west the Germans were defeated on the Marne, and although they maintained themselves on the line of the Aisne it became obvious that the immediate and overwhelming defeat of France, which their military leaders had promised, was likely to remain an unfulfilled dream. As the autumn drew on, a condition of deadlock seemed to have been reached.

German war plans had been based upon the assumption of a short campaign, and the prospect of facing a vast coalition through a long-drawn-out struggle was one that appalled the army leaders; some of them have since confessed that with the battle of the Marne, and the beginning of the deadlock on the western front, they regarded the war as lost. Colonel

House was of the same opinion, and argued that if the Germans were wise they would accept what terms they might, before the ultimate consequences of defeat became apparent. At the very moment of the decision on the Marne, he had written to Zimmermann, suggesting that the time was approaching when President Wilson's offer of mediation might be taken in other than an academic sense.

Colonel House to the President

PRIDE'S CROSSING, MASSACHUSETTS
September 5, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a letter to Herr Zimmermann. If you approve, will you not have it properly sealed and sent to the German Embassy for transmission?

Please criticize it frankly and return it to me for correction if you think best.

I have a feeling that Germany will soon be glad to entertain suggestions of mediation and that the outlook is more hopeful in that direction than elsewhere.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

*Colonel House to Herr Zimmermann*¹

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 5, 1914

DEAR HERR ZIMMERMANN:

Thank you for your letter of August 1. I gave it to the President to read and he again expressed his deep regret that the efforts to bring about a better understanding between the Great Powers of Europe had so signally miscarried.

He looks upon the present war with ever-increasing sorrow, and his offer of mediation was not an empty one, for he would count it a great honor to be able to initiate a movement for peace.

¹ The letter was approved by Wilson and sent to Zimmermann.

Now that His Majesty has so brilliantly shown the power of his army, would it not be consistent with his lifelong endeavor to maintain peace, to consent to overtures being made in that direction? ¹

If I could serve in any way as a medium, it would be a great source of happiness to me; and I stand ready to act immediately upon any suggestion that Your Excellency may convey or have conveyed confidentially to me.

With assurances of my high esteem, I am, my dear Herr Zimmermann,

Sincerely yours

EDWARD M. HOUSE

At the same time, House renewed his personal contacts with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, of whom he had seen much the previous summer on the North Shore.

'September 5, 1914: I am dining out to-night [he wrote] to meet Ambassador Dumba. I am laying plans to make myself *persona grata* to all the nations involved in this European war, so that my services may be utilized to advantage and without objection in the event a proper opportunity arrives. I have been assiduously working to this end ever since the war broke loose. I do not believe in leaving things to chance, and then attribute failure to lack of luck or opportunity. I am trying to think out in advance the problems that the war will entail and the obligations which will fall upon this country, which I hope the President will properly meet.'

¹ House's rather florid tribute to the pacific tendencies of the Kaiser must be read in connection with Zimmermann's letter of August 1 (above, p. 279). The implication of House's phrase is, 'If the Kaiser really loves peace as much as you say, now is the time to show it.'

Colonel House to the President

PRIDE'S CROSSING, MASSACHUSETTS
September 6, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Last night I had a conference with the Austrian Ambassador. He talked very indiscreetly and, if one will sit still, he will tell all he knows. I sat very still.

I learned that the Germans were making a mighty effort to gain a decisive victory in France and that, when that was accomplished, they would be ready to consider overtures for peace.

I also learned that their great fear was starvation. Austria is fairly self-sustaining and, because of her close proximity to Roumania, she would not unduly suffer; but Germany faces famine if the war continues.

England, it seems, lets no ship pass into neutral ports without first ascertaining whether or not it contains food-stuffs; and when it does, she exercises her right to purchase it.

What Dumba particularly wants, is for the American ships to defy England and feed Germany. . . .

He spoke of England's enormous power and said Germany's military power was not to be compared with that which England exercised over the entire world because of her navy. He forgot to add that England is not exercising her power in an objectionable way, for it is controlled by a democracy.

He strongly deprecated the war and said if he had been Foreign Minister in Austria it would never have occurred. He intimated that Germany and Austria felt that Russia would have been prepared in 1915, and therefore it was necessary to anticipate her. . . .

He deprecated the use of bombs.

Your very affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

II

Colonel House was under no illusion as to the difficulty of beginning parleys. He had observed the pathetic failure of the attempt of Mr. Oscar Straus, who had engaged in peace discussions with Count Bernstorff and hoped to pass a German offer to the Allies through Mr. Wilson; some one talked, and all hope of success immediately evaporated. The fiasco did not enhance House's respect for the discretion of the German Ambassador, nor would it tend to facilitate other attempts. Furthermore, although House argued that were he in the shoes of the German leaders he would make every concession for peace, he did not place great confidence in their political good sense. On September 10 he wrote: 'England will not stand for peace unless it also means permanent peace, and that, I think, Germany is not yet ready to concede.'

Nevertheless, when Bernstorff asked for an interview, the Colonel agreed to discuss the matter, for he did not want to leave any possible opening untried. If the German Government would actually authorize Bernstorff to make a reasonable offer, it would be good sense for the Allies to consider it carefully. In House's mind at this time a 'reasonable offer' seems to have meant evacuation of invaded territory and full compensation to Belgium.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, September 18, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Bernstorff came to see me this afternoon. I suggested that he meet Sir Cecil Spring-Rice at dinner. He is willing.

I am writing Sir Cecil, asking if it would be convenient for him to come to New York within the next day or two, but making no mention of my conferences with Bernstorff. If we can get these two together, we can at least make a start.

For the moment, England dominates her allies. Later, she may not. She would probably be content now with an agreement for general disarmament and an indemnity for Belgium. Germany, I think, would be glad to get such terms. Shall I go on, or shall I give Sir Cecil some satisfactory reason for wanting to see him?

Now that I am in touch with Bernstorff, I hope to persuade him to close his mouth for a while. He promises that no human being shall know of these negotiations.

The world expects you to play the big part in this tragedy—and so indeed you will, for God has given you the power to see things as they are.

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

‘I found Bernstorff [Colonel House recorded in a separate memorandum] in a different attitude from when I last saw him, which was in the spring. He was then *débonnaire* and cock-sure of himself and of his country. After telling him something of my visit to Germany and of my purpose in making it, and after speaking of the charming manner in which the Kaiser received me at Potsdam, I began to talk of the peace negotiations. I asked if he had met Sir Cecil Spring-Rice since hostilities began. He said he had not, that it was against diplomatic usage to do so. I thought the best thing that could be done now was for the two of them to meet, and I asked if he was willing to do so provided I could bring it about. He hesitated for a moment and then said he would be willing to do so provided it was known only to the three of us. I agreed that the President would be the only one informed. If anything developed from the conference, I promised permission from our Government for him to use code messages direct to his Government, which of course up to now he has not been able to do. He said if nothing came from the conference, he would not mention it to his Government or to any one else.’

Fortunately House was, even as early as this, on the most intimate terms with the British Ambassador. The two had already gone over important despatches to Page and Grey, together working for the elimination of undiplomatic phrases. Spring-Rice wrote to House in a private code, and the latter felt free to call on him at any time when the importance of the business in hand warranted. From him the Colonel had already gathered that the Allies would not consider a makeshift peace. 'You will understand that no peace is any good which simply means an armed truce with another war at the end of it.' Thus wrote the Ambassador to House on September 12. 'We want not only the end of a war but the end of all wars: and unfortunately no *treaty* has now the slightest importance. We have suffered too severely by trusting in treaties, and if we were to allow Belgium to suffer what she has suffered without compensation, we should be pretty mean quitters. It is an awful prospect for the world and I see no immediate remedy.'

None the less, House felt it worth while to attempt to arrange a meeting between Bernstorff and Spring-Rice — a highly unconventional proceeding, but House recked little of conventions; and when Spring-Rice telephoned that he could not leave Washington at the moment, House insisted that he must come at once. 'I will take the midnight train,' answered the Ambassador. It is hard to repress a smile at the thought of the diplomatists taking orders from the quietly persuasive Colonel.

'September 20, 1914: I met Sir Cecil [recorded House] at seven-thirty at the Pennsylvania. I did not get out of the car for fear of being seen.¹ We immediately took up the subject

¹ Spring-Rice had a horror of spies. Evidently he preferred that his interview with House should not be generally known, for House noted: 'Around eleven o'clock Sir Cecil went to the Majestic Hotel to see Sir Courtenay Bennett, the British Consul-General. He merely did this to give an excuse for his trip to New York in the event it became known.'

in hand. I found him unwilling to confer with Bernstorff, whom he considers thoroughly unreliable. He says he has a bad reputation not only in England but in Germany, and that he was sent to America because it was thought he could do no harm here. . . .

'I explained to Sir Cecil the situation as I saw it. First, that at this time Great Britain dominated the Allies, which perhaps she would not do later. Second, that Great Britain could probably obtain from Germany, for the Allies, a disarmament agreement with compensation for Belgium. This was what Great Britain wanted and not the dismemberment of Germany, which would surely follow even over her protests, provided the Allies were signally victorious.

'He agreed to all this, but said the Germans were so unreliable, that their political philosophy was so selfish and so unmoral that he hesitated to open up negotiations with them. He was also afraid the time was not ripe for peace proposals.

'He said it would be necessary for all the Allies to be approached simultaneously, for it would not do for Great Britain to begin secret negotiations, even if they were willing, because Germany would not play fair and would later denounce Great Britain as being treacherous to her allies. Then there was difficulty with France's and Russia's representatives here. Jusserand, he said, had an extremely bad case of nerves at present, and the Russian Ambassador was a reactionary of the worst type and was little less than mad.

'He told me of despatches that had passed between Sir Edward and himself, and we discussed at great length what was best to do in the circumstances and what was best to tell Bernstorff. . . . He is frank and honest, and is a high-minded scholarly gentleman.

'He thinks the best thing for the present is for the President to keep constantly in touch with the situation and to give repeated assurances to the different Governments that he stands ready to act whenever they feel the moment has

arrived. He believes it would not do for the President to make any proposals as to terms, but merely to hold himself in an absolutely neutral position. . . .

'I was successful in making Sir Cecil see that it was not wise for Great Britain to take any big gamble in this conflict. If she could get disarmament and compensation for Belgium, she had better accept it and not risk the stupendous consequences of defeat. I also made him see that if the Allies won and Germany was thoroughly crushed, there would be no holding Russia back and the future situation would hardly be less promising than the past.'

The cable which Spring-Rice sent to Sir Edward Grey as the result of this conversation, embodying the American point of view, was as follows:

Ambassador Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey

B[ernstorff] was willing that he should enter into communication with S.-R. direct. S.-R. answered that as three Powers were bound to make peace simultaneously, he could not receive a communication.

I think B. was not acting without instructions or knowledge of his Government. Conversations here are likely to be difficult.

But following considerations seem to force themselves on the attention of the world:

If war continues, either G[ermany] becomes supreme or R[ussia]. Both alternatives would be fatal to the equilibrium of Europe. Consequently the present moment is more propitious to an agreement favorable to the principles of equilibrium.

President may therefore (from this point of view) be anxious to facilitate negotiations now. The basis for these might well be Sir E. G.'s two principles: (1) End of militarism and permanent peace. (2) Compensation to Belgium.

If other Powers are willing to make suggestions in order to effect an agreement on the basis of these two principles, then negotiations could begin. If they have other proposals to make, it would be as well that they should be made known as soon as possible for reasons given above, and the P[resident] would be perfectly willing to facilitate exchange of ideas as friendly intermediary, without expression of opinion.

G[ermany] is doing her best to put E[ngland] in the wrong by causing a belief that E[ngland] is rejecting G[ermany]'s friendly overtures.

It would be dangerous for E[ngland] to persist in *non possumus* attitude. Although it is fully understood that she cannot negotiate without knowledge of other two, it would be to advantage of all three that G[ermany] should be forced to show her hand.

E. G.'s two principles would have sympathy of world.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, September 22, 1914

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Bernstorff came to see me again yesterday in order to hear the outcome of Spring-Rice's visit.

I told him that Sir Cecil hesitated to go into a conference without the consent of his Government and without the knowledge of their allies. Bernstorff thought this reasonable. He justified his own action by saying that he thought the instructions from his Government warranted him in taking up negotiations of this sort. . . .

Bernstorff thought it was not too early to begin conversations, for the reason that they could hardly bring results in any event for some months.

Sir Cecil and I agreed that the Kaiser would probably be willing to accept such terms as England would be glad to concede, provided the German war party would permit him. The most serious difficulty that will be encountered during

negotiations is the deep-rooted distrust England has for German diplomacy and promises. Something of this is also felt by the Germans towards England.

Another difficulty was expressed by Bernstorff, to the effect that neither side wished to be placed in the position of initiating peace proposals. This can be avoided, however, in some such way as is being done now, for they will soon find themselves talking about it and will not be so sensitive. . . .

Your faithful and affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, *October 6, 1914*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Dumba came to see me and handed me the enclosed article, which he has written for publication in the *World's Work* for November. He wanted you to see it in advance.

He hardly tried to disguise his eagerness for peace measures to begin. I told him I did not think the Allies would want to commence conversations of this sort as long as the German forces occupied their territory. He replied, 'Perhaps, then, a German defeat at this time might not be an unmixed evil.'

I told him how anxious you were to be of service, but that you felt you had gone as far as it was wise to go without some encouragement.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Whatever the private protestations of Bernstorff and Dumba, the public announcements of the German and Austrian Governments were in a directly opposed sense and did not facilitate the beginning of peace negotiations. Public opinion in the Central Empires had been encouraged to expect a smashing victory and their official spokesmen continued to promise it. The Allied leaders echoed such sentiments on their side with a shade of increased intensity. The

British felt, and not without some justification, that it was hard to reconcile Bernstorff's suggestions of peace with the campaign of hate against England which Berlin was whipping up.

Ambassador Spring-Rice to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 24, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . The message went to its destination and is being considered by the big bugs there. In the meanwhile I note that the assurance made to you and others by your friend [Bernstorff] has been publicly and officially repudiated by his employers, so that he cannot be regarded as either authorized or responsible. Any suggestions from this quarter that one member of the firm [the Triple Entente] alone should discuss conditions with him, can obviously only be made with a view to sowing distrust among them. Any one who wants the terms of an arrangement to be discussed, must approach all the members of the firm simultaneously. . . .

I notice that our own selves are at the present moment the object of the most virulent attacks from the person who talked to you [Bernstorff] and from his friends and associates. There is no sign whatever of any peaceful intention and everything is done to envenom the situation, especially and very particularly as far as we are concerned.

I enjoyed our talk most of any I have had for a long time and I hope we shall have another one. . . .

Yours ever

C S R

*Mr. H. C. Wallace's memorandum of a conversation with
Ambassador von Bernstorff*

September 25, 1914

I was lunching alone at the Ritz Carlton to-day and he came up and asked to sit with me.

He was anxious to know whether there were any subse-

quent developments, and I said I thought the difficulty was the necessity of talking with the partners [France and Russia].

During the conversation I asked whether he believed the time was propitious for negotiations to begin; and he answered there was not the slightest doubt, provided an opening wedge could be started on the Island [England]. In his opinion, a full coöperation could be counted on in his country, but he told me this was in strictest confidence. He said if negotiations could start on the Island and could be kept absolutely secret, that he could arrange for a favorable reception and visit to his country. His principal apprehension was public opinion on Island and partners — hence necessity of secrecy.

He also believed that unless something was done soon, the affair would be long-drawn-out, as nothing really decisive could occur for at least six months and probably a year; and, further, that if something occurs which makes either side particularly happy, public opinion would harass, if not defeat, plans short of subjugation. He also told me in confidence that his people had refrained from doing a number of very disagreeable things to avoid inflaming that nation.

If Winston [Churchill] voices the feeling of Government, it is useless to make effort; but I told him G[rey] had different views, and he replied that if that were true, great accomplishment might be made by sending some one from the P[resident] to the Island first and then across the Channel.

'September 29, 1914 [Spring-Rice and House in conference]: He said the cablegram to Sir Edward Grey, which we composed together, September 20, was being considered by his Government and they were discussing it with the Allies. When I pushed him, he admitted that perhaps it would be some time before we heard from it. I gathered that they intend doing nothing until what they consider a propitious

time, and then they will use it as a means of beginning peace conversations. I could see that Sir Cecil was thoroughly of the opinion that Germany should be badly punished before peace was made. There was something of resentment and almost vindictiveness in his attitude. He said to forgive Germany now and to make peace, was similar to forgiving a bully and making peace with him after he had knocked you down and trampled upon you pretty much to his satisfaction.'

III

From the American Ambassadors in London and Berlin, House received confirmation of the fact that both sides were determined to carry the conflict to a finish. Mr. Page sympathized entirely with the popular point of view in England, which at that time saw no way of ending German militarism without annihilating Germany in the political sense. House did not agree, but maintained then and always that German militarism had failed at the battle of the Marne and that the only sure way to resuscitate it was to threaten the German people with political destruction and force them to accept a military dictatorship.

Mr. Page's letters displayed at times a prescience and, again, a surprising misreading of the future.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, September 15, 1914

DEAR HOUSE:

... You needn't fool yourself; they are going to knock Germany out, and nothing will be allowed to stand in their way. And unless the German navy comes out and gets smashed pretty soon, it will be a longer war than most persons have thought. It'll be fought to a finish, too. Pray God, don't let . . . the Peace Old-Women get the notion afloat that we can or ought to stop it before the Kaiser is put out

of business. That would be playing directly into Bernstorff's hands. Civilization must be rescued. Well, there's no chance for it till German militarism is dead. . . .

Yours heartily

W. H. P.

LONDON, *September 22, 1914*

MY DEAR HOUSE:

. . . 'The war will begin next spring' — so said Kitchener yesterday. And probably that's true. The French will do all they can till cold weather comes, and the Russians will smash Austria. Then in the spring the English will go in with a million and a half fresh men and get the fox's tail. That's what Wellington did at Waterloo. That's the English way. — Look at their diplomatic management. Of course the war is really between Germany and England; but England made sure that Russia and France were both in before she went in. Germany has only Austria to help her. Italy failed, and Austria is already whipped. — Grey and Kitchener are too much for them.¹

In fact the blindest great force in this world to-day is the Prussian war party — blind and stupid. Well, the most weary man in London just this hour is

Your humble servant

W. H. P.

but he'll be all right in the morning.

LONDON, *November 9, 1914*

MY DEAR HOUSE:

. . . Peace? I fear not for a very long time. The Germans feel as the woman feels whose letter I enclose. Their Gov't *can't* stop so long as the people feel so and so long as it has

¹ These statements do not do justice to the Ambassador's historical knowledge or his prophetic instincts.

food and powder and men. The English can't stop till the Germans are willing to reinstate Belgium and to pay for its awful rape. — Yet, I pray Heaven, I am mistaken; for the sheer awfulness of this thing passes belief. We say to one another, Rockefeller is worth 400 or 500 or 1000 millions of dollars. That means nothing: it is too big. If a man be worth \$100,000, or half-a-million, or a million, or even ten millions, we can comprehend it. So, when I say that perhaps 3,000,000 men have been killed — that means nothing. We have no experience to measure it by. Hence this unbelievable courage goes on. . . . We have lost our common human bearings, and all the old measurements of things are thrown away, and we have no new measurements; we are simply dazed. . . .

Yours heartily

W. H. P.

The Ambassador's estimate of the killed was exaggerated, but his conclusion is of poignant interest, for it suggests the soul of the tragedy, Europe helpless to prevent the war in the first place, equally helpless to stop it: 'simply dazed.'

In Germany as in England, the only feeling was that of the necessity of endurance. The German people, like all the belligerents, regarded the war as one of self-defence. 'Their principal concern,' so ran a letter written from Leipzig by an American correspondent in August, 'is that America shall understand that they resisted war as long as they could do so with honor. My association with all kinds of Germans bears out their assertion that war was undesired. The general belief among them that they were forced into it by Russia, is perfectly sincere.'

With this consciousness, it was hopeless to expect from them a willingness to make sacrifices in order to secure peace. Even in the midst of their suffering, the Germans were buoyed up by the feeling that they fought for a sacred cause.

Courtes von Moltke to Colonel House

CREISAU (SCHLESSEN), October 7, 1914

DEAR MR. HOUSE,

I have so often thought of your remark to me in Berlin in May: 'Europe is in a dangerous state.' How dangerous I never realized; I wonder if you did? The present state of affairs seems like a bad dream; one can hardly realize that this embittered struggle is a fact. . . .

Only one great value has this war brought with it to us in Germany at least — all that was best and noblest in the nation has risen to the surface; materialism, luxury and selfishness have slipped from us, and each one of us feels that we are better men and women than before. But it is a hard price to pay.

My husband is away fighting like every one else. The spirit among the troops is very sober but most confident. Every one, even the Social Democrats, feels that Germany did not want war, that therefore they are absolutely right in defending their country, and they all have unbounded confidence in those in command, in their ability and trustworthiness. . . .

Our only consolation is that we in Germany are making the best possible use of its lessons and growing morally in an astonishing way. Germany is being new-born, but the travail is heart-breaking. . . .

Yours very sincerely

DOROTHY MOLTKE

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, November, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . I had a long talk with the Chancellor to-day, who sent for me as he was here a few days from the Front. He says he sees no chance of peace now. Germany is much worked up over Americans selling munitions of war to France and Eng-

land. Also over the condition of German prisoners in other countries, particularly Russia. The hate here against England is phenomenal — actual odes of *hate* are recited in the music halls. The people are still determined, and seem to be beating the Russians in spite of reports from the Allied press. On the French Front there is nothing to report. The Reichstag voted another large credit and then adjourned. Only Liebknecht objected, and since then his own party has reproved him. Life seems perfectly normal here and provisions are only slightly higher. Women send their only sons of fifteen to fight, and no mourning is worn and it is etiquette to congratulate a family who has lost a son on the battle-field.

The losses to date here alone are 4500 officers and 83,000 men killed — about 280,000 wounded and about 100,000 prisoners. Not great, by any means, out of a possible twelve millions. The finances are in perfect order and the country can continue the war indefinitely — a war which is taken quite coolly by the people at large.

We still have lots of work. I have been especially engaged in getting cotton in and chemicals and dyestuffs out. We have to have cyanide to keep our mines going and dyestuffs to keep endless industries, and the Germans know this and want to use this as a club to force us to send cotton and wool in. So they only let us have about a month's supply at a time. Also they fear lest we should re-sell to the English. . . .

My job is made harder by these sales of munitions by U.S.A. to France and England and by the articles and caricatures in American papers; but I still seem O.K. with the Government, and the Kaiser has intimated he wants me to visit him at the Front. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. GERARD

House realized acutely that it would not do to press the Allies unduly for a categorical response to the suggestion of

parleys which he had sent to Grey through Spring-Rice. Such pressure might easily be construed as a move to save Germany from the defeat which many optimists believed would be inflicted upon her in the spring. The Colonel himself wanted to see Germany sufficiently beaten so that the issue of militarism would be settled for all time to come.

But he felt strongly that unless some beginning were made toward peace in the early winter, the most favorable opportunity would be lost. For the moment, military movements had reached a deadlock. In the spring each side would see the chance of victory and would refuse conversations until they had tried out their new armies. The end of the autumn was necessarily the psychological moment for negotiations.

There was at least one German who, in his belief that his country was headed toward destruction and could be saved only by an early peace, labored incessantly to begin negotiations. This was Count von Bernstorff. The distrust which his early career had awakened in the British was perhaps not entirely unmerited; yet the record of the following months was to prove the complete sincerity of his efforts for peace and for the preservation of friendly relations between Germany and the United States. House had been prejudiced against him and was never able to negotiate with him on the basis of complete frankness he used with the British. But he ended by admitting both the ability and the essential honesty of the German Ambassador.

IV

It may have been diplomatic wiles, it may have been self-deception; at all events, Bernstorff reiterated the willingness of Berlin to make terms that would satisfy the British. Perhaps his Government was willing to let Bernstorff make promises, and repudiate him at their convenience. Certainly a letter which House received from Zimmermann in December did not indicate clearly any change of the official German

heart, although there was a hint that, if the other side made advances, Germany might not be unreasonable.

Herr Zimmermann to Colonel House

BERLIN, December 3, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL:

Please pardon me for allowing so much time to elapse before answering your letter of September 5th which was besides long delayed in reaching me. I read what you wrote with great interest, but it seems to me that considering the turn events have taken so far and the apparently unabated zeal of our opponents, the question of mediation has not yet reached the stage for action.

When I say 'unabated zeal of our opponents' I have in mind such utterances as appeared for instance in the London correspondences of the *New York Sun* of October 9th and the *New York Tribune* of October 16, announcing that 'to no voice of the kind (i.e., mediation) will England, France or Russia now listen.'

On the other hand, you are fully aware of the fact that we have greatly appreciated the President's and your own good offices. You may be perfectly sure that the President's offer of mediation was received exactly in the spirit in which it was meant and that it was not for a moment considered an empty one.

Germany has always desired to maintain peace, as she proves by a record of more than forty years. The war has been forced upon us by our enemies and they are carrying it on by summoning all the forces at their disposal, including Japanese and other colored races. This makes it impossible for us to take the first step towards making peace. The situation might be different if such overtures came from the other side.

I do not know whether your efforts have been extended in that direction and whether they have found a willing ear.

But as long as you kindly offer your services in a most unselfish way, agreeing to act upon any suggestion that I convey to you, so it seems to me worth while trying to see where the land lies in the other camp.

Needless to say, your communications will always be welcome and considered confidential. . . .

Sincerely yours

ZIMMERMANN

Bernstorff insisted that if House would come to Germany, he would find the Berlin Government entirely reasonable. The two had lunch together in Washington in mid-December.

'December 17, 1914: We took up the question of European peace proposals [recorded House]. I informed him of the President's decision to leave the matter to me; that is, as to the proper time and as to the question of procedure. He said there would be no objections from his Government; that it would not be necessary to go to Germany first; that if I could get the Allies to consent to parleys, I would find the Germans willing. I replied that there was no use taking it up with the Allies excepting upon a basis of evacuation and indemnity of Belgium and drastic disarmament which might ensure permanent peace. He thought there would be no obstacle in that direction.

'I congratulated him upon this position, and thought it would have a fine effect and would show it was not Germany's fault if peace parleys were not started. I asked him to confirm this by cabling to his Government. He has maintained that he has no means of communication with his Government excepting through our State Department; but I said, "Of course I know that you can communicate with your Government when you desire, for any intelligent man can see that it would be impossible, under modern conditions, to prevent this." He then admitted that he could reach them.

'I regard my conversation with Bernstorff as satisfactory, although should actual parleys commence I may have difficulty in holding him to any verbal agreements they may make. However, I kept this misgiving well under cover.'

Three days later, House received the message from the British for which he had waited so long. It was not entirely unequivocal, but it indicated at least that there might be some chance of British consideration of a German offer.

'December 20, 1914: At 9.45, Phillips of the State Department telephoned to say the British Ambassador desired to see me in the morning about a matter of importance. I told Phillips I was leaving for New York to-night and to ask the Ambassador to come immediately to his house, and I would be over within five minutes. I excused myself to the President and went to Phillips' and met Spring-Rice. He had word from Sir Edward Grey concerning our peace proposals, and thought it would not be a good thing for the Allies to stand out against a proposal which embraced indemnity to Belgium and a satisfactory plan for disarmament. Sir Edward wished me to know that this was his personal attitude.

'I returned to the White House. The President . . . was much elated and wanted to know whether I could go to Europe as early as the coming Saturday. I stated that I could go at any time. He . . . thought before I left we could button-up our South American matters so as to leave me free. . . .

'December 23, 1914: When I met Spring-Rice, he said he had received another cablegram from Sir Edward Grey and, while he was personally agreeable to the suggestion made, he had not yet taken it up with his own Cabinet, much less with the Allies. He felt there would be difficulties with France and Russia, and great difficulty in effecting a plan by which a permanent settlement might be brought about. Sir Cecil

wanted to go into a discussion of what such a settlement would entail. It seemed to me footless to undertake such a discussion at this time, for it would probably cover a period of weeks, if not months, even after the Powers had begun parleys. I told him it was not my idea that they should stop fighting, even after conversations began, and that an armistice need not be brought about until at least a tentative understanding as to what would constitute a permanent settlement was well within sight.

'He thought France would probably desire the French part of Lorraine, and he thought Russia would like Constantinople. He wondered if Germany would accede to the former request. I thought that was something to be threshed out later, and that the conversations should begin upon the broad lines of an evacuation and indemnity for Belgium and an arrangement for a permanent settlement of European difficulties, including a reduction of armaments.

'I was surprised to hear him say that the indemnity to Belgium could be arranged, for all the Powers might be willing to share the damages done that brave little nation. I was also surprised to hear him say that he saw signs of what he called "a general funk among the European nations," and he thought perhaps "most of them feared revolutions." . . .

'He could not understand why Germany would consent to peace parleys now when they seemingly were so successful, and he did not believe the German military party or the German people as a whole would permit such conversations being brought to satisfactory conclusions. That was also my opinion, as far as those two elements were concerned; but I thought the Kaiser, the Chancellor, the Foreign Secretary, and their *entourage* knew that the war was already a failure and did not dare take the risk involved, provided they could get out of it whole now. . . .

'Sir Cecil said he would cable Sir Edward Grey to-night and tell him of our conversation, and ask him to feel out the

Allies and let us know as soon as possible whether it was advisable for me to come to London.

'I asked him to explain that we had no disposition to force the issue, but it would be inadvisable to let the Germans have the advantage of having expressed a willingness to begin parleys upon such terms, and then have the Allies refuse. . . .

'Returning to the White House, I found the President anxiously awaiting me. After telling what had passed, we discussed what was best to do regarding Bernstorff, and we came to the conclusion that it would be well to leave him alone until I had heard something direct from the Allies; and then we could put the question squarely up to Bernstorff by telling him I was ready to go to London, but he must not let me go only to find Germany repudiating what he had said.'

v

Until December, Wilson had displayed more enthusiasm than House for the proposed mission to be attempted by the Colonel. House understood the British distrust of German sincerity and partly shared it. He realized more keenly than the President the difficulties involved in persuading war-blinded belligerents that compromise was better than the risk of annihilation. And he sympathized too thoroughly with the Allied point of view to desire a compromise peace, if it meant the continued life of German militarism.

But the crisis in our relations with the British that threatened to result from the dispute over restrictions on neutral trade, added a new factor. If the friendly understanding with the British were broken, there would be no possibility of American mediation. Furthermore, German opinion, which during the early weeks of the war had been friendly, was becoming hostile because of the export of American munitions to the Allied countries. Obviously no further progress toward mediation could be made through the Ambassadors in Washington. If he went abroad, more positive results

might be secured from the chiefs of government; and House could at least help to appease the anti-American sentiment that was becoming apparent in all the belligerent nations. He was confirmed in this feeling by messages from Gerard and Sir Edward Grey.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, December 29, 1914

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... Thanks for the 'tip' about the German ladies (American-born) who write home about this Embassy.¹ One is doubtless a Frau von —, who threatened me (and in *writing*) that she would complain to the President because we would not accept her invitation to dinner or invite her here. As a matter of fact, we declined her invitations because we were tired, and would have invited her here in time were it not for her extraordinary outburst; and now, of course, we cannot be sand-bagged or black-jacked or blackmailed into inviting any one — and, anyway, the 'hand of Douglas is his own.' ...

Prospects of peace seem very dim. But in about three months more, the plain people in every land are going to be very sick of the business and then, unless one side has some startling success (which *all* hope for in the spring), Peace will come, grudgingly, slowly; and we hope to see you here in the rôle of the Angel thereof.

The Germans are a little irritated just now at our sale of munitions to the Allies. Also because of an extraordinary order that 'American Ambassador shall not inspect or visit prisons, camps, etc.,' issued by State Department; and they naturally feel that we cannot protect their interests in

¹ House had warned Gerard, as he had Page, to be careful not to express unneutral feeling. Complaints had come to Washington that the American Embassy in Berlin was anti-German. It is interesting to compare Gerard's placid reception of the warning with Mr. Page's reaction as related in the preceding chapter.

France, England, and Russia without such inspection. Also, they are quite 'sore' because Chandler Anderson from our Embassy in London was allowed to come here and inspect places where English were confined, but when we (and this was an express condition of allowing Anderson here) sought to send some one from here to look at English camps, we were met by this order (see my long cable to Department). Have been working hard getting cotton in and dyestuffs out.

The Emperor has been sick for a few days, but neither I nor any one else saw him. They say he is quite angry at Americans over the sale of arms, but I don't think he would shut up Krupps' factory if we were at war with Japan, and during the Spanish War many munitions from Germany found their way to Spain. There is no doubt, however, that a real neutrality would stop the sale, but would our people 'stand' for such a curtailment of American industry? . . .

Sincerely yours

J. W. G.

BERLIN, *January 20, 1915*

MY DEAR COLONEL:

Hope you can read my writing; but, as most of my stenographers are doubtless in the pay of the Foreign Office, it is safer than typewriting. . . .

Great talk in the newspapers and many anonymous letters, etc., coming here about sale of arms by U.S.A. to Allies. But you never could satisfy the Germans unless we joined them in war, gave them all our money and our clothes and the U.S.A. into the bargain. Besides, it would be unneutral to change the rules after the game had commenced, and, anyway, the German Government has not protested. Germany sold arms to Spain in 1898 and to Russia in the Russo-Japanese War, and to Huerta when we were having trouble with him; and, in any event, as I have said, we cannot satisfy

the Germans. They write many articles accusing the President of being against Germany and say that Secretary Bryan is unneutral because his son-in-law is a British officer. . . .

In the meantime, however, I seem to be getting through most of the matters I have in hand, in spite of the unpopularity of Americans. Why was an order sent me from the State Department telling me not to visit or inspect the camps of British prisoners here? ¹ That is the only way I can get good treatment for the prisoners. Is it because Page in London doesn't want to visit the camps in England? The Spanish Ambassador visits the camps of the French and Russian prisoners, and it is considered an essential part of the duty of an Ambassador who takes over the interests of another country to inspect personally or by members of the Embassy. Hundreds of poor devils have died already from neglect, which I might have prevented. Germany makes no pretense of keeping the Hague Convention about the treatment of prisoners. I buy clothes (with funds from English Government) for these prisoners — many of whom, captured in August, have only summer clothes, no change of underwear, and are alive with vermin. The food given is not sufficient and the officers are subjected to petty annoyances to make them revolt and get in fights with officers of their allies. In some camps the commanders are gentlemen as well as officers, and these annoyances do not occur.

If business lets up a little, I shall try to see the Emperor soon at the front and report how he feels. Every one here still confident, and the organization is so wonderful I don't see how they can lose. They will soon undoubtedly try to blockade England with submarines and attack the ports with Zeppelins as soon as the weather is more favorable. Zimmermann is still in charge of Foreign Office, as von

¹ The order was rescinded and Ambassador Gerard was permitted to inspect the prison camps.

Jagow is at the front. I get on very well with Zimmermann. . . .

Best wishes to Mrs. House from us both.

Ever yours

JAMES W. GERARD

German antagonism toward the United States, combined with confidence in military victory, would not facilitate a plan for American mediation. Still more disheartening was a message from Sir Edward Grey passed on to House by the British Ambassador in Washington. Grey stated frankly that the British were disappointed by the attitude of the United States Government and were inclined to be suspicious of the motives that actuated President Wilson.

Sir Edward Grey to Ambassador Spring-Rice

January 22, 1915

Your message received.

It will give me great pleasure to see him [House] and talk to him freely. Of course, he understands that all that can be promised here is that if Germany seriously and sincerely desires peace, I will consult our friends as to what terms of peace are acceptable.

Before, however, setting out on his journey, it is as well that he should be informed as to the state of public opinion here. I fear it is becoming unfavorably and deeply impressed by the trend of action taken by the United States Government and by its attitude towards Great Britain. What is felt here is that while Germany deliberately planned a war of pure aggression, has occupied and devastated large districts in Russia, Belgium, and France, inflicting great misery and wrong on innocent populations, the only act on record on the part of the United States is a protest singling out Great Britain as the only Power whose conduct is worthy of reproach. . . .

At the beginning of the war there was, no doubt, a distinct and purely American sentiment which was stirred by the wrong done to Belgium and which approved of our action in going into war. This feeling was no doubt genuine and widespread and founded rather on ideals of conduct than on race, history, or language. But we feel that the Germans regard themselves as partisans, that they work actively in America as everywhere else by all means in their power, for the success in Europe of the German arms, and that they aim one way or another at making their influence felt in the press, in business, and in every branch of the Government. Upon their action and upon the success which has attended it so far, Germany founts hopes that the attitude of the United States Government will be increasingly disadvantageous to the Allies and, it may be added, more especially to Great Britain. . . .

I can hardly believe that such a policy is deliberately desired by any but the German-Americans in the United States. There is, however, an impression in Europe that there is a danger of the United States Government insensibly drifting into such a policy. If this apprehension is realized, then there can be no hope of a speedy conclusion of the war. Germany will not relax her hold on Belgium; and as for Great Britain, not to speak of the Allies, she cannot give up the restoration of Belgium unless and until she has exhausted all her resources and has herself shared Belgium's fate.

This is what people here are beginning to feel, and I should like him [House] to know it. The feeling has not yet found widespread public expression, but it is there and it is growing. In the struggle for existence in which this country is at stake, much store is set in England on the good will of the United States; and people cannot believe that the United States desires to paralyze the advantage which we derive from our sea power, while leaving intact to Germany those military and scientific advantages which are special to her.

I think it is only fair that he should be warned that should people in England come to believe that the dominant influence in United States politics is German, it would tend to create an untoward state of public opinion which we should greatly regret.

The above is purely personal and must be so regarded; but I think it is my duty under the circumstances to give this personal and friendly warning as to the probable trend of public sentiment.

E. GREY

British opinion, as expressed by Grey, of the official attitude assumed by the United States, was to a large degree unjustified and rested more upon emotion than upon fact. If the only protests raised by America had been directed against the British, this was because the only flagrant interference with American neutral rights, thus far, proceeded from the application of the British Orders in Council. British fear of German intrigues that might influence the policy of the United States was without foundation. If it was true that the German-Americans were agitating for an embargo upon munitions of war, it was equally true that the Government steadfastly refused to permit the embargo; thus the United States had not merely asserted their neutral rights of export as against the demands of Germany and German-Americans, and incidentally incurred German ill will, but at the same time supplied what Grey himself termed the 'need of the Allies.'

These facts were evidently not clearly appreciated by the British Government or people. There was all the more reason for sending to England some one capable of emphasizing them and explaining the American point of view.

Early in January, House decided to make the venture.

VI

'*January 12, 1915*: I took the 12.08 for Washington. I found Samuel Huston Thompson of the Department of Justice, and H. C. Wallace on the train. At Baltimore, Davies and Harris, Director of the Census, met me; so, altogether, I had no rest.

'McAdoo and Grayson were at the station to meet me. After I had dressed for dinner, I went into the President's study; and in a few minutes he came in. We had exactly twelve minutes' conversation before dinner, and during those twelve minutes it was decided that I should go to Europe on January 30. I had practically decided before I came to Washington that this was necessary, and I was certain, when I gave my thoughts to the President, he would agree with me it was the best thing to do.

'I thought we had done all we could do with the Ambassadors at Washington, and that we were now travelling in a circle. It was time to deal directly with the principals. I had a feeling we were losing ground and were not in as close touch with the Allies as we had been, and that it was essential to take the matter up directly with London and afterward with Berlin.

'There were no visitors for dinner. After dinner the President read from A. G. Gardiner's sketches of prominent men until half-past eight, when Senator La Follette came. When he left, the President resumed his reading. I was surprised that he preferred to do this rather than discuss the matters of importance we had between us. He evidently had confidence in my doing the work I came to Washington for, without his help.¹ . . .

'*January 13, 1915*: After breakfast this morning the President and I strolled from the elevator to his study, in which

¹ The primary reason for this trip to Washington was to confer with Naon, da Gama, and Suarez upon the Pan-American Pact, for House was at this time carrying on a three-ring circus of negotiations.

time I told him of my plans for the day; that is, I should see the South American Ambassadors, the British Ambassador, and Mr. Bryan. I considered it important for us to decide what reason to give Spring-Rice for my going over. I thought it was best to tell him I wanted to try out the Germans, and the President said, "Of course, if you stop over in London and see the British Government in the meantime, that would be expected and could not offend the sensibilities of the British Ambassador."

'I met Spring-Rice at Phillips' at 10.45. I found him in rather a sulky mood. He began to talk about this country's attitude toward the Allies, and indicated that the Allies would not receive the good offices of the President cordially. I soon got him in a good humor by telling him what a wonderful thing it would be to have the United States throw its great moral strength in behalf of a permanent settlement, and it was my purpose not to discuss terms with Germany so much as to discuss a plan which would ensure permanent peace.

'He thought this fine, and said I had hit the nail on the head. I told him how strongly the President felt upon obtaining a permanent settlement, and that it was not his intention to suggest any cessation of fighting until this condition had been agreed to by all the belligerents. He approved this programme, and thought if I explained it to Sir Edward Grey when I went to London, he would cordially approve. He wanted me to talk to the Russian and French Ambassadors and tell them of my purpose, as they might take offence at not being called into conference. My judgment was, not to see them; but I yielded to his advice. We agreed that we should all meet at Phillips' at four o'clock. . . .

'I was the first to arrive, then came Spring-Rice and, later, Jusserand and Bakhmetieff [the French and Russian Ambassadors]. I had asked Sir Cecil to inform the other two Ambassadors of our conversation in the morning and to get

them into a receptive frame of mind. He evidently had not done so, and he was not particularly nice in helping me out. It was rather awkward at first. Both Jusserand and Bakhmetieff were violent in their denunciation of the Germans and evinced a total lack of belief in their sincerity. They thought my mission would be entirely fruitless.

'Later, I brought them around to the view that at least it would be well worth while to find how utterly unreliable and treacherous the Germans were, by exposing their false pretenses of peace to the world. That suited them better, and it was not a great while before we were all making merry and they were offering me every facility to meet the heads of their Governments. I found them somewhat sensitive about my going to London and Berlin; each thought Petrograd and Paris should also be visited. I agreed to this, but made a mental reservation that it would be late in the spring before I could get as far as Russia. . . .

'I gave Mr. Bryan a summary of my day's work with the European Ambassadors and of what the President desired me to do. He was distinctly disappointed when he heard I was to go to Europe as the peace emissary. He said he had planned to do this himself. . . .

'I replied that the President thought it would be unwise for any one to do this officially, and that his going would attract a great deal of attention and people would wonder why he was there. . . .

'He was generous enough to say that, if he did not go in an official way, I was the one best fitted to go in an unofficial way. . . .

'The President and I got down to work. We agreed upon a code to be used between us in sending cable messages while I am abroad. I thought he should write me a letter of instructions — something that I need not let go out of my hands, but which I might show in the event it was necessary for me to go to countries where I was not well known.

‘Together we outlined what this letter should contain, and he is to send me a draft of it in a day or two for me to look over and make suggestions which seem pertinent. He said he would write it himself on his little typewriter, so that not even his confidential stenographer would know of it. . . .

‘*January 14, 1915:* Count von Bernstorff called at 2.30. We had an interesting and satisfactory talk, and he expressed pleasure that I was going to Europe so soon and said he would notify his Government at once. I told him frankly of my meeting with the Allied Ambassadors yesterday, and that none of them thought the Germans were sincere in their desire for peace. . . .

‘I suggested he advise his Government not to make useless and sensational raids upon England by Zeppelins or otherwise, for they could do nothing effective from a military standpoint and would merely destroy non-combatants, and that such raids would have a very bad effect upon my endeavors. . . .

‘*January 20, 1915:* I asked the German Ambassador to come to see me this morning at twelve. . . .

‘I asked him again, for the love of Heaven, to stop his people from killing non-combatants in England by dropping bombs. The attempt yesterday upon Sandringham, had it been successful, would have made impossible any discussion of peace. He promised to send this view to his Government, although he could not promise definite results, for the reason that the military and not the civil authorities dominated. He is to inform his Government of my expectation to be in Berlin soon after the middle of next month.’

VII

House returned to New York for his final preparations. He had many affairs to wind up, for besides the negotiations he had been conducting with the European diplomats regarding the possibility of mediation, and with the South

Americans regarding the Pan-American Pact, he had also on his hands many details of local politics which, with his continued residence in New York, were gently steered in his direction. He did not expect to remain long in Europe. As matters turned out, he stayed there for nearly six months.

Nothing illustrates so exactly the President's purpose in sending him abroad as the letter of credentials which House was to carry. In this letter Wilson emphasizes the fact that House was representing not an official attempt at mediation, but merely the desire of the President to serve as a channel for confidential communication through which the belligerent nations might exchange views with regard to terms upon which the present conflict might be ended and future conflicts rendered less likely. He disclaimed himself any desire to indicate terms or to play the part of judge, but merely that of the disinterested friend who had nothing at stake except interest in the peace of the world.

European despatches which at the last moment the President forwarded to House, gave cause for both hope and anxiety. The temper of the Germans was not reassuring. The British were likely to be reasonable, but they must always reckon with the territorial ambitions of France and Russia, which would prove a stumbling-block to a peace based on the *status quo ante*.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Secretary Bryan

LONDON, January 15, 1915

I lunched to-day with General French¹ who came here secretly for a council of war. He talked, of course, in profound confidence.

He says the military situation is a stalemate. The Germans cannot get to Paris or to Calais. On the other hand, it will take the Allies a year, perhaps two years, and an incal-

¹ Commander-in-Chief of the B.E.F.

culable loss of men, to drive the Germans through Belgium. It would take perhaps four years and an unlimited number of men to invade Germany. He has little confidence in the ability of Russian aid in conquest of Germany. Russia has whipped Austria and will whip Turkey, but he hopes for little more from her.

Speaking only for himself and in the profoundest confidence, he told me of a peace proposal which he said the President, at Germany's request, has submitted to England. He tells me that this proposal is to end the war on condition that Germany gives up Belgium and pays for its restoration. French's personal opinion is that England would have to accept such an offer if it should be accompanied with additional offers to satisfy the other allies, such, for example, as the restoration to France of Alsace-Lorraine and the agreement that Russia shall have Constantinople. . . .

American Ambassador, London

Ambassador Gerard to the President

BERLIN, January 24, 1915

I do not think that the people in America realize how excited the Germans have become on the question of selling munitions of war by Americans to the Allies. A veritable campaign of hate has been commenced against America and Americans. . . .

Zimmermann showed me a long list, evidently obtained by an effective spy system, of orders placed with American concerns by the Allies. He said that perhaps it was as well to have the whole world against Germany, and that in case of trouble there were five hundred thousand trained Germans in America who would join the Irish and start a revolution. I thought at first he was joking, but he was actually serious. The fact that our six army observers are still here in Germany and not sent to the front is a noteworthy indication. Zimmermann's talk was largely ridiculous, and, impossible as

it seems to us, it would not surprise me to see this maddened nation-in-arms go to lengths however extreme.

GERARD

VIII

Before sailing, House spent another twenty-four hours in Washington, partly to make final arrangements, chiefly to have the pleasure of personal farewell with the President, who at no time in his career showed himself more appreciative of the Colonel's efforts.

'January 24, 1915: I left to-day on the 12.08 for Washington. There was no one I knew on the train and I had a quiet and restful trip. Dr. Grayson met me in a White House car. The President was waiting for me and we immediately began to work and remained at it continuously for more than an hour, delaying dinner ten or fifteen minutes, which is a most unusual thing for the President to do. . . .

'He insisted upon arranging for my expenses abroad and for those of my secretary, Miss Denton. I let him know how trustworthy she was, so he would not think me indiscreet in writing through her about matters of an important and confidential nature. He asked me to tell Sir Edward Grey his entire mind, so he would know what his intentions were about everything. . . . He said, "Let him know that while you are abroad, I expect to act directly through you and to eliminate all intermediaries."

'He approved all I had in mind to say to Sir Edward and to the Germans. He said, "There is not much for us to talk over, for the reason we are both of the same mind and it is not necessary to go into details with you."

'I asked if it would be possible for him to come over to Europe in the event a peace conference could be arranged and in the event he was invited to preside over the confer-

ence. He thought it would be well to do this and that the American people would desire it.¹ . . .

'*January 25, 1915*: I went to Phillips' at ten o'clock to meet the British Ambassador. He seemed pleased that I was holding to my intention to leave on Saturday. I again requested that he arrange with Sir Edward Grey, by cable, an engagement immediately upon my arrival. He said Sir Edward left Saturday afternoons and did not return until Monday morning, but, if I thought best, he knew Sir Edward would remain in town. I did not consider this necessary, for my boat would probably get in Saturday and I would not be in London until Sunday; therefore Monday would be time enough. He is cabling Sir Edward to ask me for lunch on Monday.

'Spring-Rice talked optimistically one minute, and pessimistically the next, absolutely contradicting himself. . . . He warned me that I should probably encounter sentiment in England hostile to my mission, based upon the belief that it was possibly actuated by a desire to help Germany. He said there was a party there which would seize upon any excuse for an early peace, and that they resembled the "Copperheads" of the North during our Civil War. I replied that he need not worry about my giving them comfort. . . .

'Phillips explained the arrangements he had made concerning money for my expenses. I dislike taking money even for them. I have never been paid by either a state or national Government for my services, and, while I am not being paid for them now, I have heretofore paid my expenses. I do not feel able to meet the expenses of such a trip as this, and it lifts a load from me to have the Government pay them. It was agreed that \$4000 should be placed to my credit at once. I have a feeling this will last for six months. . . .

'It then came time to say good-bye. The President's eyes

¹ As events developed, when it came to the actual decision in the autumn of 1918 Colonel House did not favor Wilson's going to Europe.

were moist when he said his last words of farewell. He said: "Your unselfish and intelligent friendship has meant much to me," and he expressed his gratitude again and again, calling me his "most trusted friend." He declared I was the only one in all the world to whom he could open his entire mind.

'I asked if he remembered the first day we met, some three and a half years ago. He replied, "Yes, but we had known one another always, and merely came in touch then, for our purposes and thoughts were as one." I told him how much he had been to me; how I had tried all my life to find some one with whom I could work out the things I had so deeply at heart, and I had begun to despair, believing my life would be more or less a failure, when he came into it, giving me the opportunity for which I had been longing.

'He insisted upon going to the station with me. He got out of the car and walked through the station and to the ticket office, and then to the train itself, refusing to leave until I entered the car. It is a joy to work for such an appreciative friend.'

CHAPTER XII

A QUEST FOR PEACE

If every belligerent nation had a Sir Edward Grey at the head of its affairs, there would be no war. . . .

Extract from Diary of Colonel House, February 7, 1915

I

ON January 30, 1915, Colonel House sailed from New York upon the *Lusitania*. It was one of the last of her voyages. For House it was one of the first of the adventurous missions in which he attempted to translate into fact his doctrine that a new code of international ethics must be impressed upon the nations by demanding from Governments the same standard of morals as that which applies to individuals. This doctrine had proved the soul of his first mission of the year before, the Great Adventure, when he tried to bring about an understanding between the European states which would prevent the war he foresaw. He kept it constantly in mind as he approached the war zone in this attempt to discover some means by which a path to peace could be blazed and bases of permanent peace be laid.

House left with no trace of overconfidence. The emotions aroused in Europe were of such intensity that no well-informed person could be hopeful of finding a pacific opening; and the Colonel was extremely well-informed. The complexities were such that the least *gaucherie* would produce an 'incident' that might not merely ruin the influence of the United States, but even endanger her friendly relations with a belligerent Power. For this reason, if for no other, the mission must be unofficial. Mr. Bryan had told the Colonel that he was the one best fitted for the task. 'I hope he may be right,' wrote House, 'for I am leaving with much trepidation. The undertaking is so great, and the difficulties are so many, that to do it alone and practically without consulta-

tion or help from any one, is as much of a task as even I, with all my willingness to assume responsibility, desire.'

However difficult and delicate, Colonel House regarded the attempt as necessary. No matter how slight the chance of peace, that chance should be pursued upon every occasion. Europe was caught in a horror from which she could not rescue herself; if an outsider could help, the duty was imperative. Furthermore, as the war proceeded, feeling in the belligerent countries turned against the neutrals and especially the greatest neutral, the United States. 'He that is not with me is against me.' No one was better fitted than House to explain the motives of the United States Government, for he was the closest friend of the President.

Whatever the Colonel's trepidation, and a brave man always confesses nervousness, he must have been heartened by the confidence of a man who had watched him in the political crises of Texas for thirty years, the captain of Rangers, Bill McDonald.

Captain W. J. McDonald to Colonel House

DALLAS, TEXAS, February 6, 1915

MY DEAR ED:

. . . If I could have seen you before you left for Europe, I would have tried my utmost to persuade you not to take this trip on account of the waters being mined as well as other dangerous conditions in that Country. Don't suppose it would have done any good, though, after you decided to go, as you and I are very much alike when we make up our minds to go against anything. I am not certain of your mission there, but am sure you will make a success as you generally do when you take hold.

Wishing you a pleasant time and a safe return to Texas, I am

As ever yours

W. J. McDONALD

In view of the tragic fate of the *Lusitania* three months later, the voyage of House in February holds some sentimental interest.

'February 5, 1915: Our voyage has about come to a close. The first two days we had summer seas, but just after passing the Banks a gale came shrieking down from Labrador and it looked as if we might perish. I have never witnessed so great a storm at sea. It lasted for twenty-four hours, and the *Lusitania*, big as she is, tossed about like a cork in the rapids.

'This afternoon, as we approached the Irish coast, the American flag was raised. It created much excitement, and comment and speculation ranged in every direction. . . .

'February 6, 1915: I found from Mr. Beresford, Lord Decies' brother, who crossed with us, that Captain Dow had been greatly alarmed the night before and had asked him, Beresford, to remain with him on the bridge all night. He expected to be torpedoed, and that was the reason for raising the American flag. I can see many possible complications arising from this incident. Every newspaper in London has asked me about it, but, fortunately, I was not an eye-witness to it and have been able to say that I only knew it from hearsay.

'The alarm of the Captain for the safety of his boat caused him to map out a complete programme for the saving of passengers, the launching of lifeboats, etc., etc. He told Beresford if the boilers were not struck by the torpedoes, the boat could remain afloat for at least an hour, and in that time he would endeavor to save the passengers.

'Ambassador Page met us upon our arrival. So also did the representatives of nearly every New York paper. They wished to know when they might have a talk with me. I told them they could do so then, for I would tell them as much as I would later — which would be nothing at all.'

Colonel House had all the advantage of being already upon intimate terms with the British statesmen, so that he need not waste time in preliminaries. Characteristically, however, he waited until he learned the essentials of the European situation as the British saw them, before he suggested the possibility of peace negotiations. And always he gave the impression of one who came to discover methods rather than as a meddler with an *idée fixe*.

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, February 9, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

We arrived here Saturday afternoon, and I immediately arranged a private conference with Grey for eleven o'clock Sunday morning. We talked steadily for two hours and then he insisted upon my remaining for lunch, so I did not leave until two-thirty.

We discussed the situation as frankly as you and I would have done in Washington, and, as far as I could judge, there was no reservation. He said several times, 'I am thinking aloud, so do not take what I say as final, but merely as a means of reasoning the whole subject out with you.'

I gave him your book, which pleased him, and he regretted that the only thing he could give you in return was a book he had written on angling.

We went into every phase of the situation, he telling me frankly the position the Allies were in, their difficulties, their resources, and their expectations. That part of it is not as encouraging as I had hoped, particularly in regard to Italy and Rumania. There is no danger of their going with Germany, but there is considerable doubt whether they will go with the Allies. Germany's success has made them timid and there is also difficulty in regard to Bulgaria. Up to now it has been impossible to harmonize the differences between Bulgaria and Serbia. Germany is making tremendous efforts

at present to impress Italy and Rumania to keep them from participating. If the differences between Bulgaria and Serbia could be adjusted, Rumania would come in at once and so probably would Greece; but they are afraid to do so as long as Bulgaria is not satisfied.

The difficulty with Russia is not one of men, but of transportation. They have not adequately provided for this, while Germany has to the smallest detail. It prevents them from putting at the front and maintaining more than one and one half million to two million men.

The most interesting part of the discussion was what the final terms of settlement might be and how the difficult question of armaments could be adjusted. . . .

He went into the discussion of what Russia and France would demand. I told him if France insisted upon Alsace-Lorraine, I would suggest that a counter-proposition should be made to neutralize them in some such way as Luxembourg now is. This would prevent the two [France and Germany] from touching anywhere and they could only get at one another by sea.¹ He thought that Russia might be satisfied with Constantinople, and we discussed that in some detail.

I let him know that your only interest was in bringing them together and that you had no desire to suggest terms, and that what I was saying was merely my personal view, expressed to him in confidence and as between friends.

There was one thing Grey was fairly insistent upon, and that was that we should come into some general guaranty for world-wide peace. I evaded this by suggesting that a separate convention should be participated in by all neutrals as well as the present belligerents, which should lay down the principles upon which civilized warfare should in the future be conducted. In other words, it would merely be the assembling at The Hague and the adopting of rules governing

¹ Compare the demilitarized zone finally arranged in 1925.

the game. He did not accept this as our full duty, but we passed on to other things. . . .

I am making a point to influence opinion over here favorably to you and to America. There has been considerable criticism of us, and I was told that at a public meeting the other day, when the name of the United States was mentioned, there was some hissing. I find, though, that intelligent people over here are wholly satisfied with your course. I took tea yesterday with one of the editorial writers of the *Times* and dined with the Managing Editor last night. Tonight I dine with our friend, A. G. Gardiner. I shall write you about that later.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

In a separate memorandum, Colonel House noted:

'When we had finished talking, Sir Edward smiled and said, "Here I am helping to direct the affairs of a nation at war, and yet I have been talking for three and a half hours like a neutral." . . .

'I put questions to him with great rapidity, so as to find what difficulties were necessary to overcome. He answered with the utmost candor, telling me the whole story as he would to a member of his own Government. It was an extraordinary conversation, and I feel complimented beyond measure that he has such confidence in my discretion and integrity.

'I have many times expressed my high regard for the character of Sir Edward Grey, but I wish to reiterate it here. If every belligerent nation had a Sir Edward Grey at the head of its affairs, there would be no war; and if there were war, it would soon be ended upon lines broad enough to satisfy any excepting the prejudiced and selfish.'

The conversation is significant, not merely because it in-

dicates the embarrassment which the territorial aspirations of France and Russia then and always caused the British, but also because of Grey's suggestion that the United States should cooperate at the end of the war in a general organization designed to guarantee peace. Even more significant was the reiteration by House of his earlier plan, providing for a scheme of limiting armaments and a guaranty of territorial integrity.

The two men who sat discussing these questions before and after lunch, were destined to play a large part in the creation of the League of Nations. Grey from the very beginning of the war insisted that it might have been prevented if the conference he had proposed had been accepted by Germany; he never wavered in his conviction that until some international mechanism were established capable of providing a permanent international conference, the world would not be safe from the menace of war. Through Colonel House the conviction was ultimately impressed upon President Wilson and was finally translated into the Covenant of the League. And in the drafting of that Covenant the ideas and the diplomacy of Colonel House became of the utmost importance.

II

Colonel House arrived in England at the moment that Germany embarked upon a momentous course, which still more envenomed the feeling between the belligerents and intensified the difficulties of his mission. The military events of the autumn had disarranged German plans, for the surprising speed of the Russian mobilization, the success of the Russian invasion of Austrian Galicia, and the incursion into East Prussia compelled Germany to make a counter-attack in the East at the moment when the Germans had hoped to concentrate their main force upon the defeat of France. Hindenburg triumphantly drove the Russians out of East

Prussia, but his attack on Russian Poland failed. In order to rob the Russians of further offensive power, it seemed necessary to carry through the conquest of Poland and to liberate Galicia. This attack upon the Russian armies was the more important in that negotiations for an Austro-Italian settlement were not proceeding smoothly and there appeared imminent danger that Italy might join the Allies. To meet this new enemy, Austria must be freed from the threat of Russian attacks.

If Germany mobilized her main strength in the East, she would be unable to push a vigorous offensive against the French and British in the West. But here she possessed one great advantage, a superiority of munitions, and upon this she counted. It was vital that Great Britain, slow in the production of her own munitions, should not be permitted to import them from America, which always refused to lay an embargo. Hence Germany's determination to utilize the submarine.

Taking as a pretext the British restrictions upon the entrance of foodstuffs into Germany, a new departure which the Germans regarded as worthy of retaliation, they proclaimed a 'war zone' around the British Isles to take effect upon February 18, 1915. After that date, they threatened, German submarines would destroy any enemy merchant ship in this zone, without regard for the safety of the passengers or crews of the vessels attacked. They warned neutral shipping of the peril that would attend entrance into the war zone, since mistakes might occur, especially if belligerent ships continued the practice of raising neutral flags.

The response of the American Government was prompt and definite. It warned Great Britain of the peril inherent in the unauthorized use of the American flag. In more solemn phrases it warned Germany that if submarines should 'destroy on the high seas an American vessel or the lives of American citizens, it would be difficult for the Government

of the United States to view the act in any other light than as an indefensible violation of neutral rights. . . . The Government of the United States would be constrained to hold the Imperial German Government to a strict accountability for such acts of their naval authorities and to take any steps it might be necessary to take to safeguard American lives and property and to secure to American citizens the full enjoyment of their acknowledged rights on the high seas.'

These new developments complicated House's mission, but did not alter his underlying purpose, which was to proceed to Berlin after his conversations with the British, provided he received a direct intimation that the Germans would receive him. The Colonel refused to go to Germany unless invited. At Washington, Bernstorff kept insisting that his Government wanted House and through him would express their desire for a 'reasonable' peace. On February 13, Wilson cabled House that he was stimulating German interest in peace through Bernstorff, who was confident that a letter of invitation was on the way.

House spent long hours almost daily with the officials of the Foreign Office, for he realized that a complete understanding was necessary both as regards trade disputes and the possibility of peace discussions. His proposed trip to Germany would be fruitless unless the British approved. He was anxious also to discuss the bases upon which a permanent world peace could be founded, something beyond the ending of the war and a settlement of the territorial aspirations of the warring states.

'February 10, 1915: I lunched with our Ambassador [the Colonel recorded] to meet Sir Edward Grey and Sir William Tyrrell. I wish I could give in detail every word of the conversation, for it was freighted with importance. We discussed at length the question of whether Germany was in earnest about beginning peace parleys. I maintained that

she was, and that she was sparring for advantage; that she desired me to come on Bernstorff's invitation, unsolicited by the Government, in order that they might say, in the event negotiations failed, that they had never been a party to them.

'Sir Edward thought the Germans were not ready for parleys, but were fencing for the purpose of getting the Allies at a disadvantage so that they might say to Ferdinand of Bulgaria and others that the Allies were making overtures for peace. I took the view that, while it was doubtful whether the military party was yet ready for peace, I felt certain the Kaiser and his *entourage* were.

'Sir Edward said he had told Delcassé, French Minister for Foreign Affairs, of my visit and of our conversations of Sunday. Delcassé thought that the Allies had not yet achieved sufficient military success to begin negotiations, and he believes with Sir Edward that the Germans are insincere.

'Among other things, Grey told me that the British Ambassador [Sir Francis Bertie] at Paris had sent him a despatch advising him of my presence in London and suggesting that he get in touch with me. This amused us all very much.

'Grey and I did practically all the talking, Page and Tyrrell joining in every now and then. We went over some of the ground we had covered Sunday, regarding a permanent settlement, and Sir Edward reverted to his view that our Government should be a party to the making of peace. Much to my surprise, Page thought this would be possible and advisable. I told Sir Edward more directly than I did on Sunday that we could not do so; that it was not only the unwritten law of our country but also our fixed policy, not to become involved in European affairs.¹

¹ House was evidently uncertain of Wilson's willingness to become entangled in European politics and realized the national prejudice against such entanglements. The covenant he proposed would not involve the United States in any purely European problems. Our participation in the war, naturally, altered his opinion as to the necessity of participating in a peace conference.



Photograph from Underwood & Underwood

SIR WILLIAM TYRRELL

'Tyrrell said we had not always followed this policy, reciting the Algeciras incident. Page also cited the Perry and Morocco Pirates incident. I held, nevertheless, that it would be impossible and that all we could do would be to join the neutrals and belligerents in a separate convention after the peace covenant was drawn up and signed by the belligerents. I told Grey that it would be impossible for our Government to take part in such questions as what should become of Alsace-Lorraine and Constantinople, and that we could not be a party to the making of the actual terms of peace, which this first convention must necessarily cover. I felt sure, though, that our Government would be willing to join all nations in setting forth clearly the rights of belligerents in the future and agreeing upon rules of warfare that would take away much of the horror of war.

'I suggested that this covenant should forbid the killing of non-combatants by aircraft, the violation of neutral territory, and the setting forth of certain lanes of safety at sea in order that shipping of all countries, both belligerent and neutral, would not be subject to attack when they were in those lanes.

'Sir Edward amended this latter suggestion by saying he thought Great Britain would be willing to agree that all merchant shipping of whatever nature, belligerent or neutral, would be immune. I accepted the amendment and was pleased to know that Great Britain stood ready to go so far.

'*February 11, 1915:* I lunched with Sir William Tyrrell today and we had a most interesting conversation. He spoke with entire frankness. . . .

'Tyrrell believed that in the convention I suggested yesterday, if an agreement should be made between all the Powers, neutral and belligerent, to establish rules governing future warfare, Great Britain would consent to the absolute freedom of merchantmen of all nations to sail the seas in time of war unmolested. This was brought out in our con-

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ference yesterday, but Tyrrell developed in his conversation to-day that Great Britain recognized that the submarine had changed the status of maritime warfare and in the future Great Britain would be better protected by such a policy than she has been in the past by maintaining an overwhelming navy.'¹

The conversations were significant, for this is the germ of the idea soon to be developed by House, which he later termed the 'Freedom of the Seas.' As Grey and Tyrrell realized, the practical application of the idea would be of immense value to Great Britain, an island depending for its life upon the continuity of its merchant trade. But House saw that the Germans, blockaded as they were and also largely dependent upon overseas trade, would be attracted by it. It might serve as the beginning of negotiations.

The fact which must touch the sense of humor of the historian is that the 'Freedom of the Seas,' later so bitterly opposed by the British and regarded generally as a German trick, was first suggested by the British Foreign Office as a means of furthering British interests.

III

On February 12, House received the invitation from the Germans for which he had been waiting. It was not entirely satisfactory, for Zimmermann demurred at the suggestion of an indemnity for Belgium, but it gave the opening if the Colonel thought best to use it.

Herr Zimmermann to Colonel House

BERLIN, February 4, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... I read with interest what you were good enough to write with reference to the desired interchange of opinion.

¹ Grey had already advocated this policy in his instructions to the British Delegation to the Second Hague Conference, 1907.

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While we are quite ready, as I wrote you before, to do our share to bring about the desired termination of the war, at the same time there are certain limits which we are unable to overstep.

What you suggest concerning the paying of an indemnity to Belgium seems hardly feasible to me. Our campaign in that country has cost the German nation such infinite sacrifices of human lives that anything in the form of such a decided yielding to the wishes of our opponents would cause the most bitter feeling among our people.

I heard that you are on your way to England at this moment and that a trip to Germany is in view. I shall be most happy to see you, should you carry out your intention, and shall hope for a personal interview more satisfactory than is possible through correspondence by letter.

With kindest regards, I am

My dear Colonel

Sincerely yours

ZIMMERMANN

'February 13, 1915: I lunched alone with Sir Edward Grey [recorded House] at 33 Eccleston Square, which, by the way, he leases from Winston Churchill. We had a very simple lunch and I made it a point not to talk business while we were at the table. We talked of nature, solitude, Wordsworth. . . . He told of Roosevelt's visit with him in the New Forest and how it occurred. Roosevelt sent him word he would like very much to hear the song-birds of England, and Sir Edward undertook to gratify this wish. He said they heard forty-one distinct voices, no one of which Roosevelt recognized excepting the golden-crested wren, which I believe we also have in America.

'In speaking of Wordsworth, I asked if he went often to the English lake district. He replied that he had never been, that his country home was so much more attractive to him

than any other place on earth that when he had time he always went there. He is the least travelled man of prominence I have ever known.

'When we went to the library, I showed him Zimmermann's letter and we discussed it long and carefully. I thought it was up to him and to me to decide when to begin negotiations for peace. As far as I was concerned, I did not want them to begin one moment before the time was ripe for a peace that would justify the sacrifices of the brave who had already given their lives, for it was even better for others to die if the right settlement could be brought about in no other way. On the other hand, neither of us would want to sacrifice one single life uselessly; and if we could accomplish now the desired result, we should do it.

'We went over the entire ground and discussed it in this spirit. I had a feeling that the sooner I went, the better — for our relations with Germany were growing worse, and soon I might not be welcome. I was afraid some foolish or wanton outrage, either by air or sea, might be committed which would so set opinion against Germany as to make it impossible for his Government to begin any discussion.

'We sat by the fire in his library, facing one another, discussing every phase of the situation with a single mind and purpose. He had information that Germany was starting an enveloping movement upon the Russian front with a view of impressing the Balkan States and, if she was successful in this, it might be that Bulgaria would come into the war — not, perhaps, against Great Britain or Russia, but against Serbia, which would be much the same thing.

'He told me of the plan to convey English troops to Salonika and to take them that way into Serbia. He thought if as many as 200,000 British troops could be safely taken there, Greece would gladly join the Allies. He did not think it fair to Greece to let her come into the war without some protection. The difficulty, he explained, was the mainte-

nance of the troops after they were there, since only a single-track railway ran into Serbia.

'He said they had never tried to influence Holland to come into the war, for they had not been able to send sufficient troops there to protect her from an invasion in the event she declared war on Germany. He thought if Germany succeeded in the present enveloping movement [in the East], she would then turn to the West and again try to break through the lines and reach Paris.

'In conclusion, he did not think it wise for me to undertake a peace mission to Germany until after this enveloping movement had either succeeded or failed, for he did not believe the civil Government would be able to do anything in the direction of peace until von Hindenburg and the other military men had tried out their different campaigns.

'It was finally agreed that we should defer a decision until after I had lunched with the Prime Minister on Wednesday. He had told none of the Cabinet about our conversations, but he had made notes and it was his purpose to discuss them with the Prime Minister and no one else at present. . . .

'*February 14, 1915:* Sir Edward Grey told me yesterday that when this war was over, he intended to retire for a year and rest. I advised retiring permanently, for he would probably have taken so great a part in this European conflict, that to do anything else afterward would be like a great artist going out in his back yard and painting the fence. He . . . looked at me wide-eyed and serious.'

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, *February 15, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I am still undecided as to what to do about Berlin. The difficulties are these: This Government [the British] has to be extremely careful about giving us any encouragement whatever. They do not dare say what they actually feel, not

only because it might make England's position misunderstood in Germany, but also because it would meet with a storm of disapproval here, for the reason that no one believes that anything like the kind of terms that England will demand will be met now.

As a matter of fact, there is no feeling whatever, excepting among a very small circle, for anything out of the war excepting a permanent settlement, evacuation, and indemnity to Belgium; but no one believes that Germany is ready for such terms.

Germany, on the other hand, is now controlled almost wholly by the militarists. There is a peace party there as there is here, and both, strangely enough, are conducting the civil Governments. Those here are much more powerful to act than those in Germany, where I believe they have but little power. As long as the military forces of Germany are successful as now, the militarists will not permit any suggestion of peace. . . .

I am formulating in my own mind, and am unravelling it from time to time to Grey and others in authority, to see how far it is feasible, a plan for a general convention of all neutral and belligerent nations of the world, at which you will be called upon to preside and which should be called upon your invitation.

It could meet concurrently with the peace conference, or, if peace is not in sight by August, it could then be called and it might be used as a medium of bringing about peace between the belligerents. This second convention, of course, would not deal with any of the controversies between the belligerents, but it would go into the rules of future warfare and the rights of neutrals.

It would be of far-reaching consequence — more far-reaching, in fact, than the peace conference itself. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

As a result of his conference with Grey and Asquith, House decided that the trip to Germany should be postponed, at least for a few weeks. The Colonel would reply to Zimmermann in such a way that, if Berlin were really serious, the door could be kept open. A message from Gerard, urging immediate action, did not change this decision, since it was plain that the Germans thought they were winning the war and Gerard himself found it difficult not to agree with them. So long as they were in this frame of mind, negotiations would be fruitless, for the Germans would merely utilize conversations for diplomatic purposes, without any real intention of making peace.

Colonel House to Herr Zimmermann

LONDON, February 17, 1915

MY DEAR HERR ZIMMERMANN:

Thank you for your kind letter of February fourth.

I thought I should be able to go to Berlin early next week, but it now seems best to remain here until I can have another word from you.

All of our conversations with the Ambassadors in Washington representing the belligerent nations were based upon the supposition that Germany would consent to evacuate and indemnify Belgium and would be willing to make a settlement looking towards permanent peace.

I can readily understand the difficulty which your Government would encounter in regard to an indemnity; therefore, if that question might for the moment be waived, may we assume that your Government would let the other two points mark the beginning of conversations?

If we could be placed in so fortunate a position, I feel confident that parleys could at least be commenced.

I need not tell you, Sir, what great moral advantage this position would give Germany, and how expectantly the neutral nations would look towards the Allies that they would meet so fair an attitude.

Your favorable reply to this will, I believe, mark the beginning of the end of this unhappy conflict.

I am, my dear Herr Zimmermann

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, February 15, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I received your letter from London. I saw Zimmermann also. He told me he had written you saying they would be glad to see you, etc., which is, of course, all they can do.

It is felt here that we are partial to England.

They are serious here about this submarine blockade, but are willing to withdraw it if food and raw materials are allowed to enter — in other words, if England will adopt either the Declaration of London or of Paris — but they say they will not stand having their civil population starved.

Make no mistake, they will win on land and probably get a separate peace from Russia, then get the same from France or overwhelm it, and put a large force in Egypt, and perhaps completely blockade England.

Germany will make no peace proposals, but I am sure if a reasonable peace is proposed *now* (a matter of days, even hours), it would be accepted. (This on *my* authority.)

The Allies should send a peace proposal or an offer to talk peace, to me *verbally and secretly here*. If it is accepted, all right; if not, no harm done, or publicity for the proposal — for I would only make it *in case I learned it would be accepted*. But Germany will pay no indemnity to Belgium or any one else. But, as I told you, this peace matter is a question almost of hours. The submarine blockade once begun, a feeling will come about which may make it impossible until after another phase of the war. If you can get such an intimation from the Allies and then come here, it will go, to the

best of my belief. I do not think the Kaiser ever actually wanted the war.

The feeling, as I said, just now is very tense against America. The sale of arms is at the bottom, and the fact that we stand things from England that we would not from Germany (according to the Germans) is the cause. But it is very real and makes us all very uncomfortable.

Hope to see you soon.

Yours ever

JAMES W. GERARD

P.S. I am sure of acceptance of proposal.

Colonel House to Ambassador Gerard

LONDON, *March 1, 1915*

MY DEAR JUDGE:

. . . These are slow-moving people [the British], and when I undertook to tell them of your opinion that quick action was necessary and it was a question of hours rather than days, I saw that it was hopeless. Of course, though, this is inevitable no matter how fast they wished to move, for the reason that they cannot act alone; and it takes an incredible time to get any satisfactory communication with the Allies, especially with Russia.

I see no insuperable obstacle in the way of peace and I feel if the belligerents would begin to talk, they might soon come to an agreement.

The army and navy machine here is now under a tremendous momentum and your prediction as to the final outcome is not shared by any one here, from the highest to the lowest. If this war lasts six months longer, England will have a navy that will be more than equal to the combined navies of the world. That is something for us Americans to think of; in fact, it is something for everybody to think of. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, February 18, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I had a conference with Sir Edward Grey last Tuesday evening, and again yesterday at which the Prime Minister and Page were present.

Both Asquith and Grey thought it would be footless for me to go to Berlin until the present German enveloping movement in the east is determined. It looks, for the moment, bad for the Russians; and they do not want me to be in Berlin at such a time. If this movement fails and things get again deadlocked, they think I should take that opportunity to go there. . . .

I put the matter plainly to both Asquith and Sir Edward, asking their advice as to what to do, telling them we were all interested alike in bringing about the desired result, and it was a question of how best to do it. They accepted this position and Sir Edward thought, at the moment, I should write to Zimmermann along the lines that I did.

The idea was that unless they at least conceded these two points,¹ the matter had as well be dropped until they were willing to do so.

Sir Edward said that England would continue the war indefinitely unless these cardinal points were agreed to. . . .

I told them at yesterday's conference that it would not do to close the door too tightly, for we must leave it ajar so it could be widely opened if Germany really desired peace. Asquith smiled and said, 'You will be a very clever man if you can do that successfully.'

The situation grows hourly worse because of the German manifesto in regard to merchantmen² and the sowing of

¹ Evacuation of invaded territory and guaranties for permanent peace.

² On the day on which this letter was written, the German threat of February 4 was to come into effect: that every enemy merchant ship found in the war zone would be destroyed 'without its being always possible to avert the dangers threatening the crews and passengers.'

mines. I tried hard to get Sir Edward, and afterwards Asquith, to meet this situation before to-day; but with the usual British slowness, they put it off until Thursday or perhaps next Tuesday.

The psychological time to have ended this war was around the end of November or the first of December, when everything looked as if it had gotten into a permanent deadlock. You will remember we tried to impress this upon Sir Cecil and tried to get quicker action, but without success. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'February 18, 1915: I went to 33 Eccleston Square at 7.30 to see Sir Edward Grey and was with him a half-hour. I handed him Gerard's letter and also one from Penfield. . . .

'Sir Edward talked as frankly as usual and said the terms Gerard proposed would only be entertained by Great Britain in the event all the things he predicted would happen, had already happened; that is, that Russia and France were completely beaten and Egypt and other British territory occupied by the enemy.

'I again urged upon him better coördination between the eastern and western fronts. He did not think this possible, because of the Russian governmental system. It seems to me perfect folly not to work more in harmony; that is, when the Germans are attacking in the east, they should be severely pressed in the west, and *vice versa*. . . .

'February 20, 1915: I called on Sir Edward Grey at 33 Eccleston Square at 7.15. Lord Kitchener was with him when I arrived, but he left within a few minutes.

'Sir Edward said that the Allies intended forcing the Dardanelles and that perhaps it would take them three or four weeks.¹ This is not only a spectacular movement, but, if suc-

¹ 'It is interesting to note how far afield this prophecy was.' [Note by E. M. H.]

cessful, will have far-reaching effect upon the Eastern situation, besides giving Russia an outlet and inlet. He also told me that Kitchener said his reports from Russia were that the Germans had not captured more than one division, and the situation in the East was nothing like as bad as represented. Sir Edward qualified this, however, by saying that Russian news was never quite reliable. He thought after matters had quieted down upon the Eastern front and a deadlock had once more been arrived at, and the Dardanelles had been forced, it would be well for me to go to Germany.'

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, February 23, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

In reply to your cablegram of the 20th, indicating that you thought there was danger of my yielding too far to the wishes of this Government in deferring my visit to Berlin, I tried to give you some explanation in my reply which I sent yesterday.

Up to now, all we know is that Germany refuses to indemnify Belgium and refuses to make any proposition herself. She may or may not be willing to evacuate Belgium and consider proposals looking to permanent peace. But even if she concedes these two cardinal points, it is well to remember that neither Russia nor France is willing now to make peace on any such terms.

When the Russian Minister of Finance and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs were here, Sir Edward told them of your letter and of my presence. He also told them what I thought might be accomplished now and he asked them whether or not they would like to have a conference with me. They both preferred not doing so, stating that the time was not opportune for peace proposals, for the reason that it was certain that Germany, being so far successful, would not acquiesce in such terms as their Governments would demand.

The British public and a majority of the Cabinet would not look with any greater favor upon the only terms that Germany would now concede, than would France and Russia.

Since the war has begun and since they consider that Germany was the aggressor and is the exponent of militarism, they are determined not to cease fighting until there is no hope of victory, or until Germany is ready to concede what they consider a fair and permanent settlement.

It is almost as important to us to have the settlement laid upon the right foundations as it is to the nations of Europe. If this war does not end militarism, then the future is full of trouble for us.

If there was any reason to believe that Germany was ready to make such terms as the Allies are ready to accept, then it would be well to go immediately; but all our information is to the contrary and the result of my visit there now would be to lose the sympathetic interest which England, and through her the Allies, now feel in your endeavors and without accomplishing any good in Germany.

You may put it down as a certainty that Germany will only use you in the event it suits her purposes to do so; and she will not be deterred from this if at any time she sees that it is to her advantage to accept your good offices.

Asquith told Page yesterday that he sincerely hoped that I would not make the mistake of going just now. That simply means, if I do go they will probably cease to consider you as a medium.

If Zimmermann replies to my letter, then I shall go to Berlin and have a conference with him; but it will accomplish nothing for the moment, for he will not now go further; and the Allies will not be willing to begin parleys upon such a basis.

Sir Edward is extremely anxious for England to take the highest possible grounds and not ask for anything excepting

the evacuation and indemnifying of Belgium and a settlement that will ensure permanent peace. But, there again, he comes in conflict with colonial opinion. The South African colonies have no notion of giving up German Africa which they have taken, as they say it will be a constant menace to them to have so powerful and warlike a neighbor.

The same applies to . . . the Caroline Islands, Samoa, etc., which the Australians have taken.

Sir Edward is trying assiduously to work up an opinion upon broader lines, and he may or may not be successful; but he is not now in a position to say that his wishes will prevail. . . .

Germany may be successful. If France or Russia gives way, she will soon dominate the Continent; and it is not altogether written that one or the other will not give way. Even if the Allies hold together, there is a possibility that the war may continue another year. . . .

I try very hard not to think of it any more than I did at home, and I try to talk of it as little as possible, so that my mind may be clear to look at the situation dispassionately.

The one sane, big figure here is Sir Edward Grey; and the chances are all in favor of his being the dominant personality when the final settlement comes, and I believe it is the part of wisdom to continue to keep in as close and sympathetic touch with him as now. . . .

I note now with interest that occasionally Sir Edward speaks of 'that second convention which the President may call.' He has come to look upon it as one of the hopes for the future and, if we accomplish nothing else, you will be able to do the most important world's work within sight.

I have reason to believe that this Government will be ready to make great concessions in that convention in regard to the future of shipping, commerce, etc., during periods of war.¹ It is my purpose to keep this 'up my sleeve' and, when

¹ Another reference to the plan of the 'Freedom of the Seas.'

I go to Germany, use it to bring favorable opinion to you by intimating that I believe when the end comes you will insist upon this being done; in other words, that with your initiative and with Germany's coöperation, Great Britain can be induced to make these terms. This, I think, will please the Germans and may go a long way towards placating their feelings toward us. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

IV

As one might expect, Colonel House took care to come into contact with every one who might give information or assistance in his mission of good will: politicians of all parties and shades of opinion, men of business, journalists.

'*February 14, 1915*: I lunched with Lady Paget, and in the afternoon Sidney Brooks took tea with me. He said there was much curiosity in London as to the purpose of my visit, and he had explained that my trousers had worn out earlier this year than usual and I had come to have Poole renew them. He asked me seriously if I desired anything said of my visit or whether I wished the *Times* to comment at all upon Anglo-American relations. I asked him to please say nothing for the moment. He said the *Times* was at my disposal whenever I wished to use it for the purpose of my mission, whatever that mission was. . . .

'*February 20, 1915*: I went to the Embassy and found Hoover discussing with Page the difficulties he is encountering from day to day in his Belgian relief work. He is a resourceful fellow and needs to be, for he has a most complex situation to contend with, having the German, the Belgian, and British Governments at cross-purposes. . . .

'*February 25, 1915*: I lunched with Lord Bryce to-day at

his apartment at No. 3 Buckingham Gate. We had a most delightful time. He arranged for us to be entirely alone, not even Lady Bryce being there.

‘He inquired after the President, and I told of the President’s having read me Gardiner’s sketch of him in “Pillars of Society,” the opening sentence of which I remember was: “If one were asked to name the greatest living Englishman I think it would be necessary to admit, regretfully, that he is a Scotsman born in Ireland.”

‘Bryce smiled and said he had not read it, and was afraid to do so for fear his head might be turned; at the same time, I noticed he asked me again the title of the book.

‘We gradually drifted into a discussion of the war and of the problems for its solution. It seemed to me a good opportunity to test the wisdom of my views upon so clear and subtle a political mind; and I told him forthwith, though in strict confidence, pretty much what I had planned. This embraced, of course, the proposition regarding the cessation of the manufacture of armaments for a period of years, the calling of the second convention by the President, and its scope and character.

‘Bryce was visibly interested. I told him, too, what I had tried to do toward preventing the war, at least between the Western Powers. He was as interested in this as in the other, and agreed that it might have been possible if war had been deferred a short while longer. He had also heard that Great Britain and Germany were on the eve of a settlement concerning the Bagdad Railroad and a division of the sphere of influence in Africa. This convention was yet to be signed when the war burst forth. . . .’

*Colonel House to the President*LONDON, *March 1, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The King's Private Secretary, the Lord Stamfordham, called yesterday to bring an invitation to me from the King to call at eleven o'clock for a private audience. I was curious to know what he wanted.

I was with him for nearly an hour. He is the most bellicose Englishman that I have so far met. I had hopes that he might want to talk concerning peace plans, but he evidently wanted to impress me with the fact that this was no time to talk peace. His idea seemed to be that the best way to obtain permanent peace was to knock all the fight out of the Germans, and stamp on them for a while until they wanted peace and more of it than any other nation.

He spoke kindly of the Germans as a whole, but for his dear cousin and his military *entourage*, he denounced them in good sailor-like terms. He is the most pugnacious monarch that is loose in these parts.

He told me a good deal about the navy and its operations and also of what they hoped to do on land. He seemed more certain than any one I have met that France and Russia would stick to the last man. He said what would happen to Germany when the French got in there, if they ever did, would be a plenty; and he said his cousin, the Czar, had written him that Russia was aflame from one end to the other and was determined to win if they had to put in the field twenty million men.

As for England, he said she was sending the flower of the nation to the front and that the world would be forced to acknowledge, before the spring and summer were over, that her army was equal to her best tradition.

He spoke of our relations and expressed the greatest gratification that we were on such good terms. He said the hope of the world lay in their continuance.

He asked me to convey to you his most respectful compliments and assurances of distinguished consideration.

Some one had evidently given him a glimpse of your character, for he voiced almost all I said of you before I could say it myself. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House asked the King why he did not take occasion to speak to the British public in the forceful manner in which he had talked to him regarding the war and war measures. He replied, House recorded, 'that he did not do so for the reason that his distinguished cousin, the Kaiser, had talked so much and had made such a fool of himself that he had a distaste for that kind of publicity. Then, too, he added, this was a different sort of monarchy and he did not desire to intrude himself in such matters.'

Colonel House to Mr. Gordon Auchincloss

LONDON, *March 2, 1915*

DEAR GORDON:

. . . I am lunching and dining with some one of importance every day. On Tuesday I go into the Conservative camp further than I have yet done, by dining to meet Balfour, Lord Curzon, and several others. . . .

4 U's¹ and I keep in constant communication by cable; but so far as I can see, my main object now must be to mark time and not offend by overdoing. . . .

Unless one has undertaken such a job himself — and there has been none like it up to now — he cannot possibly imagine the pitfalls that lurk on every hand. It keeps one side-stepping every moment; and if I succeed in doing nothing more than keeping out of trouble, I shall consider I have been fortunate.

¹ An obvious representation of W. W.

I have succeeded in keeping my name absolutely out of the European press, which is a good beginning, and I remain in as much obscurity as is possible for one having such work in hand. No one, of course, not even Page, knows when I see the different Ministers or personages of importance; and my comings and goings are as unchronicled as if I were a crossing-sweeper.

Paternally yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*March 4, 1915* [conference between House and A. J. Balfour]: We got along famously together, I doing most of the talking, although at times he would become enthusiastic and would get up and stand by the fire and declaim to me just as earnestly as I had to him. I took a liking to him at once, and have a sincere desire that it should be reciprocated. I like the quality of his mind. It is not possible to allow one's wits to lag when one is in active discussion with him. In that respect, he reminds me somewhat of the President. I am inclined to rank him along with the President and Mr. Asquith in intellectuality, and this, to my mind, places him at the summit.'

Colonel House to Mr. Gordon Auchincloss

LONDON, *March 5, 1915*

DEAR GORDON:

... I have seen almost every Liberal of importance in the Kingdom, and for the past week I have devoted myself to the Conservatives, as it will be very helpful, not only to the Government, but to me individually in the final negotiations.

Balfour was very complimentary in regard to the suggestions I have made, and said they were unique and practicable as far as he could see at the moment.

I have seen for a long while that the limiting of armaments was the insuperable obstacle in the way of a permanent set-

tlement, and I have not been able to think of a way that was satisfactory to me until I was on the *Lusitania* with my mind free to devote to the subject. It then occurred to me that if all the important nations, belligerents and neutrals, should agree to cease the manufacture of munitions of war for a period of ten years or more, the question then of how large an army Germany should have, or France should retain, or the size of Germany's or Great Britain's navy, need not be discussed.¹

The armies and the navies would remain as they are at the end of the war; but without the manufacture of any further battleships or munitions of war, everything would automatically become obsolete in a few years. What we need to do is to play for time. Time will make Germany democratic and there will be no more danger in that direction than from the United States, England, or France. Russia is another problem, which may or may not have to be dealt with in the future.

This plan would involve the shutting-down of Krupps' and of Armstrong's and other manufacturers, and it would leave the world at the end of ten years on a peace footing. The money that it would save to each nation every year would be sufficient to pay the interest on the great war debts that they are piling up.

All this, of course, is not to be mentioned except to Sidney and Martin,² from whom I keep nothing. . . .

Paternally yours

E. M. HOUSE

'March 5, 1915: Sidney Brooks called in the afternoon. He was on his way to the Foreign Office to offer his services in an effort to present the British side of questions arising be-

¹ The proposal is obviously based upon the assumption of a military stalemate, which at that time seemed probable to House.

² Dr. Sidney Mezes, and Mr. E. S. Martin, editor of *Life*.

tween the United States and Great Britain. He hopes to be able to do better work than has been done. He said up to now the Foreign Office had done it as badly as human ingenuity could suggest. He asked if I thought they could have done it worse. I thought not, and Brooks seemed pleased at this tribute to their efforts. . . .

'Chalmers Roberts and I took supper at Scot's. Afterward I went to the Ambassador's, as he wished to show me Colonel George O. Squier's diary, which he said I must keep in the deepest confidence. It embarrassed me to have to tell him that I had had a copy of the diary for more than two weeks.

'We talked of home, of the President, McAdoo, and conditions, and we had a genuinely good time. I like Page. He is direct and without guile. . . .

'*March 8, 1915:* I dined with Lord Loreburn. John Burns was the only other guest. They are both sane, reasonable, able men, and we talked of the war and of the jingoes and of the difficulties of peace. I told them of the demands of France and of those of South Africa concerning the German African colonies. Burns thought the latter could be met, but considered those of France more serious. . . .

'*March 9, 1915:* We dined with Lady Paget. She had a notable gathering. The other guests were Lord Curzon, Mr. A. J. Balfour, Sir John Cowan, Mr. Cust (who will be Lord Brownley), Lord and Lady Desborough (Lady-in-waiting to the Queen), Duchess of Marlborough, Mrs. John Astor, and Mrs. George Keppel.

'Curzon and I had considerable talk together when coffee was served, and I found him the worst jingo I have met. He wants to make peace in Berlin no matter how long it takes to get there. He is an able man, expressing himself forcefully and well. We got along agreeably, for he seemed to want to be as pleasant as possible. With that type I seldom or never argue, because our views are too far apart to ever harmonize.

'Balfour has a much more charming personality. I talked to Cust and succeeded in changing his point of view as to the United States. . . .'

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, March 8, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . Since I last wrote, I have seen something of the peace party, headed by such men as the recent Lord Chancellor, Lord Loreburn, Mr. Hirst of the *Economist*, and others.

Northcliffe is of the ultra set on the other side. He remarked to one or two friends of mine that if you had sent me over here to discuss peace, I should be run out of England. . . . I mention this to show the extreme difficulties of the situation. Sidney Brooks told me, however, that he had found no one with whom I had talked now antagonistic to our purposes.

I shall find this anti-peace feeling much stronger in Germany among the military party; but if I can get directly at the Kaiser, I hope to be able to make some impression. The great question is, who really controls in Germany? This is something I am afraid I shall have to find out for myself. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

v

In the meantime, Grey and House had decided that the moment had arrived for the Colonel to go to Berlin. Messages had come from von Jagow through Washington that the Germans awaited him; and although letters from Zimmermann and Gerard contained no intimation of Germany's willingness to make concessions, it seemed worth while to discover the real situation in Berlin.

Herr Zimmermann to Colonel House

BERLIN, March 2, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

Many thanks for your letter of February 17th. I regret to see that you consider giving up your trip to Berlin which I had counted on as offering a much more satisfactory opportunity for an interchange of ideas than has been possible up to now.

I read with interest what you believe to be a possible beginning to the desired end. It seems to me, however, that you are taking as a basis a more or less defeated Germany or one nearly at the end of her resources. It is hardly necessary for me to show in how far this is not the case. Although I can assure you that Germany has the welfare of Belgium very much at heart, still she is not able to forget what a terrific cost was paid for the resistance our men encountered there.

You may be sure, as I said before, that Germany's wish for a permanent peace is as sincere as your own. If England would consent to give up her claim to a monopoly on the seas together with her two-to-one power standard, I think it might be a good beginning.

I remain, my dear Colonel

Sincerely yours

ZIMMERMANN

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, March 6, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I hope you are coming here soon. Von Jagow said he hoped you were coming, and while I see no prospect of peace now, you could acquaint yourself with the general situation and be in a better position to talk in the other capitals. . . .

The feeling against America is in abeyance, waiting to see what happens with relation to the latest English declaration

about the blockade of Germany. I have as yet no official information.

The Chancellor is not *boss* now. Von Tirpitz and Falkenhayn (Chief of Staff) have more influence, especially as the Chancellor bores the Emperor, and there are great intrigues going on among all these conflicting authorities. The people who were in favor of accepting a reasonable peace proposal were, strange to say, the military general staff end, and it was von Tirpitz who did not want our last proposals accepted.¹ . . .

I hate to write in these spy times and do most earnestly hope you are coming soon, or, if you are going to Italy, I will run down and report to you there if you want. . . .

Ever yours

JAMES W. GERARD

'*March 7, 1915* [conference with Grey]: We both think the time has come for me to go to Germany. I have decided to go *via* France, and I asked his opinion as to whether I should see Delcassé. At first he thought not. He said Delcassé was decidedly of the opinion, when he was here, that it was no time for peace parleys, and he did not believe he had changed this point of view. I was afraid he would consider it a discourtesy if I did not see him. Looking at it from that viewpoint, Grey thought I was right and it would be best to see him, though he cautioned me to be guarded in what I said. I assured him he need have no fear of my being indiscreet.

'Grey thought France would insist upon Alsace-Lorraine. The French believe the Allies will win and that they can impose terms of peace upon Germany; later, perhaps, they would find that to impose peace conditions upon Germany would necessitate continuing the war for a number of

¹ The United States proposed that Germany should give up the submarine war zone around Great Britain, provided the British relinquished the food blockade.

years and, when that was realized, they might be willing to make concessions.

'He did not know the mind of Russia, but he believed by giving them Constantinople and the Straits, they would be willing to acquiesce in almost any other terms that might be agreed upon. . . .

'The difficulty I expect to find here in the final negotiations is, there is no man who dominates the situation. . . . In Germany I shall find the situation even more uncertain. If there were a Palmerston or a Chatham here, and a Bismarck in Germany, it would be easier.'

The Quest for Peace had thus far revealed nothing but the unwillingness of any of the belligerents to yield an iota of their aspirations. Yet the mission had not been wasted. House had established relations with the British which not merely helped to tide over the difficulties of the present, but which must prove invaluable in preventing misunderstanding for the future. The memoirs of the British Foreign Secretary indicate how thoroughly the Colonel had succeeded in establishing a sympathetic understanding. 'It was not necessary,' writes Grey, 'to spend much time in putting our case to him. He had a way of saying, "I know it" in a tone and manner that carried conviction both of his sympathy with, and understanding of, what was said to him.' And again: 'Our conversations became almost at once not only friendly but intimate. I found combined in him in a rare degree the qualities of wisdom and sympathy. In the stress of war it was at once a relief, a delight, and an advantage to be able to talk with him freely. His criticism or comment was valuable, his suggestions were fertile, and these were all conveyed with a sympathy that made it pleasant to listen to them. After a day that began about seven in the morning I broke off work by seven in the evening and took things easily at my house for an hour before dinner. It was arranged that

in this hour House should come whenever he wanted to have a talk.'¹

The Colonel's mission would have been worth while if only because of this close personal understanding with the Foreign Secretary, and it was one of the imponderables that weighed heavily in the diplomatic history of the following years.

Appreciative of Grey's honesty and moderation, fearful of the demands of France, suspicious of German sincerity, yet determined if possible to find a thread to throw across the chasm: such were the feelings of House when on March 11 he left England for Paris and Berlin.

¹ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years* (Frederick A. Stokes Company), II, 124.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS

If peace parleys were begun now upon any terms that would have any chance of acceptance, it would mean the overthrow of this Government and the Kaiser.

Zimmermann to House, March 21, 1915

I

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, March 14, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

We arrived here Thursday night. A destroyer accompanied our boat a good part of the way, and we passed one floating mine about one hundred yards away. Otherwise the trip was without incident. . . .

I have just returned from my interview with Delcassé.¹ The interpreter was the Assistant Secretary for Foreign Affairs.² I let him read your letter and told him I came to present your compliments, but that you did not desire to intrude yourself upon them or to hurt their sensibilities in any way by making an immature suggestion of peace.

I said this before he had a chance to say anything, for I knew quite well what was in his mind. He was visibly pleased when this suggestion was made, and it placed us on a good footing.

I then told him that you had foreseen for a year or more that, unless something was done to prevent it, some spark

¹ Minister for Foreign Affairs. Théophile Delcassé had been a prime mover in the Entente with Great Britain, and largely responsible for the energetic foreign policy of France from 1904 on. He was the *bête noire* of the Germans, who regarded him as the collaborator of Edward VII and Grey in the attempt to 'encircle' Germany.

² Jaquin de Margerie, at that time Director of Political Affairs of the Foreign Office; in the post-war period appointed French Ambassador to Germany.

might cause the present conflagration, and you had sent me to Europe last May for the purpose of seeing what could be done to bring about a better understanding; that I had gone to Germany and had come to France, but they were changing Government at the time and it was impossible to talk to them.

I wanted to let him know that you had had the threads in your hands from the beginning and that you understood the situation thoroughly. . . .

In reply he said that France greatly appreciated your keen interest and noble desire to bring about peace, and he was glad I had come to Paris and would look forward with interest to seeing me when I returned from Germany. He said he would then tell me in the frankest way what France had in mind and was willing to do. I did not press him to tell me this then, because I happened to know what they have in mind and I did not want to go into a footless and discouraging discussion.

I had accomplished more than I anticipated, for it was not certain that I would be received cordially. Even Sir Edward was a little worried. The main thing accomplished was that France has at least tentatively accepted you as mediator; and that, I think, is much. . . .

Gerard tells me, through Winslow, that he does not believe the Germans would hesitate a moment to go to war with us. On the other hand, Winslow says that when you sent them the note to Germany which was almost an ultimatum,¹ he saw a distinct change for the better at the German Foreign Office the very next day. They had been insolent before, but were all right afterwards.

They all seem to think that the Germans have literally gone crazy. I am not so sure of it myself. I can see gleams of sanity in much they are doing.

¹ A reference to Wilson's note of February 10, warning the German Government that in case of the destruction of an American vessel or American lives it would be held to a 'strict accountability.'

I shall be exceedingly careful about cabling you or even writing from Berlin, for it is dangerous to the last degree. Winslow tells me that their system of espionage is something beyond belief and that one can never be sure that papers have not been tampered with.

I find that the ruling class in France do not desire peace, but that a large part of the people and the men in the trenches would welcome it. This, I think, is also true of Germany. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. Gerard also sent word that he thought the Kaiser would be deposed in the event Germany was not successful in this contest.

'*March 14, 1915:* Willard Straight called this morning. He is a great friend of Casenave¹ and also of Margerie, and Margerie is a friend of Casenave and Delcassé, so the circle is fairly complete. I told Straight some things I wished told to Delcassé through Casenave and Margerie. This Straight promised to undertake. I wish Delcassé to know that in my opinion France is taking a big gamble in demanding peace terms that Germany will never accept unless the Allies reach Berlin. I am sorry I am not on such terms with Delcassé to tell him these things myself, for I do not like using third parties.

'Straight is to convey the thought that it will be of advantage to the Allies to have the good will of the President, and that the best way to get it is through me. Another idea I wished conveyed was that the really essential thing and the big thing was to strive for a permanent settlement and not for any small territorial advantage, which in itself would leave wounds which in time would lead to further trouble.'

¹ In charge of the Press Bureau at the Foreign Office.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, March 15, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

De Casenave came to see me to-day. He is at the head of the Press Bureau and his principal duties are to see that the French papers contain the proper kind of reading matter in regard to England, America, and other nations. . . .

I asked him to be very frank and to tell me of French opinion. He said the French people at large thought that America had nothing in mind further than a dollar. He said a few Frenchmen had gone to America, had stayed there some weeks, not knowing the language, had visited such places as the pork packeries of Chicago, and had come away to write books concerning the avarice of our people. He said this had been done to such an extent that the opinion was fixed in France that we were guided entirely by mercenary motives.

He said when he gave to the French papers directions as to what to say in regard to America, they smiled and shrugged their shoulders. . . .

I am trying to make a friend of de Margerie of the Foreign Office. He has lived in America, speaks English well, and is said to be almost as much of a force in the Foreign Office as Delcassé, besides being in Delcassé's confidence. I have some mutual friends on this job and I will remain here long enough upon my return to try and clinch it.

I shall attempt the same thing in Germany, probably using Zimmermann as a medium. If I can establish such relations, the situation can scarcely get away from us. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

II

All his conversations in Paris merely confirmed the forebodings which House had experienced in England. The

aspirations of the French for territorial annexations put out of court immediately the bases for peace which he had discussed with Grey. A message from Gerard indicated that the Germans were equally determined upon wide annexations. 'He was sure,' House noted after receiving the message, 'that they were not in a frame of mind to consider such peace terms as the Allies would think of offering. . . . The French not only want Alsace and Lorraine, but so much more that the two countries are not within sight of peace. If it is brought about, it will be through the sanity and justice of Sir Edward Grey and British opinion.'

House might have given up his proposed trip to Germany then and there. But he saw the chance of placing German-American relations on a better footing, through personal conversations, and did not wish to lose the opportunity of indicating to the Germans some basis of future compromise with the British. He determined, however, that it would be worse than useless to raise the question of immediate peace parleys in Berlin.

Colonel House to Mr. Gordon Auchincloss

BERLIN, March 21, 1915

DEAR GORDON:

We left Paris at eight o'clock Wednesday morning. We went close to the firing line, somewhere between ten and twelve miles. Soldiers boarded the train as we passed through this territory and pulled down all shades and stationed themselves in the corridors so we could not look out. We were within hearing of the guns.

The different Governments are always notified of our coming, before we reach the borders, and every facility has been extended to us. If this were not done, travelling would be practically impossible — that is, where we have gone.

At Basle I had a conference with Minister Stovall from

Berne and Consul-General Wilbur from Zurich, and at Frankfort with Consul-General Harrison.

We arrived in Berlin yesterday morning in a snowstorm. Gerard met us and brought us to his house. I have had a conference with Zimmermann and he was exceedingly cordial and delightful. I have always liked him and I am glad we have resumed our friendly relations.

I cannot write you very fully, excepting to say that there is nothing that even looks like peace within sight. However, I am accomplishing many things that I have in mind and I hope I am doing some good. It looks as if there would have to be a decisive victory on one side or the other before parleys can begin.

If I succeed in establishing cordial relations at the different belligerent capitals, I will have done all that I expected at this time. . . .

Paternally yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

BERLIN, March 20, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . We arrived in Berlin this morning and Gerard immediately arranged a private conference for me with Zimmermann. I let him read your letter, which impressed him favorably as it does every one. I told him frankly what I had done in England, whom I had met there, in what way, and my conclusions.

He was surprised to hear of the lack of bitterness in England towards Germany and was equally surprised when I told him that the difficulty was with France. They have evidently tried to cultivate good relations with both France and Russia, for the purpose of making separate terms with them. I think I convinced him that England did not desire Germany crushed and that, in the final analysis, terms would

have to be agreed upon between these two countries. This is so patent that I wonder they do not recognize it. It is fortunate it is true, for the difference between the two is not great and they could get together now if it were not for the fact that the people in both Germany and England have been led to expect much more than is possible of realization. Neither Government can fulfil these expectations. If they attempted to make peace upon a different basis from that which the people have been led to believe will ultimately come about, there is a possibility that the Governments would be overthrown. That is the real trouble now. Just how it can be overcome, is the question.

I am trying to get every one to soften down through the press and create a better feeling. Zimmermann tells me that the main thing Germany wants is a settlement which will guarantee permanent peace. It is the same cry in each of the belligerent states.

I showed Zimmermann the different points where our interests and theirs touched, and expressed a desire that we work together to accomplish our purposes. I brought up the second convention [for organizing permanent peace] in this connection, and he received it most cordially. I told him in particular that we as well as Germany desired that some guaranty should be had in the future as to the protection and uninterrupted of our commerce, either as neutral or as belligerent. I told him that we recognized England had a perfect right to have a navy sufficient to prevent invasion, but further than that she should not go.

He was exceedingly sympathetic with this thought, and I think it will have a tendency to put us on a good footing here.

The Chancellor is out of town for a few days, but Zimmermann is to arrange a meeting as soon as he returns. He also suggested that the Emperor might want to see me. Gerard says this is impossible, that he has not seen him for

months because of his intense feeling against us on account of our shipment of munitions of war to the Allies. It is not important now whether I see him or not, and I shall leave it to Zimmermann's judgment. . . .

I am somewhat at a loss as to what to do next, for it is plain at the moment that some serious reverse will have to be encountered by one or other of the belligerents before any Government will dare propose parleys. I can foresee troublous times ahead, and it will be the wonder of the ages if all the Governments come out of it intact.

The world has been strained as never before in its history, and something is sure to crack somewhere before a great while.

It looks as if our best move just now is to wait until the fissure appears.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

BERLIN, *March 21, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am gradually getting at the bottom of things here and, while I cannot write with perfect freedom, I can tell enough to give you a fair idea of it.

I am seeing a great many people, just as I did in England, and I hope to have soon a composite picture that may be of value.

I met last night an able and sane man by the name of Dr. Rathenau.¹ I am told he is a great power in commercial Germany. He has such a clear vision of the situation and such a prophetic forecast as to the future that I wonder how many there are in Germany that think like him. It saddened

¹ The dominating figure of the early *post-bellum* German Republic. Foreign Secretary from January 31, 1922, to June 24, 1922; Germany's representative at the Genoa Conference, 1922; assassinated by reactionaries, June 24, 1922.

me to hear him say that as far as he knew, he stood alone. He said he had begun to wonder whether all the rest were really mad, or whether the madness lay within himself. . . .

It was almost pathetic to hear him urge us not to cease in our efforts to bring about peace. He said it was the noblest mission that was ever given to man and that he would pray that we would not become discouraged. I hear this note struck in all the countries. Mothers and wives, fathers and brothers, have spoken in the same strain and have seemed to feel that the only hope lies in our endeavors.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'It is a sad commentary,' added House, 'that the Governments of each of the belligerents would probably welcome peace negotiations, and yet none of them are able safely to make a beginning.' For each Government, in order to evoke the belligerent enthusiasm necessary to a prosecution of the war, had created a Frankenstein monster which emphatically vetoed any whisper of peace. Zimmermann stated, wrote House on March 24, 'that if peace parleys were begun now upon any terms that would have any chance of acceptance, it would mean the overthrow of this Government and the Kaiser.'

Colonel House to the President

BERLIN, March 26, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

While I feel I have accomplished much of value here, I leave sadly disappointed that we were misled into believing that peace parleys might be begun upon a basis of evacuation of France and Belgium.

I have been cordially received and have added many new friendships to the old. I find the civil Government here as sensible and fair-minded as their counterparts in England, but they are for the moment impotent.

It is a dangerous thing to inflame a people and give them an exaggerated idea of success. This is what has happened and is happening in almost every country that is at war. . . .

If those that are in charge of the civil Government now hold their power when peace comes, there will be no doubt of their coöperation — provided, of course, our relations grow no worse, and without actual war they could not be worse.

This is almost wholly due to our selling munitions of war to the Allies. The bitterness of their resentment towards us for this is almost beyond belief. It seems that every German that is being killed or wounded is being killed or wounded by an American rifle, bullet, or shell. I never dreamed before of the extraordinary excellence of our guns and ammunition. They are the only ones that explode or are so manufactured that their results are deadly.

I have pointed out the danger of such agitation against us and have tried to show how much it would lessen our influence in helping Germany when our help is needed. I have indicated where our interests touched at various points and how valuable it would be to both nations to work in harmony rather than at cross-purposes. . . .

There is a general insistence here, as elsewhere, that when a settlement is made it must be an enduring one; but ideas as to how this may be brought about are as divergent as the poles. . . .

Gerard has been exceedingly helpful here. He has not interfered in the slightest and has insisted upon my seeing the different Cabinet Ministers and influential Germans alone. He is very courageous, and is different from some of our representatives, inasmuch as his point of view is wholly American.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

As in London, House made a point of meeting varied

types, although he sought out especially those who represented the moderate point of view. He had long talks with Rathenau and von Gwinner,¹ with Solf, the Minister for the Colonies who later played a major rôle in the final armistice negotiations, with Helfferich — 'a young man,' House noted, 'who is considered one of the rising powers in Germany,' — with the Foreign Minister, von Jagow, and with the Chancellor.

III

Apart from his desire to obtain information and create an atmosphere friendly to the United States, House wished to try out on the Germans the plan which he believed might serve as the basis for a future compromise between Germany and Great Britain. It was the plan which came to be called the 'Freedom of the Seas.'

The problem presented itself in the following aspects to Colonel House. Existing maritime regulations permitted the capture of private property of neutrals on the high seas, if it came within the category of contraband, and it was inevitable under conditions of modern warfare that the definition of contraband should be progressively extended to include practically all materials and articles of industrial life. In any war between Great Britain and a Continental Power, the first thought of the British was naturally to use their control of the sea so as to interrupt the direct and indirect imports of the Continental enemy. A quarrel between Great Britain and the United States, the largest exporting neutral, must necessarily follow, for British restrictions meant the destruction of American trade. The events of 1914 and 1915, as well as those that led to the War of 1812, offered a practical example of this ever-recurring factor of discord, the sole factor that seriously threatened the cordial relations of the two countries.

¹ Banker, and promoter of the Bagdad Railway.

Apart from the peril of complications with America, there were other elements in the situation which did not seem to favor Great Britain. The British, living on an island, dependent for their lives upon trade with the outside world and especially with their colonies, were in a position of real danger that was not clearly recognized. They had believed that so long as their fleet remained supreme, they were perfectly safe. But the introduction of the submarine raised the question whether Great Britain's ocean-going trade, carried as it was by British ships, could not be destroyed and the nation be deprived of the foodstuffs and raw materials which entered her ports, even though her surface fleet remained intact. Such a threat to the security of national life became very lively in 1917.

Germany was dependent, although not to the same degree, upon overseas trade. In their struggle with England, the Germans counted upon the neutral ports of Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. But the British, in control of the sea, could confiscate or seriously harass trade bound for these ports, and thus threaten the starvation of Germany. So much the Germans themselves, in their protests against the British food blockade, admitted.

What House proposed was that the contraband list should be restricted so as to include only actual implements of warfare; everything else should be placed upon the free list. The trade of merchant vessels, whether belligerent or neutral, should be allowed to proceed freely outside territorial waters so long as they carried no contraband. They might even enter any belligerent port without hindrance, unless that port were actually and effectively blockaded by the enemy's fleet. Such a blockade in the case of England would be practically impossible, because of the multitude of available harbors and the strength of the British fleet. An effective blockade was equally impossible in the case of Germany, as the events of the war demonstrated.

For what, then, could a fleet be used, one will ask. Simply for purposes of defence, Colonel House replied; to prevent the landing of a hostile military force and to keep essential ports open.

The proposal was less revolutionary than many thought, and it had behind it the force of both British and American traditions. Sir Edward Grey had instructed the British delegation to the Second Hague Conference in 1907 to work for a restriction of the contraband list, and it was at his inspiration that the delegation carried the idea to its logical limit and expressed a willingness to abandon the principle of contraband of war entirely.¹ In their talks with House in February, Grey and Tyrrell had approved also the principle of the immunity of belligerent merchant shipping in time of war; in fact, it was that approval which lay at the bottom of House's present suggestion.

What is equally striking is that in 1907 Elihu Root, then Secretary of State, in his instructions to the United States delegates to the Hague Conference, advocated almost precisely what House now suggested, the exemption from capture of belligerent private property, although he said nothing about the restriction of contraband.

'The private property of all private citizens or subjects of signatory Powers [so ran his instructions], with the exception of contraband of war, shall be exempt from capture or seizure on the high seas or elsewhere by the armed vessels or by the military forces of any of the said signatory Powers, but nothing herein contained shall extend exemption from seizure of vessels or their cargoes which may attempt to

¹ The following declaration was made on the part of Great Britain: 'In order to diminish the difficulties encountered by neutral commerce in time of war the Government of H.B.M. is prepared to abandon the principle of contraband in case of war between the Powers which may sign a convention to that effect. The right of visit would be exercised only in order to ascertain the neutral character of the merchantmen.'

enter a port blockaded by the naval forces of any of the said Powers.'

This was in entire consonance with the Final Act of the First Hague Conference, which gave preference to 'inviolability of private property in naval warfare.'

It was only the use of the term 'Freedom of the Seas' as applied to this suggestion which was new; and this, it appears, was originated by Colonel House. Grotius in 1609 used the term *mare liberum*, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries became accustomed to such slogans as 'a free sea or war,'¹ 'free ships, free goods,' 'free flag, free goods.' The phrase 'freedom of the seas' was itself used in 1798 by the French Revolutionary leader, Barère, in his famous summary of French foreign policy: 'Freedom of the seas, peace to the world, equal rights to all nations.' But it remained for Colonel House to utilize the phrase as applicable to what Choate had called, in 1907, 'immunity of private property at sea,' and to include the proposal of a rigid restriction of contraband of war.

House's plan for the Freedom of the Seas was thus based upon the approval of both British and American authorities. It carried with it immediate and ultimate advantages which in the case of the United States would eliminate practically all factors of complication with European belligerents. If contraband were restricted, the trade of the United States might proceed with almost as much freedom in time of war as in that of peace. The advantages to the world at large were still more obvious, since the rôle of a navy would become chiefly defensive and naval disarmament might proceed apace.

Germany would undoubtedly gain much by the Freedom of the Seas. An enemy possessing a strong fleet, like Great Britain, would still be free to blockade German ports if it

¹ In England, on the eve of the War of Jenkins' Ear.

could reach them, but could not cut off the foodstuffs and raw materials which the Germans received through neutral ports and contiguous countries. Great Britain would thus lose an offensive weapon of doubtful legality. But as compensation, how greatly British defensive strength would be enhanced! The disadvantages of her island position would largely disappear, her food supply would be secure, and her commerce with the far-flung portions of the Empire would be assured without the protection of a costly fleet. Submarines would not be able to prey upon merchant shipping. Under the principle of the Freedom of the Seas, the Power with the most colonies and the widest overseas trade stood to gain most.

So much was plain to Colonel House, although he was careful not to whisper in Berlin that he believed the British would win the lion's share of advantage. To him the great irony of the war was that his proposal was so eagerly swallowed by the Germans, so scornfully refused by British opinion.

The weak point in House's plan lay in the danger that an unscrupulous nation, after accepting its principle, would proceed to disregard its engagements. The British could not escape the fear that Germany, which had broken its promises in the Belgian treaty, was quite capable of agreeing to the Freedom of the Seas and, after securing the partial disarmament of Great Britain thereby, might embark upon a wholesale destruction of British merchant shipping. To meet this danger, House was insistent upon an association of nations bound to unite forcibly against any nation that violated its international promises.

The Colonel believed that the acceptance of the Freedom of the Seas, as a principle of international law, was essential to stability of relations between the United States and European Powers. He also believed that the idea could be used as a means to start peace negotiations between the

belligerents. If the British would agree to his proposal, with all its ultimate advantages for them, he planned to present this fact to the Germans as a diplomatic victory for Germany that would justify peace parleys and satisfy German public opinion.

Colonel House to the President

BERLIN, March 27, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Some way has to be thought out to let the Governments down easy with their people. That is almost, if not quite, our hardest problem.

It occurred to me to-day to suggest to the Chancellor that, through the good offices of the United States, England might be brought to concede at the final settlement the Freedom of the Seas, and to the extent I have indicated to you. I told him that the United States would be justified in bringing pressure upon England in this direction, for our people had a common interest with Germany in that question.

He, like the others I have talked to, was surprised when I told him the idea was to go far beyond the Declaration of Paris or the proposed Declaration of London. I said that some one would have to throw across the chasm the first thread, so that the bridge might have its beginning, and that I knew of no suggestion that was better fitted for that purpose than this; that if England would consent, this Government [the German] could say to the people that Belgium was no longer needed as a base for German naval activity, since England was being brought to terms.

I have sown this thought of the Freedom of the Seas very widely since I have been here, and already I can see the results. . . . I think I can show England that, in the long run and looking at the matter broadly, it is as much to her interest as it is to the other nations of the earth.

The Chancellor seems to think, and so does Zimmermann, that I have offered in this suggestion the best idea as a peace beginning. . . .

I have told them frankly and with emphasis that they could not expect us to lay an embargo on the exportation of munitions of war, and that they must soften their press and people on this point. They have promised to do this. I have told them I would help them in the big thing later and that they must be content with our efforts in that direction.

I leave here fairly satisfied with the situation, as we now have something definite to work on and as the warring nations have tentatively accepted you as their mediator. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Unfortunately, the Germans did not possess either the discretion or the tact necessary to the development of House's plan for the Freedom of the Seas. He hoped to win British approval, for he knew of Grey's sympathy. All he wished from Germany, for the moment, was an acquiescent silence. But the Germans lost no time in advertising the idea as their own and thereby immediately ruined all chance of success. In the United States, Herr Dernburg, in charge of German propaganda, announced that if England granted the Freedom of the Seas, Germany would retire from Belgium; if England refused, Germany would establish a permanent fortified base on the English Channel. Englishmen were entirely ignorant as to what the Freedom of the Seas meant, or whether it would be advantageous or not to refuse it; but coming in this fashion as a threat, public opinion immediately decided that it was something made in Germany and that every true Britisher would spill the last drop of his blood before considering it. From that moment began the unreasoning prejudice against the idea, which ultimately became invincible.

IV

In the meantime House had left Germany, passing back to Paris through Nice and Biarritz, where he engaged in conferences with the American Ambassadors to Italy and to Spain.

'April 2, 1915 [Nice]: Page ¹ and I have continued our talks. He has given the Italian situation in detail, going into the intricacies of Italian politics, especially as to the rivalry between the present Premier, Salandra, and the late Premier, Giolitti.

'Page thinks Italy is acting in a wholly selfish way and that it matters little with her whether she supports the Allies or the Dual Alliance, provided she is on the winning side. The aristocracy are favorable to Germany and the people to the Entente. Nowhere throughout Italy is the feeling against Germany anything like as bitter as it is against their old-time enemy, Austria.

'Page does not believe Italy would last long in the conflict, and that if she had entered at the beginning of the war she would probably have been easily defeated and disarmed. He believes she will finally enter the war on the side of the Allies when she can see the end of the struggle within a few months.

'He thinks England has made something of a mistake in not giving her some assurance as to her aspirations for new territory, or, we might say, old territory which she seeks to recover. This would include a portion of Austria, around what the Italians term the Gulf of Venice, the twelve islands which she has long coveted, and a sphere of influence in Asia Minor. . . .²

¹ Thomas Nelson Page.

² At that moment, negotiations were being carried on which ended with the Treaty of London, a guaranty by the Entente that Italy should receive the territories she claimed

'April 8, 1915 [Biarritz]: Ambassador Willard came from Madrid to-day, arriving at 2.30. . . . He says the King dominates Spain and at heart he is an advanced Liberal. He is well informed and is altogether an intelligent and up-to-date ruler. His Ministers are not nearly so progressive, and hold him back to a considerable degree.

'The King desires to figure in peace overtures, but is willing to allow the President to take the lead and will coöperate with him in a secondary capacity. I told Willard I did not see how he could figure in it jointly, since it would have to be done by one or the other and, unless the situation changed it would doubtless be the President. However, the situation could change to the disadvantage of the President, for, if all the belligerents become dissatisfied and embittered with our neutral policy, they might conceive the idea that any one would be preferable to the President as a mediator. I explained to Willard that I was appealing to the self-interests of both sides, and that in itself would probably induce them to accept Wilson.

'Willard said the King was pro-French, but not especially pro-British; that he was anti-German, but pro-Austrian. His reason for not being strongly pro-British, even though his wife is English, is because he feels that he has not been very courteously treated by the British upon his several visits to England. Then, too, there is always Gibraltar to sting Spanish pride. . . .'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, April 11, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

This is the first time I have had an opportunity to write you freely since I left here. My visit in Berlin was exceedingly trying and disagreeable in many ways. I met there no one of either high or low degree who did not immediately corner me, and begin to discuss our shipment of muni-

tions to the Allies, and sometimes their manner was almost offensive.

Upon the streets one hesitated to speak in English, for fear of being insulted. . . .

I feel, however, that with the Government and with the influential people with whom I talked, a better understanding of our purposes was brought about; and I hope this feeling will sooner or later reach the people at large. . . .

The trouble with Germany is that it is antiquated in some of its ideas. They started upon the rule of force at a time when the most advanced nations were going in the opposite direction.

I endeavored to make it clear to the German Government that their best interests could be served by working along harmoniously with us. If we can keep this view before them, they will probably want you as mediator, for they are narrowly selfish in their purposes and have no broad outlook as to the general good of mankind.

I found a lack of harmony in governmental circles which augurs ill for the future. The civil Government are divided amongst themselves. . . . The military and civil forces are not working in harmony.

The Emperor is still in absolute authority, although he is criticized pretty generally by both the civil and military branches of the Government. Falkenhayn and von Tirpitz seem to have more influence with him than any one, but Falkenhayn is not popular with the army in general.

The Crown Prince seems to be left out of all important councils and is generally ignored by both the civil and military Governments, though he seems to be more popular with the people than his father because he is said to be without egotism and more democratic in his manner.

Hindenburg is the popular hero and is the only one that dares to assert himself against the Emperor. I believe there are troublous times ahead for the Kaiser and that

one dénouement of the war may be a more democratic Germany. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

At Paris Colonel House did not raise the question of peace, for there was less chance of it than ever. In the East, the Germans were driving the Russians out of Poland. In the West, the French were planning a great drive in the Champagne regions. The British were developing the attack upon the Dardanelles. Italy was on the point of joining the Allies. Both sides were trying to win over Bulgaria. Every one hoped for victory. House confined himself to securing information and solidifying his personal relationships, especially with Delcassé and Poincaré. House met Poincaré for the first time on this occasion. An American diplomat warned him not to be disappointed by the coldness of manner characteristic of the French President. 'I replied,' wrote House, 'that his coldness and silence would not embarrass me if it did not embarrass him, and I could be as quiet, and for as long, as anybody.'

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

PARIS, April 13, 1915

In a private conference with Delcassé, he was good enough to express his satisfaction at the way negotiations have been carried on up to now. He said that I had given Berlin a correct idea of France's attitude and he approved what I had said and done there. . . .

He wished me to convey to you the appreciation of France for the fairness with which you have maintained our relations with the belligerents. I shall see Poincaré before I leave.

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, April 17, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have just cabled you of my interview with Poincaré. I had been told that he was austere in his manner and I was quite unprepared for the warmth with which he welcomed me.

He seemed to understand my relation to you and he expressed his appreciation of your having sent me to France.

When I wrote the cable to you on Thursday, I made a request that you send some message that could be repeated to him and to Delcassé. I afterwards struck this out, for fear lest it might give you too much trouble. When I received your cablegram yesterday, sending messages to them both, it seemed like a case of telepathy.

Poincaré was visibly pleased. I have not seen Delcassé since, but will do so in a day or two in order to discuss with him the second convention. There is nothing you could do that would promote better feeling than occasionally to send some word that I may repeat to those in authority in the country in which I happen to be. We are all susceptible to these little attentions.

I find your purposes badly misunderstood in France. They believe the American public largely sympathetic to the Allies; but there is a feeling, which I am sorry to say is almost universal throughout France, that you personally are pro-German. It is the most illogical conclusion that one could imagine, and I can scarcely keep within the bounds of politeness when I discuss it. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Secretary Bryan

PARIS, April 15, 1915

DEAR MR. BRYAN:

... Everybody seems to want peace, but nobody is willing to concede enough to get it. They all also say that they desire a permanent settlement so that no such disaster may occur hereafter, but, again, there is such a divergence of ideas as to how this should be brought about that for the moment it is impossible to harmonize the differences.

Germany is not willing to evacuate Belgium at all, nor even France, without an indemnity, and Count von Bernstorff's suggestion that this could be arranged was wide afield. The Allies, of course, will not consent to anything less; and there the situation rests.

With warm regards and good wishes for Mrs. Bryan and you, I am

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

'April 16, 1915: I can see from my interviews [wrote House], not only with Delcassé and Poincaré but with others, that I would have made a mistake if I had attempted to talk peace at this time. France as a whole has an idea that the President is not altogether in sympathy with the Allies and that he is inclined to be pro-German, and that it is for that reason he has tried to push peace measures and in order to save Germany's face. It is very discouraging to have to talk to intelligent people and argue with them about such a matter, but that is what I have to do.

'Another impression they have here is that the President is catering to the pro-German vote. I explain to them that a man of the President's intelligence would hardly cater to fifteen per cent of the American vote in order to lose eighty-five per cent of it. This they had never thought of. In fact, it seems to me they do not think much at all.

418 INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

'The ignorance of Europe concerning itself, to say nothing of America, is appalling.

'France, to-day, does not understand England, her purposes, or her forces in the war. They have an idea that they, themselves, are doing it all and that England is idling. Only a few Frenchmen who have been in England understand the momentum gathering force there, and the indomitable energy and tenacity which in the end will probably turn the scales in favor of the Allies.'

Colonel House to President S. E. Mezes

PARIS, April 18, 1915

DEAR SIDNEY:

... We lead a busy and interesting life and do not get time to thoroughly enjoy the bombs that drop before and after us. We just missed them in Paris and also missed them as they were dropped on the stations and railway sheds along our journey. Now that the weather is milder, we have a better sporting chance, as all the belligerents promise that an acceleration of their activities in this direction will soon commence.

Martin is evidently looking forward with interest to a bomb catching me somewhere on the Allies' territory — as he believes that would bring about war with Germany, which he considers would be worth dying for. On the other hand, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* writing editorially hopes I may be spared, for the reason that, desirable as my taking off would be, the price of a war with Germany would be too great to pay. . . .

Fraternally yours

E. M. HOUSE

'April 19, 1915: Last night Ambassador and Mrs. Sharp gave a dinner. The guests besides ourselves were, the Infanta Eulalia of Spain, the Spanish Ambassador and his

wife, Ambassador Willard, Robert Bliss, Mrs. Crosby, and Mr. and Mrs. Tuck. I sat by the Infanta and immediately caught her attention by complimenting her recent article in an American magazine, on the Kaiser. I thought she had written charmingly of him, and any one who knew him would recognize how truthful it was. She said she was fond of the Kaiser, and had tried to make the French people understand that he was not the ogre they imagined. We had a spirited talk about the war and its outcome. She knew the situation in Italy thoroughly and of the dangerous position in which the King was. She also knew that the King and aristocracy were for Germany, but the people were in favor of the Allies. . . .

'She spoke of the petty jealousies and differences among Royalty, and laughingly said that when the family silver spoons were to be divided, it was always a question as to who should have this spoon and who should have the other. In talking of the Kaiser, I thought he had not surrounded himself with an efficient Cabinet. She said that was one of his faults, for he wanted to do everything himself and did not desire any dominant figure on the boards excepting himself; consequently he had been badly served.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, April 20, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . The Spanish Ambassador told me that the King of Spain wished him to meet me and ask me to come to Madrid. He confirmed what Willard had said, and that is, the King would like to take some part in peace negotiations and is willing to follow your lead.

I told the Ambassador that you did not desire me, at the moment, to visit the neutral countries and that I was confining myself to the belligerents, and that we were not making any peace overtures, but were simply studying conditions.

I told him, however, that after visiting Russia I might go to San Sebastian and meet the King. This makes it indefinite and many things may happen to prevent my going. . . .

Evidence still comes to me each day of the misunderstanding which the French people at large have of our position. They are very much afraid that peace will be made overnight and that the Germans will not receive the punishment for their misdeeds which they feel they so richly deserve.

In the course of the next two or three months, the conviction will break in upon them that the wonderful things they expect the army to do, have not happened; and they will then become more reasonable in their attitude.

I notice that Dernburg has taken the cue from Berlin and is saying that Belgium must be retained unless the 'Freedom of the Seas' is established. Yesterday I noticed that a prominent Hamburger said the same thing, and it looks as if the German Government had accepted my suggestion that this was the best way to save their faces before the people.

I took lunch to-day with Joseph Reinach. He is a German-French Jew whose people have lived in France some sixty years. He is said to be thoroughly patriotic and is a man of influence.

He writes for the *Figaro*, and I outlined some things I thought it would be well for him to incorporate in his next article. I drew his attention to the fact that it was more to France's interest to have the United States come in at the final settlement and exercise its moral influence than it was to ours.

I also made him the same talk I have made to others concerning you and your purposes. . . .

Reinach gets German papers from friends in Switzerland, and he said he saw a great change within the last two weeks in their attitude towards England. I am wondering whether what I said to them in Berlin has begun to bear fruit and

they see the wisdom of modifying their hate campaign in that direction.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

House left Paris for London on April 28. His visit to France had been without result so far as hastening the chance of peace was concerned, but he had solidified the personal relations which were later to be of immense diplomatic value. In England he at once renewed his intimacy with British friends and created new contacts of interest and importance.

'May 5, 1915: I lunched with Lord Northcliffe. The only other guest was L. J. Maxse, of the *National Review*.

'Northcliffe spoke freely about the war and criticized the Government without stint. He thought Kitchener too old for the job and that he did not understand the sort of warfare he was now engaged in. He did not think the British appreciated the magnitude of the task before them, or that they were meeting the situation with anything like the determination and ability the occasion required. Neither Northcliffe nor Maxse thought there was a big man connected with either the Government or army. He told of the number of men they had in France at this time and the number in every place. It was most indiscreet to tell these facts, if, indeed, they are facts. I do not wonder the Germans get so much information, for I hear the most profound secrets of the army and navy repeated in a way that makes me shiver. . . .

'May 6, 1915: I dined with General Sir Arthur and Lady Paget. The others present were Mrs. McGuire, daughter of the late Lord Peel, Lady Fingall, Arthur Balfour, and Sir Horace Plunkett.

'During dinner the conversation drifted upon the subject of whether Great Britain was doing her full duty, and was

performing as important a part in the war as her resources and position demanded. I allowed the talk to run along for a few minutes, and then I broke in by saying that of all the belligerents Great Britain had performed her part best. Germany was considered the dominant military nation of the world and Great Britain the dominant naval power. Germany had failed to maintain her dominance on land, while Great Britain had asserted her supremacy at sea and was the undisputed master of it within a week after hostilities began. In addition to this, she had raised an enormous army, something it was thought would not be required of her, and she was the only belligerent with a world-wide vision of the war and its consequences — differing from France, Germany, and even Russia, who looked upon it from local points of view and as to its effects upon them.

‘When Great Britain entered the war, every neutral country felt that Germany was doomed to defeat, and I was sure Germany herself had the fear of God in her heart. I was interrupted from time to time by the English “hear, hear,” and when I had finished Balfour said, “That is the most eloquent speech I have ever heard.” This, of course, was polite. . . .

‘When the ladies left the table, Sir Arthur told us of his recent visit to Russia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Serbia, and Greece, from which countries he has just returned. He was with the Grand Duke for ten days, and he gave a better idea of his ability and character than I have yet had. He spoke glowingly of the Russian army, and regretfully of Russian corruption which prevented the Grand Duke from equipping his army properly. He said the Grand Duke was displeased at the manner of Joffre’s insistence that he change his plan of campaign and attack Prussia, at a time when the Grand Duke thought he should merely fortify himself against the Prussians and direct his entire energies against Austria. This change of policy he claims has caused Russia to lose innumerable men and treasure.

'May 7, 1915: I went to Sir Edward Grey's at ten o'clock. I handed him the King's invitation to call at 11.30. . . . I decided, however, to go with Grey to Kew and get a glimpse of it. Before we started, I showed him some telegrams and letters — one from Ambassador Willard bearing on the Spanish situation, one from Thomas Nelson Page on the Italian situation, and, most important of all, the President's cable concerning the retention of American cargoes. . . .

'The gates of Kew Gardens were not open when we arrived, but we got through by the porter's lodge. I have never seen the gardens so beautiful; it is to me one of the superlatively beautiful spots in England. Grey showed me the different trees and told something of them. The blackbirds were singing, and we talked of how different they were to those in far-away Texas.

'Grey's eyesight is failing, the doctors having warned him that unless he stops reading he will lose his sight to the extent of not being able to read again. He said he supposed this was the sacrifice he had to make for his country and he was going on in that spirit, knowing well what lay before him.'

v

In the meantime House had taken up again with Sir Edward the question of the Freedom of the Seas, concerning which the two had corresponded while House was still in Paris, and which, as House wrote Wilson, he hoped to use as a means of starting negotiations between the belligerents. Grey was suspicious of the Germans, perhaps not without justification, and he wished to make sure that if England accepted the Freedom of the Seas, Germany would agree to general military disarmament.

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

PARIS, April 12, 1915

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

. . . I did not find conditions in Berlin favorable for any discussion looking towards peace; consequently I did not remain long or say much. The visit, however, had great value and I feel that I now know the true conditions there, making a more intelligent line of action possible.

I found but few points where our interest and theirs touched strongly enough for me to create a sympathetic feeling, but one of these was what we might term the Freedom of the Seas. It was upon that subject alone that I awoke sufficient enthusiasm to warrant the hope that in it lies the way to peace.

Looking at the matter from a narrowly selfish standpoint, they could not believe that England would concede enough in this direction for Germany to consent to those things without which no peace can ever be possible. But from my conversations with you, I knew that you saw a future more secure and splendid for England in this new direction than in the old. I gave no sign of this, but left them thinking what concessions they might make in order to reach so promising an end.

While I am eager to discuss this and other matters with you, still I feel that it is well to move leisurely and to assume a certain indifference as to time. . . .

Your very sincere

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, April 12, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . What I want to do, is to get Sir Edward's consent to what might be termed a paper campaign. If he agrees to this I will write to him, even though in London, and have

him reply. Copies of this correspondence will be sent either to the German Chancellor direct, or to him and Zimmermann through Gerard.

This will necessitate replies, and we may have them talking to one another before they realize it. . . .

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House.

33 ECCLESTON SQUARE, LONDON
April 24, 1915

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . Your news from Berlin is not encouraging; it reduces Bernstorff's peace talk at Washington to 'Fudge.'

What you hear from Berlin and found there is confirmed to me from another source — neutral but not American.

As to 'freedom of the seas,' if Germany means that her commerce is to go free upon the sea in time of war, while she remains free to make war upon other nations at will, it is not a fair proposition.

If, on the other hand, Germany would enter after this war some League of Nations where she would give and accept the same security that other nations gave and accepted against war breaking out between them, their expenditures on armament might be reduced and new rules to secure 'freedom of the seas' made. The sea is free in times of peace anyhow.¹

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

¹ A curious irrelevancy, in view of the fact that war-time trade was the subject under discussion. Perhaps Grey had in mind an argument, which Wilson later accepted, that with a league of nations to prevent war the question of war-time trade became academic.

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, April 30, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I arrived here Wednesday night. I have already had two conferences with Sir Edward Grey, and I am to have the first formal one with him, by appointment through Page, this afternoon at five o'clock.

Of course no one but you is to know of the other two conferences.

I have outlined to him the full plan of the Freedom of the Seas and how best it can be brought to Berlin's attention and what concessions they must give in return. I shall not let them know how receptive he is to the idea, but shall try to impress upon them how hard we are working to accomplish the desired end and give them little dribblets of hope from time to time. The thing thus is held within our hands.

Sir Edward tells me that public opinion here will have to be educated in this direction, particularly the Conservatives, and I shall endeavor to do this. . . .

We will have to keep this programme absolutely confidential between yourself, Sir Edward, and myself; and even the men I shall discuss these things with, will not know our full purposes. . . .

I told Sir Edward I felt sure that the Berlin Government wanted peace and that they were deterred mainly by German public opinion, which will have to be educated to the making of concessions. . . .

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

Even as early as this, the historian will observe, House had begun to make plans for the Peace Conference, for he believed in being prepared. A note which he made after this conversation with Grey throws light on what the Colonel

wanted to have accomplished by the Paris Conference in 1918 and 1919.

'April 30, 1915: I told Grey . . . how I planned to organize this convention by getting the material that was to come before it thoroughly prepared and digested, in order that nothing should be left to chance. I would try to get the commissioners from each of the neutral States, and from as many of the belligerent States as possible, in accord with us before they came to the convention.

'I explained my methods of organization in political conventions in the past; that while they were seemingly spontaneous, as a matter of fact nothing was left to chance. While measures were apparently drawn by different delegations, in the end it was found they fitted into the platform like a mosaic.¹ I could see Grey was intensely interested in this programme. I showed why no opposition could withstand such thorough organization. . . . We would be actuated by unselfish motives and would not propose anything that was merely to the advantage of Great Britain or the United States, but would advocate only such things as would redound to the good of the entire world. If we held to this principle, with thorough preparation and organization we would be able to do great and lasting good — good which would be limited only by the extent of our ability to conceive and execute it.

'In order to get the proper material and to prepare for an

¹ The illness which laid Colonel House low just before the meeting of the Paris Peace Conference prevented him from carrying through the organization he planned. Henry Wickham Steed, foreign editor of the *Times*, says in this connection: 'One serious misfortune — which proved to be a disaster — befell the Conference through the illness of Colonel House. A severe attack of influenza incapacitated him for any work during this critical formative period. Consequently his guiding influence was absent when it was most sorely needed; and, before he could resume his activities, things had gone too far for him to mend.' — *Through Thirty Years*, II, 266.

intelligent discussion of the questions which might come before the peace conference, I desired to see some of the best minds in England as to particular subjects. I mentioned Lord Loreburn as being one with whom to advise on Admiralty questions. Grey approved Loreburn, but suggested, in addition, Lord Mersey, and said Balfour could also be of service.

'Grey makes the point clear that whatever guaranty of good faith the Allies would wish from Germany, Germany would receive a like guaranty from the Allies. His mind and mine run nearly parallel, and we seldom disagree. I know in advance, just as I know with the President, what his views will be on almost any subject. I often come in contact with very able men whose minds run in an opposite direction from mine, and I find it difficult to agree with them upon any question. It is therefore my good fortune that Fate has given me two such friends as Woodrow Wilson and Edward Grey.

'Grey came to Page's at five. I took the precaution to remain downstairs in order to meet him when he first came in and to walk up to the drawing-room with him. In this way there was no embarrassment nor any pretense of not having met before.

'He stayed for a half-hour and the conversation was unimportant, as we had covered most of it before. I merely filled in the gaps by telling something further of my recent travels. I told Page that one of the General Staff in Berlin had said that Sir Edward's ambition was to be a George Washington, a Lincoln, a Bismarck, and a Napoleon. Page thought this very amusing, but Sir Edward . . . took it seriously and argued upon the peculiar bent of the German mind that could compare Washington and Lincoln with Bismarck and Napoleon.'

*Colonel House to the President*LONDON, *May 3, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... I saw Lord Loreburn this morning. He is not only a man that can be thoroughly trusted, but I believe he is my friend. He told me that he thought if we could bring about the Freedom of the Seas, it would be the greatest act of statesmanship that had been accomplished in centuries. He thought it would be of 100 per cent value to other nations and 120 per cent to England, though we would have great difficulty in getting the English mind to see this.

He spoke of Balfour as having great ability, but thought his mind was too feminine to grasp the significance of such a measure. He advised, just as Sir Edward did, that I see Bonar Law, who he said had an inferior mind, but who was practical and could probably be convinced sooner on that account.

He said if we could incorporate this idea into the peace convention, it would not only be a great act of statesmanship, but it would be perhaps the greatest jest that was ever perpetrated upon an unsuspecting nation — having, of course, Germany in mind.

I told him I shivered in Berlin when I proposed it to the Chancellor and the Foreign Office, for fear they would see that it was more to England's advantage than their own and would therefore not be willing to make concessions because of it. . . .

Lord Loreburn is one of the warmest admirers you have in Great Britain, which is naturally a great bond of sympathy between us.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

*Colonel House to Herr Zimmermann*LONDON, *May 1, 1915*

MY DEAR HERR ZIMMERMANN:

Since I saw you in Berlin, I have been to Switzerland and France and came here a day or two ago. I have carried out my plans as expressed to the Chancellor and you and have seen many of our representatives at the different European capitals, who came by appointment to meet me, and I have discussed with them the questions I had in mind.

I have seen Sir Edward Grey and have mentioned to him the interest which the United States and Germany had in the Freedom of the Seas, and I am pleased to tell you that he was at least willing to listen to the suggestion.

He explained to me, however, that if he himself could be brought to the idea, it would only be upon an agreement that would guarantee the making of aggressive warfare on land as impossible as it was intended to make it upon the sea. In other words, if the commerce of the world, even in time of war and even between belligerents, was to go free and to have access to its own ports and to neutral ports without molestation, the land should be as free of menace as the sea.

He did not undertake to commit himself to the suggestion, and he particularly wanted me to know that he was speaking for himself and not for the Government or for the people.

He has promised to discuss the matter with his colleagues, and I shall undertake to get some estimate of the general sentiment in regard to such a proposal.

Of course, you understand that the conversation was predicated upon the evacuation of Belgium and France and upon the consent of all the Allies.

If the belligerents really desire to make an honorable peace that will be of far-reaching good, not only to themselves but to the entire world, I think the opportunity will soon be here.

If you will give me some assurance that you consider these questions at least debatable, it will go a long way to aid us in

our endeavors. I shall understand that no commitments are made, either directly or indirectly, and that everything is unofficial; but this seems to me to be the most promising starting-point.

It will take a long while to make a successful campaign in England in regard to the Freedom of the Seas; but we will undertake it with both pleasure and enthusiasm, provided our efforts are cordially seconded by the other nations at interest.

Please present my very warm regards to their Excellencies, the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and believe me, my dear Herr Zimmermann,

Very sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

VI

The chief difficulty that obstructed the development of House's plan was obviously the inability of the British to comprehend the advantages they would derive from the Freedom of the Seas. This lack of comprehension rested in part upon a false sense of security and a failure to realize the extent of the danger threatened by the German submarine. It was also based upon a natural emotion, aroused by the war, which compelled the average citizen to believe that anything acceptable to Germany must *ipso facto* be unacceptable to Great Britain. Any intensification of the bitter feeling between the two countries would inevitably spell failure for House's hopes.

Precisely at this moment, the German navy committed the outrage upon humanity which a modern Talleyrand must certainly have pronounced 'worse than a crime, a blunder,' and which immediately rendered hopeless any attempt to reconcile the belligerents.

It was not entirely unforeseen by House, who on May 5 received a cable from Wilson asking him for advice in view of

the attack upon an American oil boat.¹ House warned him that the German threat of using submarines recklessly might have to be taken at its face value.

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

LONDON, May 5, 1915

I believe that a sharp note indicating your determination to demand full reparation, would be sufficient in this instance.

I am afraid a more serious breach may at any time occur, for they seem to have no regard for consequences.

EDWARD HOUSE

On the morning of May 7, House and Grey drove out to Kew. 'We spoke of the probability of an ocean liner being sunk,' recorded House, 'and I told him if this were done, a flame of indignation would sweep across America, which would in itself probably carry us into the war.' An hour later, House was with King George in Buckingham Palace. 'We fell to talking, strangely enough,' the Colonel wrote that night, 'of the probability of Germany sinking a trans-Atlantic liner. . . . He said, "Suppose they should sink the *Lusitania* with American passengers on board. . . ."'

That evening House dined at the American Embassy. A despatch came in, stating that at two in the afternoon a German submarine had torpedoed and sunk the *Lusitania* off the southern coast of Ireland. Many lives had been lost.

Thus did Germany interpret the Freedom of the Seas.

¹ The *Gulflight*, torpedoed by a German submarine on May 1, but not sunk. The master died of heart failure the next morning, and two sailors were drowned.

CHAPTER XIV

SUBMARINE VERSUS BLOCKADE

I think we shall find ourselves drifting into war with Germany. . . .
House to Wilson, June 16, 1915

I

THE sinking of the *Lusitania* destroyed all hope of beginning negotiations between Germany and Great Britain. It was now, rather, a question as to whether the United States itself could remain out of the war. Ambassador Page regarded immediate intervention as inevitable, and cabled Wilson to that effect. 'Page strongly urges the President,' House recorded, 'to bring us into the struggle upon the side of the Allies, stating that he does not believe we can retain the good opinion of any one if we fail to do so.'

Colonel House himself believed that the United States could not long stand aside, in view of Germany's reckless course. 'It seems clear to me,' he wrote on May 9, 'that the *Lusitania* is merely the first incident of the kind and that more will follow, and that Germany will not give any assurance she will discontinue her policy of sinking passenger-ships filled with Americans and non-combatants.' That the United States must receive such an assurance or enter the war to enforce it, he believed then and always. On May 9 he sent the President a carefully pondered cable. It is historic, for Mr. Wilson read it to his Cabinet at the same time that he read them his note of protest to Germany.

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

LONDON, *May 9, 1915*

It is now certain that a large number of American lives were lost when the *Lusitania* was sunk.

I believe an immediate demand should be made upon Germany for assurance that this shall not occur again. If she fails to give such assurance, I should inform her that our Government expected to take such measures as were necessary to ensure the safety of American citizens.

If war follows, it will not be a new war, but an endeavor to end more speedily an old one. Our intervention will save, rather than increase, the loss of life.

America has come to the parting of the ways, when she must determine whether she stands for civilized or uncivilized warfare. We can no longer remain neutral spectators. Our action in this crisis will determine the part we will play when peace is made, and how far we may influence a settlement for the lasting good of humanity. We are being weighed in the balance, and our position amongst nations is being assessed by mankind.

EDWARD HOUSE

LONDON, *May 11, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I cannot see any way out unless Germany promises to cease her policy of making war upon non-combatants. If you do not call her to account over the loss of American lives caused by the sinking of the *Lusitania*, her next act will probably be the sinking of an American liner, giving as an excuse that she carried munitions of war and that we had been warned not to send ships into the danger zone.

The question must be determined either now or later, and it seems to me that you would lose prestige by deferring it.

Germany has one of two things in mind. She may believe that we will not go to war under any provocation; or that we will be impotent if we do and she desires us to enter. The first is more understandable than the second, although she probably thinks if we became involved we would stop the shipment of munitions in order to equip ourselves.

She may also think that in the peace conference we would be likely to use our influence to settle upon broader and easier terms for Germany.

Or she may think that being able to torpedo our ships would contribute to the isolation of England.

If, unhappily, it is necessary to go to war, I hope you will give the world an exhibition of American efficiency that will be a lesson for a century or more. It is generally believed throughout Europe that we are so unprepared and that it would take so long to put our resources into action, that our entering would make but little difference.

In the event of war, we should accelerate the manufacture of munitions to such an extent that we could supply not only ourselves but the Allies, and so quickly that the world would be astounded.

You can never know how deeply I regret the turn affairs have taken, but it may be for the ultimate good. My heart goes out to you at this time as never before, and I think of you every hour of the day and wish that I was by your side. My consolation is that I may be of greater service here.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House's conversations in London make it clear that both he and his British friends believed that Germany had embarked upon a course which would inevitably bring the United States into the war. The Colonel discussed with Kitchener the value of American intervention to the Allies.

'*May 12, 1915*: Lord Kitchener has asked to meet me and invited me to come to the War Office or to York House as I preferred. I seldom go to any of the offices, so I met him at York House at six o'clock. . . .

'He was very cordial. When I put the question as to whether it would be of benefit to the Allies for the United

States to come in on their side, he said, "Nobody but a damn fool could think it would not be of benefit to us, and I am surprised that any Englishman could question it." This was apropos of the editorial I showed him from the *St. James Gazette*, and of conversations I had had with some of his countrymen.

'He said, "God forbid that any nation should come into such a war," and he asked me to say to the President that he did not want him to think that Great Britain either made the request or had a desire for us to enter, but if we considered it necessary to do so, in his opinion it would greatly shorten the war and would save innumerable lives, not only of the Allies, but of the Germans as well.

'He said the war was one of attrition and the moment we entered, the Germans, unless they were totally mad, would know that the end was a certainty and would endeavor to make the best terms they could. It was a case of a mad dog turned loose, and every one trying to do his share toward stopping him. If we entered, and I would let him know, he would at once put his mind upon the problem and would aid us not only as to organization but in any other way we desired. He paid a magnificent tribute to American valor and said: "With American troops joined with the British, we will not need French troops on the West Front, but can keep them as a reserve."

'He has 2,200,000 men under arms, and of these 500,000 are now in France and 650,000 are ready to go the moment they are needed. In addition, there are 120,000 in the Dardanelles. He spoke of the army and the war as if it were his army and his war, and very much as a monarch would speak.

'We talked for the best part of an hour, although I tried to leave repeatedly because I knew how busy he must be and how valuable his time was to his country. When I got up to leave, he arose, but continued to walk up and down the room and talk. He repeated time and again that the war would

be shortened enormously if the United States entered, and that it would be helpful to an extent which no one but a man of his experience could estimate. He said the coming in of Italy was as nothing compared to that of the United States, even though she had a large trained army. . . .

'He was greatly interested when I gave it as my opinion that the Germans did not have a man of the "first class" in official life. He was also interested in von Tirpitz and Falkenhayn. The latter, I thought, was a much abler man than von Tirpitz and an abler man than von Moltke, whom he superseded. Kitchener spoke several times of their method of warfare, and said he did not dream that a nation claiming to be civilized would stoop to the things they had done. He was especially bitter concerning asphyxiating gases and said the only thing he could do was to reply in kind.

'This is the first time I have met Kitchener, and he seemed to me to be forceful and able, though, perhaps, without the spark of genius — unless, indeed, his great power of organization might be termed that.¹ I was impressed by his fairness and the impartial way he discussed our possible entry into the war. While it was the clever way to talk to me, he did not do it for that reason, for how could he know what would or would not influence me? He doubtless realizes, as the King does, that my advice to the President will be a potent influence in this crisis, but there was nothing of eagerness or urging in his remarks. He took no pains to hide his opinion that our entry would be decisive, and yet he said no word to

¹ Kitchener's organizing ability, however, was better fitted to the crises of his earlier career than to that which he faced as Secretary of War in 1915. The value of Kitchener's name was inestimable and he built up a great army, but he was used to a situation that could be handled by himself as dictator and he never understood the need of an able General Staff at the War Office. 'His conception of work,' wrote Grey, 'was that it must be a one-man job. He shouldered the responsibility and did the work of a Titan; but he did not realize that general responsibility must be shared with the Cabinet, and strategic responsibility with the most independent and expert military brains, organized in a General Staff and working with him.' — *Twenty-Five Years*, II, 246.

hasten that decision. Kitchener is not the greatest intellect with which I have come in touch, but he has a manner indicating great reserve force, and if I were going tiger hunting I would gladly have him for a companion.

'May 13, 1915: I lunched with Arthur Balfour. We had a most interesting talk. I told of my interview with Kitchener and of my advice to the President regarding the *Lusitania* incident and read him my cablegram, which he complimented warmly. I talk to Balfour with more freedom than any man in Great Britain with the exception of Grey, for I trust him implicitly. Grey and Balfour are two great gentlemen, and I feel sure of their discretion.

'Balfour criticized the Government for depending so much upon America for munitions of war. He thought at the very outset they should have accelerated the manufacture of munitions to such an extent that by now they would have needed no outside aid. . . .'

During the six days that followed the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Colonel House received no intimation of the action that President Wilson planned. He did not seriously suspect him of an inclination to avoid the issue which Germany had raised, but he did confess some anxiety as a result of a speech which was generally interpreted as proof of Wilson's invincible pacifism. On May 11 he recorded:

'Page and all of us are distressed by the President's speech at Philadelphia, in which he is reported to have said, "There is such a thing as being too proud to fight." Page sent him a long cablegram, which he submitted to me for criticism.'

Mr. Wilson faced a choice of two alternatives: to break diplomatic relations forthwith, on the ground that the sinking of the *Lusitania* and her thousand passengers was a crime against civilization, or to demand an official disavowal

and the assurance that inhuman acts of such a kind would not be repeated. To break relations without giving Germany any chance to alter her submarine methods was contrary to the President's instincts, and it is unlikely that the nation would have supported him with the degree of unity which such a decided step demanded.

He chose the second alternative, and on May 13 he sent to Germany a note conceived and expressed with vigor, but avoiding both the form and tone of an ultimatum. Rehearsing the earlier attacks made by submarines that had resulted in the loss of American lives, 'a series of events which the Government of the United States has observed with growing concern,' he demanded that the Germans should

'disavow the acts of which the Government of the United States complains, that they will make reparation so far as reparation is possible for injuries which are without measure, and that they will take immediate steps to prevent the recurrence of anything so obviously subversive of the principles of warfare. . . . Expressions of regret and offers of reparation in case of the destruction of neutral ships sunk by mistake, while they may satisfy international obligations, if no loss of life results, cannot justify or excuse a practice, the natural and necessary effect of which is to subject neutral nations and neutral persons to new and unmeasurable risks.'

The note did not satisfy the bellicose insistence of Mr. Roosevelt for an immediate break with Germany. Another ex-President, however, William Howard Taft, described it as 'admirable in tone . . . dignified in the level the writer takes with respect to international obligations . . . it may well call for our earnest concurrence and confirmation.' Mr. Page himself expressed satisfaction and telegraphed to the President, 'May I be allowed to express my personal congratulations on the note.' And he added that most of the

members of the British Government, as well as Lansdowne, Balfour, and Bonar Law of the Opposition, gave 'private expressions of praise.'¹

Articulate opinion, indeed, with rare exceptions both at home and abroad, commended the note; it was only later, after many months of German diplomatic evasions, that critics with the advantage of hindsight complained that Wilson should have issued an ultimatum and set down for Germany a time-limit — a course which might or might not have led her to give up the submarine campaign immediately. Sidney Brooks, writing in *The English Review*, insisted that 'this note ranks with the greatest diplomatic literature. It seems as if one could see the President wrestling with the Wilhelmstrasse for the soul of Germany.' *The Times* declared that 'nothing less than the conscience of humanity makes itself audible in his [Wilson's] measured and incisive sentences.' From France, it is true, Whitney Warren wrote to House that there was a growing inclination to believe that 'the President has been influenced in the past and is still influenced by German tradition and inspiration.' And the depatriatized Americans of Paris, always hostile to Wilson, attacked him bitterly for truckling to Germany. But official opinion both there and in England agreed that the President had acted not merely wisely but adequately.

Ambassador Sharp to Colonel House

PARIS, June 2, 1915

MY DEAR MR. HOUSE:

... While practically everybody over here has endorsed the President's note to Germany, following the sinking of the *Lusitania*, yet it makes a loyal American rather 'hot under the collar,' as we say, to read little squibs like those I have marked. . . . However, those in authority in the French Government fully understand and appreciate the attitude of

¹ *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, III, 245.

President Wilson and have great confidence in the integrity of his purpose.

Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador, told me the other day that he was very much in hopes that we would not go to war with Germany, as we could be of very much more assistance to the Allies out of the war than actively in it. . . .¹

Very truly yours

WILLIAM G. SHARP

*Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey*² to Colonel House

LONDON, June 1, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

. . . As I was walking home here just now I was thinking to myself — 'We don't want America to come in.' The thought of dragging our own kith and kin into this hideous struggle is *odious*, but I do wish that the Americans could tell the Germans, 'if you dare to destroy Westminster Abbey, America will never forgive you. It is *ours* as well as *theirs*.'

And yet with these lunatics that might after all be the worst way of protecting it. I suppose it is childish, but I would rather see half London smashed than the Abbey and Westminster Hall destroyed. Except for that, Zeppelins will never give me a bad night.

Yours very sincerely

J. ST. LOE STRACHEY

II

Colonel House evidently did not believe that Germany would alter her methods of naval warfare unless some more potent factor than the protests of the United States could be brought to bear. On May 18 he wrote to Secretary McAdoo: 'The German mind seems not to understand anything ex-

¹ In his private papers the British Ambassador expressed quite the contrary opinion.

² Editor of *The Spectator*.

cepting hard knocks and they have a curious idea that we will not fight under any circumstances. As a matter of fact, this idea is prevalent throughout Europe and will sooner or later involve us in war.' A fortnight later, after another submarine attack, he recorded: 'I have concluded that war is inevitable.'

Both House and Page agreed that unless Germany yielded to the demands set forth in Wilson's note and ceased the torpedoing of ships without warning, the United States could not avoid intervention.

Unlike Page, however, House shared the sentiment of President Wilson that war with Germany could not be justified unless every possible means to secure a peaceful settlement were first attempted; and he worked assiduously to discover a plan by which Germany might be induced to give up the cruel and illegal submarine warfare. He had the coöperation of Sir Edward Grey, who, with a singular largeness of view rare amid the passions of war, was ready to consider any reasonable compromise.

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, May 14, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I took lunch with Sir Edward Grey to-day. The principal topic of our conversation was the *Lusitania* disaster and the action you might take.

Grey told me he did not see how you could do differently from what you have done, and he intimated that if we had done less we would have placed ourselves in much the same position in which England would have been placed if she had not defended Belgian neutrality. In other words, he thought that we would have been totally without friends or influence in the concert of nations, either now or hereafter. I am sure that this is true.

If we had failed to take action in a determined way it

would have meant that we would have lost the friendship of the Allies on the one hand, and would not have mitigated any of the hate which Germany feels for us. Sooner or later we would have had to reckon with Germany unless she is completely crushed, and we would not have had a sympathetic friend among the great nations.

Grey asked me what I thought Germany's reply would be. I told him that if I were writing Germany's reply I would say that if England would lift the embargo on foodstuffs, Germany would consent to discontinue her submarine policy of sinking merchantmen. Grey replied that if Germany would consent not only to discontinue that mode of warfare, but would also agree to discontinue the use of asphyxiating gases and the ruthless killing of non-combatants, England would be willing to lift the embargo on foodstuffs.

I am rushing a cablegram to you, outlining this. It distresses me that I cannot have you, Grey, and Berlin within talking distance. If that could happen, so much could be accomplished that is impossible under present conditions.

I am writing this hastily, in order to catch to-night's mail. It may interest you to know that Italy has signed an agreement with the Allies to come into the war before the 26th.¹ This agreement will be carried out unless the Italian Parliament refuses to sanction it. I have had this information for ten days or more, but have not written it because there seemed so many slips between the agreement and its completion. . . .

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

¹ The Treaty of London, signed April 26, 1915, one of the 'secret treaties.' It did not set a date for Italy's entrance into the war, providing merely that she should use all her resources in making war with the Allies upon all their enemies. On May 23, Italy declared war against Austria, but did not declare war on Germany until August 27, 1916. On April 30, 1917, Mr. Balfour explained the details of the treaty to President Wilson.

The conversation with Grey suggested the possibility of an arrangement which might go far towards settling the dispute with England over the holding-up of cargoes and also might avert the livelier danger of an open break with Germany, over the submarine. The European War, as it touched the United States, had now become a struggle between German submarine and British blockade. Both weapons infringed American neutral rights. If the belligerents could be induced to give up their use, much of our difficulties would disappear. And to many the compromise seemed fair, for if the British food blockade threatened to starve Germany out, the German submarine threatened to destroy British commerce.

The suggestion was not new. In February, President Wilson, following a hint of Ambassador Bernstorff, had made a similar proposal to the British. Since the Germans averred that the submarine war zone was merely retaliation for the British attempt to starve non-combatants, Wilson argued that, if the British would permit foodstuffs to pass, Germany ought to give up her illegal submarine warfare. Grey had approved the proposal. Talking to House on February 27, he pointed out that with an agreement of this kind the British could carry on the war indefinitely. British public opinion, however, did not appreciate how dangerous a weapon the submarine might become, and felt that Great Britain would be sacrificing too much by lifting the embargo upon food. Ambassador Page himself held this opinion and, regarding the President's suggestion as something made in Germany, did not push it vigorously.

'I went to the Embassy to see the Ambassador [wrote House]. He did not return from his week-end with the Prime Minister until 12.15. . . . Page told of the two unhappy days he had spent in the country. One of the perquisites of the Prime Minister is the use of an old castle near Dover, and in it Page was lodged for two cold, wet, miserable nights. There

were no fires excepting one here and there, and, though Page is a vegetarian, there seemed nothing to eat excepting meats of many varieties. . . .

'Page was inclined not to make a personal appeal to Grey in behalf of the acceptance of the President's proposal concerning a compromise with Germany on the question of the embargo. I called his attention to the President's cable to me requesting me to say to Page that he desired the matter presented with all the emphasis in his power. He then said he would make an appointment with Grey and do so, though one could see he had no stomach for it. He did not consider the suggestion a wise one, nor did he consider its acceptance favorable to the British Government. I argued to the contrary, and tried to convince him that the good opinion gained from the neutrals would be compensation enough for any concessions this Government might make, and that the concessions were not really more than those made by Germany.'

Evidently the British Cabinet, with the exception of Grey, shared Page's belief that it was preferable to retain the offensive weapon of the food blockade against Germany, even if it meant braving the threat of the submarine, the danger of which then and even later they did not fully realize. On March 15, they refused the compromise.

The crisis of May was so much more acute than that of February, that House seized eagerly upon the chance of renewing the proposal that Germany give up the submarine warfare provided that Great Britain would relax the food blockade. He was sincere in his belief that the British would gain both a moral and a material advantage thereby, and he was convinced that it offered the sole means of preventing American intervention, which otherwise would be inevitable as the result of German submarine attacks.

'Grey was very fine about it [recorded Colonel House].

He said of course it would be to the advantage of Great Britain for the United States to enter the war, and if he agreed to do what we requested it would mean that the United States would remain neutral. Nevertheless, he wanted to do what we considered to be for our best interests and what, indeed, he thought was in the long run for Great Britain's best interests.

'We discussed this feature at length, I maintaining that Great Britain was taking long chances upon being isolated by German submarine warfare, and if her commerce could be free from this menace, she could carry on the war indefinitely without fear of ultimate defeat.'

President Wilson immediately cabled to House expressing deep interest in the suggestion. He looked upon it, not merely as a means of ending the crisis in German-American relations, but also as affording a possible solution of the quarrel with England over the blockade. For the sake of diplomatic consistency, he asserted, he would soon have to address a note to Great Britain regarding the interruption of American trade with neutral ports. It would be a great stroke on England's part, said the President, if she would of her own accord relieve the situation and put Germany wholly in the wrong, a small price to pay for the ending of submarine outrages.

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, May 20, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

When your cable of the 16th came, I asked Page to make an engagement with Grey in order that we might protest against the holding-up of cargoes and find definitely whether England would agree to lift the embargo on foodstuffs, providing Germany would discontinue her submarine policy. Page promised to make the appointment. He did not do so, and

finally told me that he had concluded it was useless because, in his opinion, the British Government would not consider for a moment the proposal to lift the embargo.

It was then I sent you the discouraging cable. However, when your second cable of Tuesday came, I went to see Sir Edward without further consultation with Page.

I found Grey was even more receptive of the suggestion than when I saw him last, and he promised to use all his influence in favor of such a proposal, provided one was made by Germany. He added, however, that the discontinuance of asphyxiating or poisonous gases must also be included in any agreement made.

He explained that the Cabinet was in dissolution and that he could only speak for himself and that he did not want me to consider that he spoke for the Government. I expressed a willingness to accept his personal assurance in regard to his own endeavors, with the understanding that it committed no one but himself. He said that in ordinary times if the Cabinet refused to acquiesce in his view, he would resign; but that he did not feel justified in doing this in time of war. I took occasion to express your high regard for him and to assure him that we would consider his resignation a calamity.

He dictated, while I wrote, the understanding between us, which was literally this:

1st. Permitting staple foodstuffs to go to neutral ports without question.

2d. All foodstuffs now detained to be brought before the prize court as quickly as possible.

3d. Claims for cotton cargoes now detained to be made as soon as shippers certify as to each cargo, that they are the real owners to whom payment should be made.

Should England agree to the first proposition, Germany was to cease submarine warfare on merchant vessels and discontinue the use of asphyxiating or poisonous gases.

Propositions two and three are matters between this Gov-

ernment and ours and have no reference to Germany and will be carried out at once.

I told Grey that I would immediately cable Gerard, asking Germany to withhold her answer to your note until I could communicate with him further. I also told him I would suggest to the German authorities, through Gerard, that they answer the note by making the proposal in question. . . .

I assumed the entire responsibility, so if things go wrong you and Sir Edward can disclaim any connection with it.

If Germany refuses to consider this proposal, it will place you in the position of having done everything possible to avert war between the United States and Germany.

Sir Edward took a copy of the memorandum I made, so that there might be no misunderstanding between us. Of course there would be none, anyway, for he remembers well what he says and never recedes from his word. . . .

It is unfortunate that the Cabinet is to be re-formed, for I am confident with the present members the plan would go through, provided Germany makes the proposal. The new element to go in is less apt to favor the proposal than those already there.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Ambassador Gerard

[Telegram *via* Copenhagen]

LONDON, *May* 19, 1915

. . . Can you not induce the German Government to answer our note by proposing that if England will permit food-stuffs in the future to go to neutral ports without question, Germany will discontinue her submarine warfare on merchant vessels and will also discontinue the use of poisonous gas? Such a proposal from Germany at this time will give her great advantage, and in my opinion she will make a grave mistake if she does not seize it.

EDWARD HOUSE

'*May 19, 1915*: Page thought I was making a mistake in doing anything [wrote House], and that it would result in bad feeling between England and the United States provided Germany assented and Sir Edward Grey could not get his Government to agree. I answered that this was a matter I could not control; that my purpose was to place the United States and the President clearly in the right, so if trouble came between Germany and ourselves the President would have done everything within his power to prevent war, and could maintain his position taken in the note with a clear conscience and with the certain approval of the American people.

'I took dinner with Lord Haldane. By common consent we dined alone, so as to discuss matters freely. . . . He showed me the diary he kept during his memorable visit to Berlin on February 9 and 10, 1912. He was sent over, as the world knows, as the representative of the King and British Government, to try to bring about a better understanding with Germany and to draw up a tentative treaty to that effect. . . .

'I took it as an indication of his confidence that he let me read this. He explained, however, that he felt I should know everything that had passed between the German and British Governments, in regard to Asia Minor, the African Colonies, and the larger relations concerning the Triple Entente, and what Great Britain might do in the event either Germany or England should become involved with nations other than themselves.

'Grey had spoken to Haldane about my proposal concerning the lifting of the embargo on foodstuffs and the discontinuance of the submarine campaign. He said his own influence would be in favor of the proposal, but he did not know what action the new Ministry would take.

'He spoke of himself and of his years of service to his country, and his voice saddened when he told of how he had been maligned and misunderstood since the war with Ger-

many began.¹ He gave me two of his books, and we talked at length of Germany, her future, and the German people. I mentioned my proposal as to the Freedom of the Seas. He thought it splendid, and I understood that I could count upon his influence in behalf of that measure when the proper time came. . . .

'May 21, 1915: I lunched with Grey and read him the President's despatch. . . . He has seen nearly all the present Ministry and enough of the Opposition who would probably be in the Cabinet, to be able to say that in his opinion, if Germany made the proposal I had suggested it would be considered by his Government.

'He is always cautious in his statements, and I conclude that what he says means that the British Government will accept the proposal. It will be a great diplomatic triumph for the President if brought about, and it will settle our contentions with both Governments. . . .'

Whatever the ultimate decision of the British Cabinet might have been, the German Government put an end to any chance of a compromise settlement by a brusque refusal to consider House's suggestion. In public the plaintiveness of German protests against the cruel starvation of women and children by the British was not diminished, but in private the German leaders were evidently unwilling to pay the price necessary to raise the blockade. They were determined to make full use of the submarine, and they were the less inclined to heed American warnings in that they were not con-

¹ Haldane, as Minister of War in the Asquith Cabinet, had created the territorial organization and made possible the immediate despatch of an efficient Expeditionary Force. 'But for his work,' wrote Grey to Asquith, 'this Force would not have been available at a moment's notice. . . . That Haldane of all people should have been . . . accused of lack of patriotism or public spirit is an intolerable instance of gross ignorance, or malice, or of madness.' (Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, II, 244.) But the Conservatives made Haldane's exclusion from the new coalition Cabinet a condition of their own participation.

vinced the United States would support such warnings by other than verbal factors. Two messages from Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House carried the news of the failure of the proposed compromise and indicated the cause.

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

LONDON, May 24, 1915

Gerard cables me as follows: 'Zimmermann told me yesterday that Dumba, Austrian Ambassador, had cabled him that Bryan told him that America was not in earnest about *Lusitania* matter.' Of course Mr. Bryan did not say that, but I think you should know what Zimmermann told Gerard. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

Ambassador Gerard learned of the cable from Dumba in a curious fashion. Zimmermann had come to lunch with him and after his customary two quarts of Moselle was talking freely to an American lady, wife of a German. He assured her that there would be no break with the United States over the *Lusitania*, since Wilson was not serious in his protest. The Ambassador, as soon as he learned the gist of the conversation, called upon Zimmermann and demanded the source of his information. Zimmermann at once pulled out the cable from Dumba and laid it before him. Mr. Gerard faced a problem. It was essential that he inform Wilson, and he could hardly do so through the State Department, since his cable would go straight to Mr. Bryan. Thus he turned it over to House, knowing that he would at once inform the President. Dumba's message carried disastrous effects, since it convinced the Germans that they could carry on their submarine campaign with impunity. Hence their refusal of the compromise that House suggested.

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

LONDON, May 25, 1915

I have following cable from Gerard:

'I gave your suggestion to von Jagow this morning. This proposition of permitting the passage of food in return for the cessation of submarine methods has already been made and declined.

'If raw materials are added, the matter can perhaps be arranged. Germany is in no need of food.'

Of course the conditions they make are impossible. This does away with their contention that the starving of Germany justifies their submarine policy. I think this strengthens your already unassailable position.

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House to Ambassador Gerard

[Telegram]

LONDON, May 25, 1915

The Allies would never agree to allow raw materials to go through; therefore I can do nothing further and there is no need for Germany further to delay acting on our note.

I am terribly sorry, because the consequences may be very grave.

EDWARD HOUSE

'May 26, 1915: I lunched with Sir Edward Grey again to-day. I read him all the telegrams that had passed between the President, Gerard, and myself since we last met. We first discussed Gerard's cable saying Berlin had refused to accept my suggestion. Grey thought it had at least placed Great Britain in a more advantageous position, and he expressed himself as being glad it had been sent, for *it settled the German contention that they were compelled to wage their*

submarine policy against Great Britain because she was endeavoring to starve sixty-five million German non-combatants.

‘In talking to other members of the Government, he said some of them had thought in the event Germany accepted the proposal it would mean that she was actually running short of food and it would not be well for England to relax. Grey, however, argued that there were too many advantages on the other side to let that one prevail. He said, too, he was anxious for us to know that England was doing what she could to keep us from war with Germany, and not trying to push us in. My admiration and affection for him grows.’

Thus ended the most favorable opportunity for settling the controversy that later was to exercise momentous effect upon the course of the war and the fate of Germany. Had Berlin accepted the compromise, not merely would Germany have obtained the food of which, as she complained, her starving civilian population was deprived by an illegal blockade, but she might have avoided the quarrel with the United States that brought America into the war. ‘Whom the Gods would destroy —’

III

Germany’s refusal to seize the opportunity that had thus been offered her convinced Colonel House that further stay in Europe was useless. The chance of beginning peace negotiations between the belligerents, if it had ever existed, had completely disappeared. On both sides emotion was so thoroughly envenomed that any suggestion of a pacific arrangement was regarded as criminal. House was also convinced that German policy meant American intervention and he wished to be near the President so as to urge him to wage war with vigor.

‘I have concluded that war with Germany is inevitable [he

wrote on May 30] and this afternoon at six o'clock I decided to go home on the S.S. *St. Paul* on Saturday. I sent a cable to the President to this effect.

'I discussed the matter with Wallace, who will go with us, and I also discussed it with Page, who advised our going if we cared to get home within the year. Page is always a candid adviser. . . .

'June 1, 1915: I told Plunkett I was leaving for America and my reasons for doing so. I said it was my purpose to persuade the President not to conduct a milk-and-water war, but to put all the strength, all the virility, and all the energy of our nation into it, so that Europe might remember for a century what it meant to provoke a peaceful nation into war.

'I intended to suggest a commission, with perhaps a member of the Cabinet as chairman, to facilitate the manufacture of munitions of war and war materials. Plunkett wanted me to see some of the British Cabinet and talk with them before I left. He arranged for me to meet Lloyd George at six o'clock. . . .'

A letter from the American Ambassador in Berlin indicated that Germany had embarked upon the new course with confidence, and strengthened House's conviction that war could not be avoided.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, June 1, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I am afraid that we are in for grave consequences. This country, I fear, will not give up the torpedoing without notice of merchant and passenger steamers; and their recent victories over the Russians have given them great confidence here. They seem also to be holding their lines in the Dardanelles and their lines in France and Belgium with ease, and probably Italy will be defeated.

The only thing that can gain the war for the Allies is universal service in England and the throwing into the balance of at least two million new English troops. If the English knew what the Germans have in store for England in case of success, the very dead in the graveyards would volunteer for the war.

It is the German hope to keep the *Lusitania* matter 'jollied along' until the American people get excited about baseball or a new scandal and forget. Meantime the hate of America grows daily.

As to food and even raw materials, the Germans have enough for war purposes. They need raw materials for the trades, but have everything needed for the manufacture of munitions; and as they are spending all the money for war supplies in their own country their financial situation is good for the present. They expect some other country to pay the cost of the war.

In governmental circles there is no talk of giving up Belgium. They want to keep it and exact great indemnities from other countries.

They are building new and great submarines (2800 tons), and are putting so many in the water that I think they will soon become a serious menace to England. That is why a great land army is necessary. . . .

Will cable if anything comes up. Best wishes to Mrs. House.

Yours as ever

JAMES W. GERARD

If, contrary to expectations, Germany agreed to abandon or modify the submarine warfare or if the crisis should be tided over, House was equally desirous of being in the United States and near the President, for in that case the dispute with Great Britain over the holding-up of American cargoes would certainly become acute. The difference was serious enough at best, and mutual misunderstanding threat-

ened to make it worse. Colonel House was anxious that President Wilson should comprehend the difficulties which Sir Edward Grey faced, how hard he was pressed by British opinion and the Admiralty, and how important it was that the United States remain on friendly terms with the Allies. Whatever the irritation caused by the restriction of American trade, House never wavered in his conviction that our welfare was bound up in German defeat. All this Ambassador Page had urged in many long letters. But the very number and length of the letters, touched as they were by pro-Ally emotion, lessened the influence of the Ambassador, who, in Washington, seemed more like the spokesman of Allied interests than the representative of the American Government. As House realized acutely, a purely objective summary of the situation with emphasis upon American interests would carry more weight.

‘*March 4, 1915: Yesterday [wrote House], when Page was drawing up his despatch to the President asking that he do nothing for the moment concerning the proposed blockade of Germany, he had a lot of things in it which I advised eliminating. It was the strongest sort of pro-British argument, and I knew it would weaken his influence both with the State Department and with the President. He reluctantly cut it down to a short statement. . . .*’

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, *May 25, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . There is nothing new to report here, and it looks as if things might be settling down for a long war. . . . I want very much to see you and to go over the situation in person. There are so many things that cannot be written, and I think it would be well worth while for me to make the trip even if it is necessary to return within a short time.

There is no doubt that the position you have taken with both Germany and Great Britain is correct; but I feel that our position with the Allies is somewhat different, for we are bound up more or less in their success, and I do not think we should do anything that can possibly be avoided to alienate the good feeling that they now have for us. If we lose their good will, we will not be able to figure at all in peace negotiations, and we will be sacrificing too much in order to maintain all our commercial rights.

The situation, I know, is most trying and difficult, and you have acted with extraordinary patience and good judgment.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House had constantly impressed upon his British friends the importance of recognizing the irritation and loss caused in the United States by the holding-up of American cargoes and mails. From the moment of his arrival in February, 1915, he emphasized the fact that, even though this was the only serious cause of friction between the two countries, it was nevertheless one that would lead to grave results unless eclipsed by the dispute with Germany. The latter infringed the rights of humanity, whereas the controversy with Great Britain was of a far less vital sort. But it touched the pockets and the sensibilities of many Americans.

Furthermore, it was impossible for the President to protest with vigor against German infractions of the law of nations, so long as the Germans had some ground for complaint that he permitted the British to alter maritime regulations at will. Letters from the President and Cabinet members gave House a clear picture of the difficulties which they faced in Washington. The friendly tone of the President's message goes far to answer the criticism that the *gaucherie* of American protests tended unnecessarily to embitter Anglo-American relations.

He reiterated his emphasis upon the change that was coming over American opinion because of British interference with neutral trade and expressed the fear that it might be impossible to prevent the passage by Congress of an embargo upon shipments of arms. Wilson intimated that he would try to prevent it, but he wished Grey to realize the danger. He conveyed the warning through House rather than Page because he wished it to be absolutely unofficial and spoken merely in personal friendship. Secretary Lane expressed similar sentiments.

Secretary Lane to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, May 5, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I am glad to receive your note. There is little that I can say as to conditions here. The President is bearing the burden well. Notwithstanding all the insults of Germany, he is determined to endure to the limit, to turn the left cheek and then the back, if necessary; but of course, he cannot suffer insult after insult to the point of humiliation, for the country would rise in rebellion. We are a sensitive people, as our English friends discovered a hundred years ago.

And the English are not behaving very well. They are holding up our ships; they have made new international law. We have been very meek and mild under their use of the ocean as a toll road. Of course, the sympathy of the greater part of the country is with the English, but it would not have been as strongly with them, not nearly so strongly, if it had not been for the persistent short-sightedness of our German friends. I cannot see what England means by her policy of delay and embarrassment and hampering. Her success manifestly depends upon the continuance of the strictest neutrality on our part, and yet she is not willing to let us have the rights of a neutral.

You would be interested, I think, in hearing some of the

discussion around the Cabinet table. There isn't a man in the Cabinet who has a drop of German blood in his veins, I guess. Two of us were born under the British flag. I have two cousins in the British army, and Mrs. Lane has three. The most of us are Scotch in our ancestry, and yet each day that we meet we boil over somewhat, at the foolish manner in which England acts. Can it be that she is trying to take advantage of the war to hamper our trade? . . .

If Congress were in session, we would be actively debating an embargo resolution to-day. . . .

After all, our one great asset is the confidence of the people in the President. They do not love him, because he appears to them as a man of the cloister. But they respect him as a wise, sane leader who will keep them out of trouble, and whatever fool things are done they are willing to blame on Bryan, which is gravely unjust. I am growing more and more in my admiration for Bryan each day. He is too good a Christian to run a naughty world and he doesn't hate hard enough, but he certainly is a noble and high-minded man, and loyal to the President to the last hair. . . .

As always yours

F. K. L.

Even in England there were a number of thoughtful persons who felt that interference with neutral cargoes bound for neutral ports, even though the goods were ultimately destined for Germany, was not worth the difficulties it would provoke. Such opinion, although held by a minority, was not entirely confined to pacifist circles.

'*March 3, 1915: Both Brooks and Pollen*¹ [wrote Colonel House] agreed with me that Great Britain was entering into a dangerous phase of warfare in undertaking to establish a paper blockade against Germany, an actual blockade being

¹ A. H. Pollen, journalist and naval authority.

seemingly impossible. I argued the point very earnestly, for I wanted their influence and that of their papers in the trouble I can see looming up between our two countries.

'*March 4, 1915*: Francis W. Hirst, editor of *The Economist*, called this morning for the second time. I missed him yesterday when he was here. I found in him an entirely new type of Englishman. . . . He is antagonistic to the Government, though a Liberal. He criticized Grey and Asquith severely, though Asquith is a near relative. . . . He is against the war, and claims he is far from being alone, for he believes the war unpopular in England, and if public opinion could find expression it would be shown to be. He desires me to meet Lord Morley and the former Lord Chancellor, Lord Loreburn. He says both of them are against the war and they believe peace should be brought about now.

'Hirst thinks the President should take an active stand against the proposed blockade, believing if he would prohibit all exports to all the belligerents, he could force this Government to do practically what he desired. He wished the President to lay down a new international code of laws and insist upon every nation living up to it. I tried to point out some of the difficulties of such a procedure.

'He said that his predecessor on *The Economist*, Richard Bagehot, whom the President admires so much, declared that England should have done this in 1870. . . .

'*March 9, 1915*: Mr. Robert Donald, editor of *The Daily Chronicle*, took tea with me. He is an able and reasonable Scotchman. We talked of the embargo, and of war and everything relating thereto. He is a great friend of Lloyd George and thinks he is the greatest man in the Kingdom. He thought it a mistake for Great Britain to declare a blockade against Germany, and believed if it is enforced our Government would be justified in placing an embargo on munitions of war. He is to touch upon this matter cautiously

in his paper, and will try to influence the Government in the direction we desire. . . .'

IV

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, May 7, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Your cablegram concerning the delaying of cargoes came to me yesterday. I already had an engagement with Sir Edward Grey this morning, so I did not make an earlier appointment.

I read him your message and told him that in my opinion the situation was critical and that it would not do to temporize with the matter; that the Germans were doing everything possible to embarrass you and to force you to place an embargo upon arms.

He said he understood the situation perfectly. He took a memorandum, which he read to me afterwards and which was to be sent to each member of the Cabinet in the form of a communication. He put it strongly and urgently, and he told me he would do all that was possible.

He said he had to contend with public sentiment here that demanded a complete blockade of Germany. I think, too, he has opposition in the Cabinet with Kitchener and Winston Churchill. . . .

Sir Edward wants to do everything that is possible, and he desired me to let you know that he had great difficulties here to contend with. . . .

I have seen a great many people since I last wrote you, among them the Russian Ambassador. I found him a very able man, but as ignorant of your purposes as the people of France. . . .

When I came over here it was practically the universal opinion in France and England and, I find now, in Russia also, that you were inclined to be pro-German even though

the American people as a whole were otherwise. I have a feeling that Sir Cecil ¹ has fostered this sentiment, because what I have heard here sounds very much like what he said to me on several occasions. He told Norman Hapgood that the Administration was pro-German, and he has told others the same thing.

I took occasion to tell Sir Edward that Sir Cecil was very nervous and was constantly seeing spooks and that he had told me that we would all be pro-German before the end of the war. I did this because I was sure he had written the same thing to Sir Edward. . . .

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

LONDON, *May 27, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I saw Sir Edward Grey yesterday and discussed the holding-up of cargoes.

As to cotton, he said this Government, following precedent, had a right to make it contraband of war just as our Government did during our Civil War. But out of consideration for our wishes they had not done so, and therefore he hoped we would be lenient.

He also said they were doing everything that was possible now to avoid friction with us and that orders had gone out to pass upon all questions speedily, so they could no longer be charged with delay.

He told me some things of interest concerning the Balkan States. One was that Rumania had agreed to come in, provided the Allies would give her certain Hungarian territory.² Sir Edward refused to consider such terms, for the

¹ Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, British Ambassador in Washington.

² The Banat of Temesvar and the Transylvanian forelands. Serbia's claim to the southwestern portion of the Banat was insistent. The Peace Conference in 1919 recognized much of Serbia's claim, dividing the Banat between that Power and Rumania.

reason that what she wanted would be unfair to Serbia. His reply was that since Great Britain went into this war to defend the rights of one small nation, it would not transgress upon the rights of another, even though great advantage to the Allied cause might accrue.

If it were not for Ferdinand, Bulgaria would probably come in with the Allies, and, if she did, then Greece would also. They all fear lest some one of the Balkan States will remain out and be in a condition to take advantage of the exhaustion that may occur. . . .

I am glad Balfour is in the new Cabinet. He is a man of the Grey type, and I feel sure that there will be less trouble with the holding-up of cargoes now than when the Admiralty was administered by Churchill.¹

Sir Edward leaves Monday to be gone a month, and Lord Crewe will probably act for him during his absence. He is to arrange with Crewe for me to see him at any time I desire, and at his home. He lives close by. I never go to the Foreign Office or any of the other Government Offices on account of the publicity. They all understand my reasons for this. . . .

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

Before leaving for the United States, Colonel House entered many long conferences with members of the new Cabinet and with others of influence, in order that no misunderstanding should mar Anglo-American relations. In most of these conversations he laid strong emphasis upon the blockade problem, for he regarded it as vital that the British should appreciate the American point of view.

'May 22, 1915: Lord Bryce called at ten o'clock. I told

¹ An unfulfilled prophecy, despite the calm good sense of Mr. Balfour and his friendly feeling toward the United States.

of some of the troubles between Great Britain and the United States, regarding the holding-up of cargoes. He expressed a willingness to use his influence with the Foreign Office, but I asked him to do nothing for the moment, for I am sure he cannot do more than I have already done with Grey.

'We agreed that it was not the Foreign Office at fault, but the War and Admiralty Departments. I talked to him about the Freedom of the Seas, and he asked if it had to do with "capture and search at sea." He did not seem in favor of it, saying he had heard that Dernburg very much desired it. I replied that I was the instigator of it in Germany, and the Germans were merely echoing the thought I had given them. He laughed and said he felt better, for, if we were doing it, he was quite sure it was not a bad thing, and that in the future he would look at it with more friendly eyes.

'*June 2, 1915:* I met Lloyd George at ten, as previously arranged. I was surprised at the freedom with which he criticized the War Department. He said Great Britain should now have all the shells they could use, since they were the largest engineering country excepting the United States, and had all sorts of factories that could be made to turn out explosives. He showed me a list of shrapnel and explosive shells that were used by the British in recent battles. In one battle, 50,000 shrapnel were fired and only 1600 high explosives, while it should be the reverse.

'He said he had found soldiers to be self-opinionated and unsatisfactory, but he indicated his intention of putting an impetus on munition production that would revolutionize the situation. He had a list of firms and corporations from whom they were getting munitions in the United States. While important, it was not as large as I had thought. . . .

'He stated that it would be a serious menace to the Allied cause if we should stop the shipment of munitions of war at this time. . . .

'This was, I believe, George's first day as Minister of

Munitions in his new Whitehall quarters. There was no furniture in the room except a table and one chair. He insisted upon my taking the chair, which I declined to do, declaring that a seat on the table was more suitable for me than for a Cabinet official.

'He spoke again and again of "military red-tape," which he declared he would cut out as speedily as possible. He was full of energy and enthusiasm, and I feel certain something will soon happen in his department. He reminds me more of the virile, aggressive type of American politician than any member of the Cabinet. . . . He has something dynamic within him which his colleagues have not and which is badly needed in this great hour. . . .

'After lunch I went to keep an appointment with the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Reginald McKenna. . . . I took occasion to tell him that Germany had saved England from a good raking over the coals because of her embargo policy, which was entirely illegal and to which we submitted merely because Germany was so prodigal in greater infractions. I urged him to use his influence at Cabinet meetings to modify their actions in this direction. If they did not, and we composed our differences with Germany, I assured him we would hold his Government to a stricter accountability. It was not a question of what the President thought of the controversy between the belligerents, but what he had to do in justice to a large portion of the American people, who were insisting that their rights were being infringed.

'He entirely agreed with this and hoped the differences could be ironed out satisfactorily. It was also agreed that in the event we came into the war on the side of the Allies, he would communicate with me unofficially, in order that I might help in facilitating the solution of financial questions arising between the two Governments. . . .

'At half-past five, I went to Lansdowne House to call on the Marquis of Lansdowne. . . . I spoke strongly of his

Government's policy in holding-up neutral cargoes, and let him know that, if Germany was not acting so much worse, they would be called to an accounting. I did not believe Great Britain, under similar circumstances, would permit it for a moment, and the President had bent almost to the breaking point in order to avoid a disagreeable controversy with them.

'I gave a sketch of the President in which I depicted him as a Scotchman with all the tenacity of purpose of that race, and bade him remember that while the President at heart sympathized with the Allies and their purposes, yet he was President of the United States, and our people did not differentiate between those violating international law, and he had of necessity to maintain an equitable attitude.

'June 3, 1915: Lord Crewe and I lunched alone, in order to have a farewell talk about matters which could not be discussed before a third party. . . .

'I read him the President's despatches to me regarding the shipping controversy, and urged him to impress upon his colleagues the necessity of straightening this out, provided we did not immediately drift into war with Germany. I told him the President was being criticized for writing one kind of note to Germany and demanding an immediate answer, and writing another kind to Great Britain and having no reply for months. I considered it necessary for them to prepare an answer at once to the note sent in February concerning the stoppage of cargoes, and to hold it in readiness for delivery in the event it was asked for. On the other hand, I would advise the President not to ask for it until the German submarine controversy was settled one way or the other; and if it was settled by war, there would be no need for an answer. But if our differences with Germany were settled, then an immediate answer should be forthcoming. I spoke of how pressed the President was in this matter, and that it would not do to act in the future as they had acted in the past.

'June 4, 1915: I read the King one or two cables I had

sent the President, principally about the interference with our shipping. I wish all official England to understand our Government's attitude upon this question, in order that there may be no misunderstanding should it be necessary to act with vigor later.

'His Majesty talked of the recent Zeppelin raid and thought a very much more serious one would occur soon, believing they would attempt to burn London. I showed him the last cartoon in *Life* which Martin sent in advance of publication, which depicts his distinguished cousin Wilhelm hanged at the end of a yardarm. I was not sure of the wisdom of showing this, but he seemed to enjoy it thoroughly. The more I see of the King, the better I like him; he is a good fellow and deserves a better fate than being a king. . . .

'I lunched with Mr. Balfour. The only other guest was Sir Horace Plunkett, who has our confidence. Balfour said he intended to have the *St. Paul* convoyed as effectively as the British navy could do it. . . .

'There is a distinct feeling of depression in England at present, largely due to the lack of high explosives, and also to the fact of Russia's continued defeat because she, too, lacks munitions of war.

'He said that what the navy needed most now was torpedo-boat destroyers, and he was contracting for a large number of other small fast boats of this type. They have plenty of battleships. He spoke of how fortunate they had been with their transports, saying they had not lost one. He reached over, like any good American, and knocked on wood.

'I went into our shipping troubles as I have with other members of the Government, and I think I made him understand just what difficulties our Government was laboring under.'

v

House sailed on the *St. Paul*, June 5. Arriving in the United States a week later, he summarized for the President

his impressions of European affairs and emphasized the gravity of the crisis which the American Government must face.

Colonel House to the President

ROSLYN, LONG ISLAND
June 16, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The situation, as far as the Allies go, is not encouraging. Much to their disappointment and to the surprise of the Germans, they have not been able to make the progress which they thought the spring and summer weather would bring about. They have made two cardinal errors. One was the attempt to force the Dardanelles by sea only. They found this was impossible and, before they could send a land force to cooperate with the fleet, the Turks under the direction of German officers had time to make the Straits almost impregnable. They will finally get through, but at a terrible cost.¹

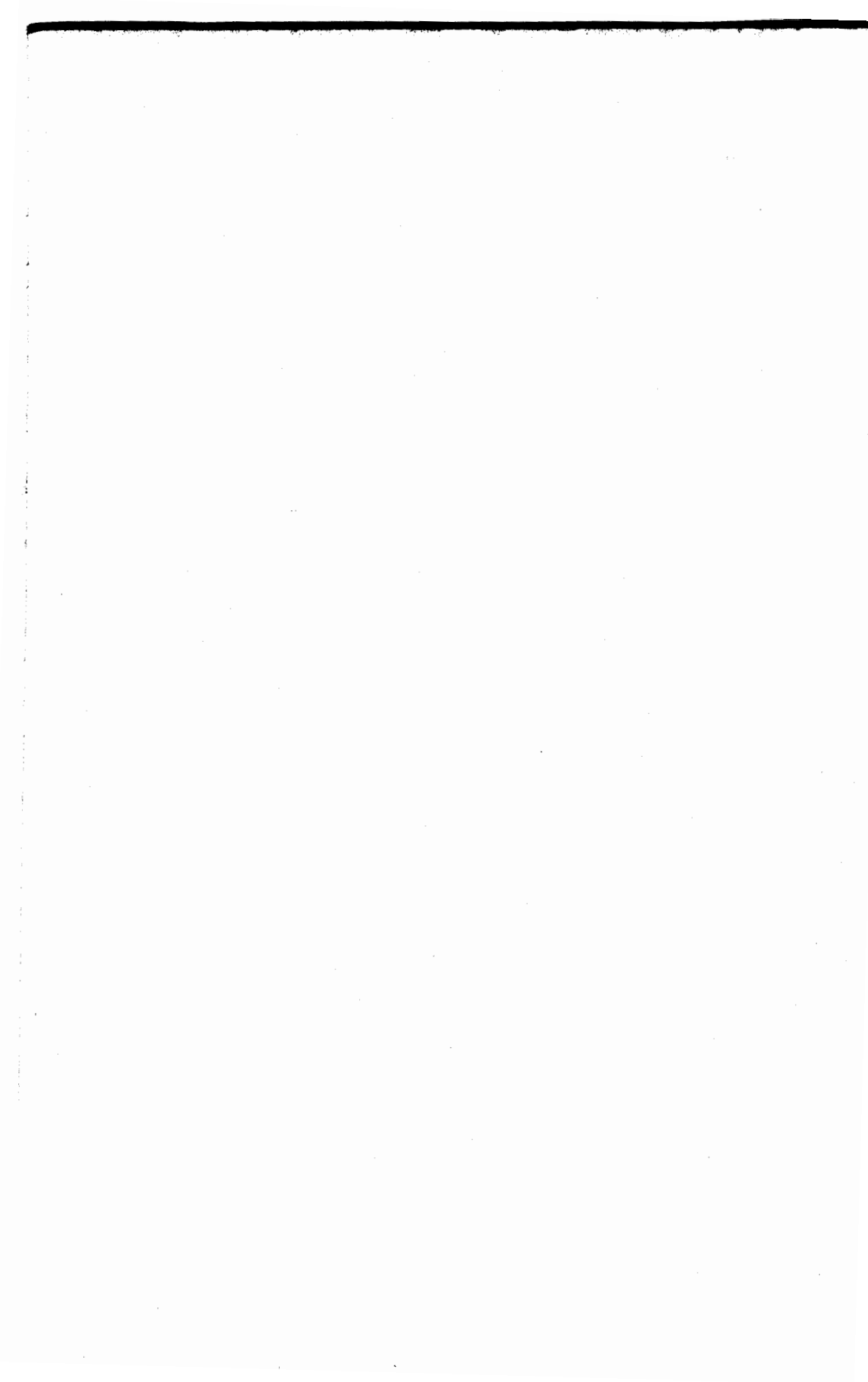
The second mistake was in not accelerating during the winter months the manufacture of high explosives. When the spring campaign opened and they attempted to storm the German trenches, they found that they not only had insufficient ammunition, but what they had was of the wrong kind. This mistake was more largely made by the English than by the French.

The Germans, through their espionage system, evidently knew the weakness of the Allies; consequently their great concern regarding the munitions of war coming from America. When I was in Berlin in March, it seemed to me that they were talking nonsense when they said that if we would stop the shipment of munitions the war would end within a short time.

¹ The prophecy was not fulfilled, for, although the cost was paid, the Allied expedition withdrew from Gallipoli in the following winter.



THE PRESIDENT AND COLONEL HOUSE OFF DUTY



The English have been unable to do more than hold their ground, and the Russians have been utterly unable to withstand the German onslaught, for the reason that they have neither sufficient arms nor ammunition. It has resolved itself into a war of munitions rather than one of men.

Germany was much more willing for peace in the autumn than she has been since. I am enclosing you a letter from Gerard bearing upon this phase.

There was the greatest possible concern in England when I left, although they are confident of ultimate victory if the Allies hold together; but it will be delayed longer than anticipated, and perhaps it would not come at all if their American supplies were for any reason shut off.

I need not tell you that if the Allies fail to win, it must necessarily mean a reversal of our entire policy.

The sinking of the *Lusitania*, the use of poisonous gases, and other breaches of international laws, made it impossible for me to continue the discussion in England of the Freedom of the Seas or the tentative formation of a peace covenant. If these things had not happened, I could have gone along and by midsummer we would have had the belligerents discussing, through you, the peace terms.

The difficulty is not with the German civil authorities, but with the military and naval as represented by the Kaiser, von Tirpitz, and Falkenhayn. The feeling is not good between the Foreign Office and von Tirpitz, for their differences are irreconcilable. In my opinion, von Tirpitz will continue his submarine policy, leaving the Foreign Office to make explanations for any 'unfortunate incidents' as best they may.

I think we shall find ourselves drifting into war with Germany, for there is a large element in the German naval and military factions that consider it would be a good, rather than a bad, thing for Germany.

Regrettable as this would be, there would be compensa-

tions. The war would be more speedily ended, and we would be in a strong position to aid the other great democracies in turning the world into the right paths. It is something that we have to face with fortitude, being consoled by the thought that no matter what sacrifices we make, the end will justify them.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The mission of Colonel House had not accomplished the miracle of peace, which in 1915 was a practical impossibility. But he had accomplished what few persons guessed — a thorough understanding with those who guided the fortunes of the Allies. Henceforth, whatever the disputes of State Department and Foreign Office, the personal relations he had created would preserve an underlying cordiality. He had been given a private code that would permit him to communicate speedily and informally with Sir Edward Grey, and the British Foreign Secretary promised to write him frankly and frequently. House had obviously won the confidence of the British Government at a moment when public opinion in England was turning against America. He had made a host of friends abroad who would send him constant and reliable information. And President Wilson, supposed to be ill-informed and isolated, was through Colonel House kept in close touch with the inner currents of European politics.

Sir Horace Plunkett to the President

THE PLUNKETT HOUSE, DUBLIN
June 4, 1915

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

... Colonel House, in his own quiet, tactful, and marvelously persuasive way, has, to my certain knowledge, rendered an inestimable service to the Government of this

country by his counsel and advice in regard to its attitude to the United States in this crisis. What similar service he may have rendered to you, and to his people, in other European countries you will know. He sails to-morrow, and I can well believe that, as he cannot be in Europe and America at the same time, it may be better that he should now be at your side. As I have had the privilege of introducing him to some people he wished to meet over here, and of explaining to them some aspects of American public life which it was necessary for them to know in order to appreciate the value of Colonel House's help, I have offered to be of any assistance in my power, should misunderstandings arise in his absence which informed unofficial intervention may be best qualified to remove. I have also offered to keep him advised of any events or movements of opinion, which, from the possession of his confidence, I feel he ought to know. I merely wish to assure you, Mr. President, that something will be done to minimize the loss to us over here which must be set against the gain to you and to the United States in having Colonel House at Washington.

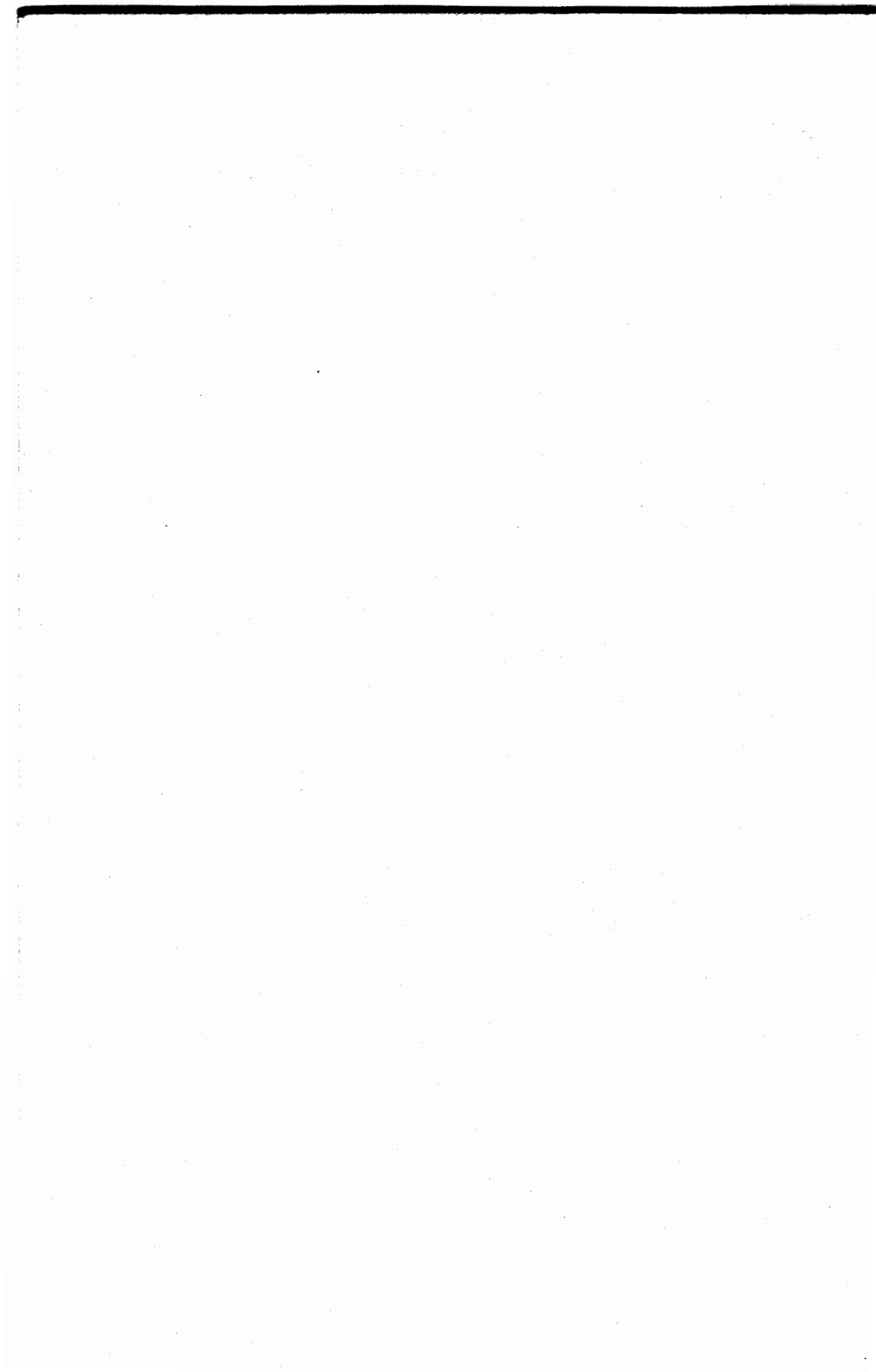
I am, with deep respect

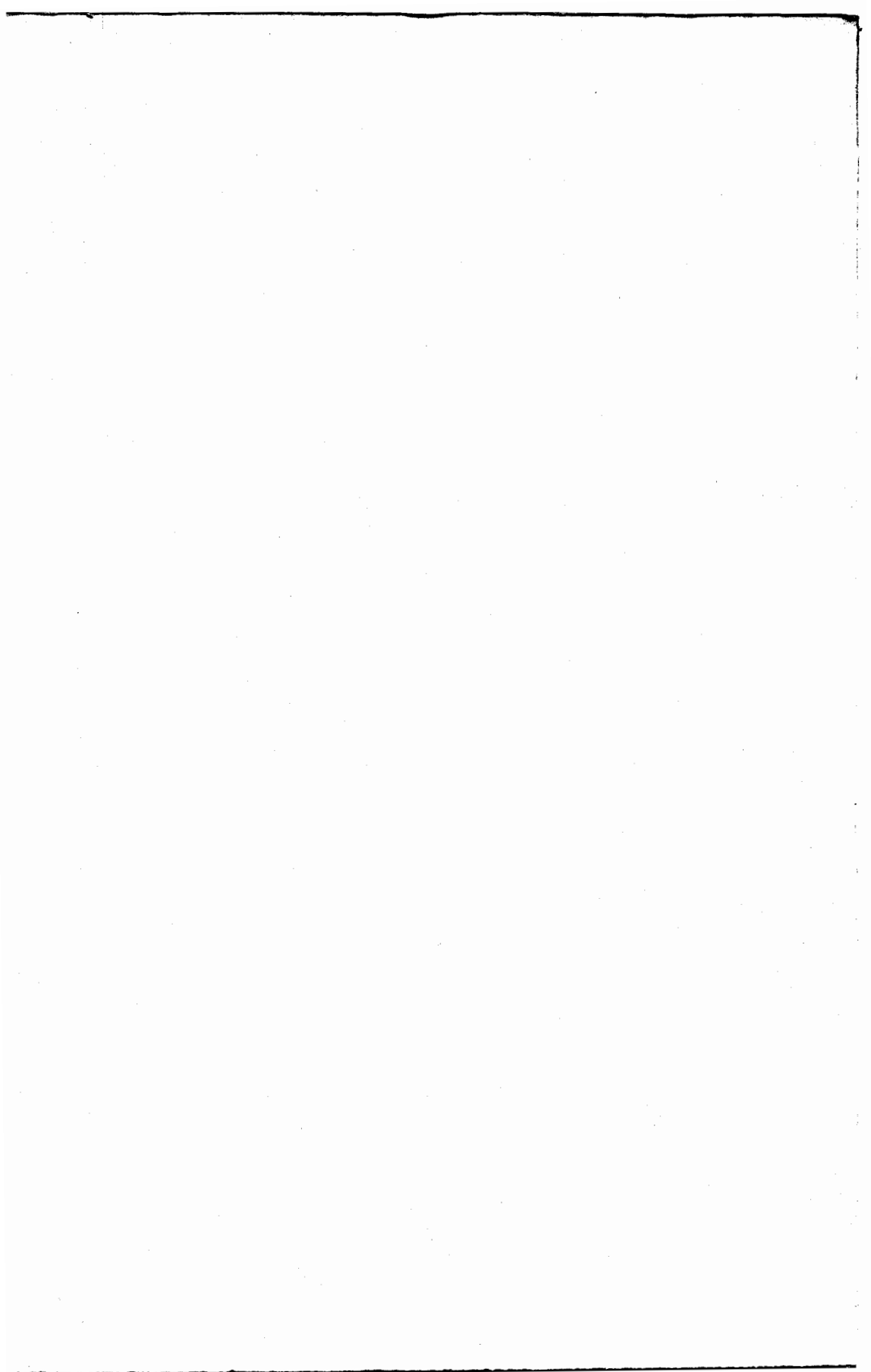
Yours sincerely

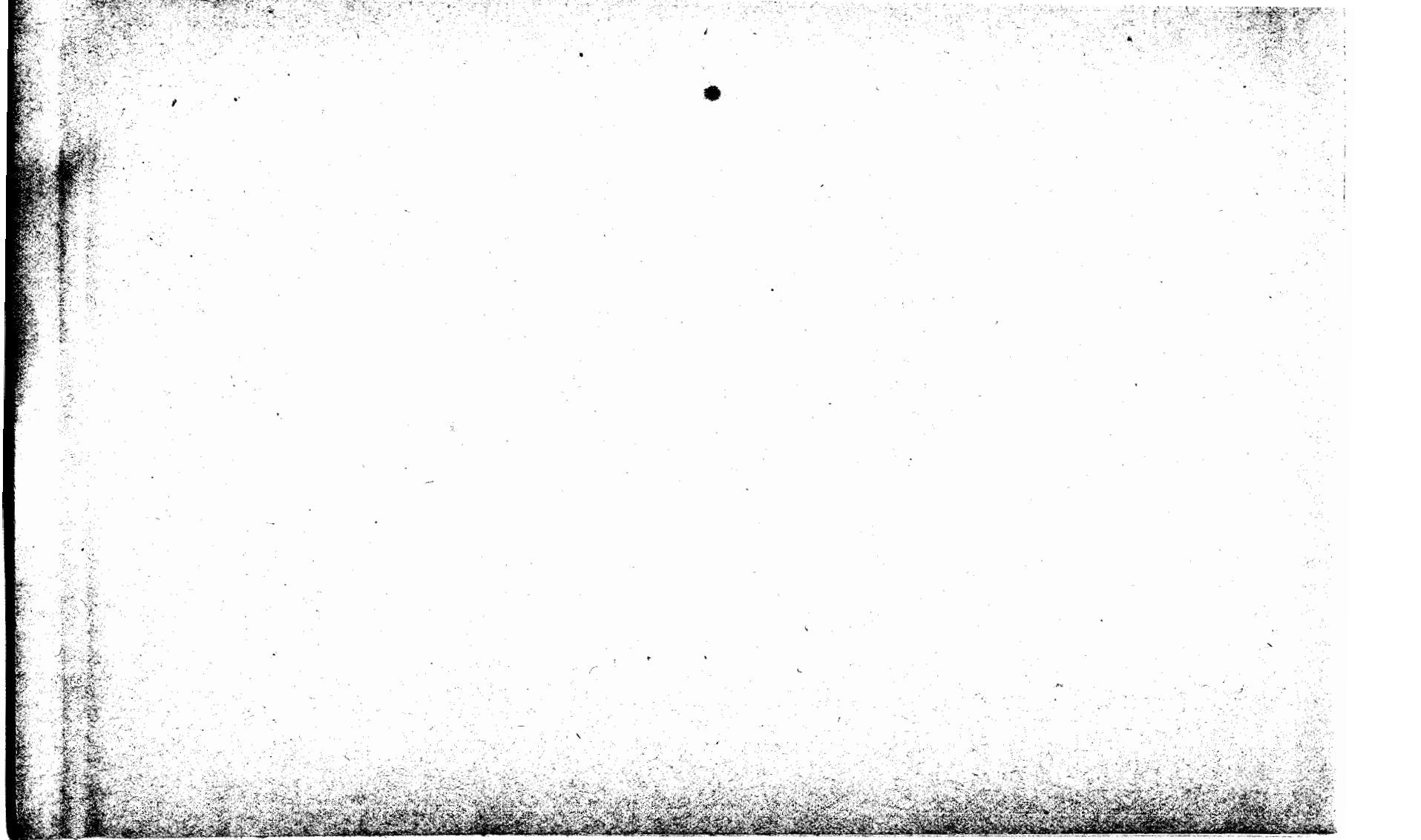
HORACE PLUNKETT

It was, therefore, with his eyes fully opened to all aspects of the European situation, that President Wilson faced the long-drawn-out crisis in our relations with Germany which followed the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

END OF VOLUME I







THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE



FROM NEUTRALITY TO WAR
1915-1917

'If the story of President Wilson's actions through this crisis is ever told, not the least of the things to his credit will be the departure from all diplomatic precedents in availing himself of the services of this wise and far-seeing political observer and adviser. . . .'

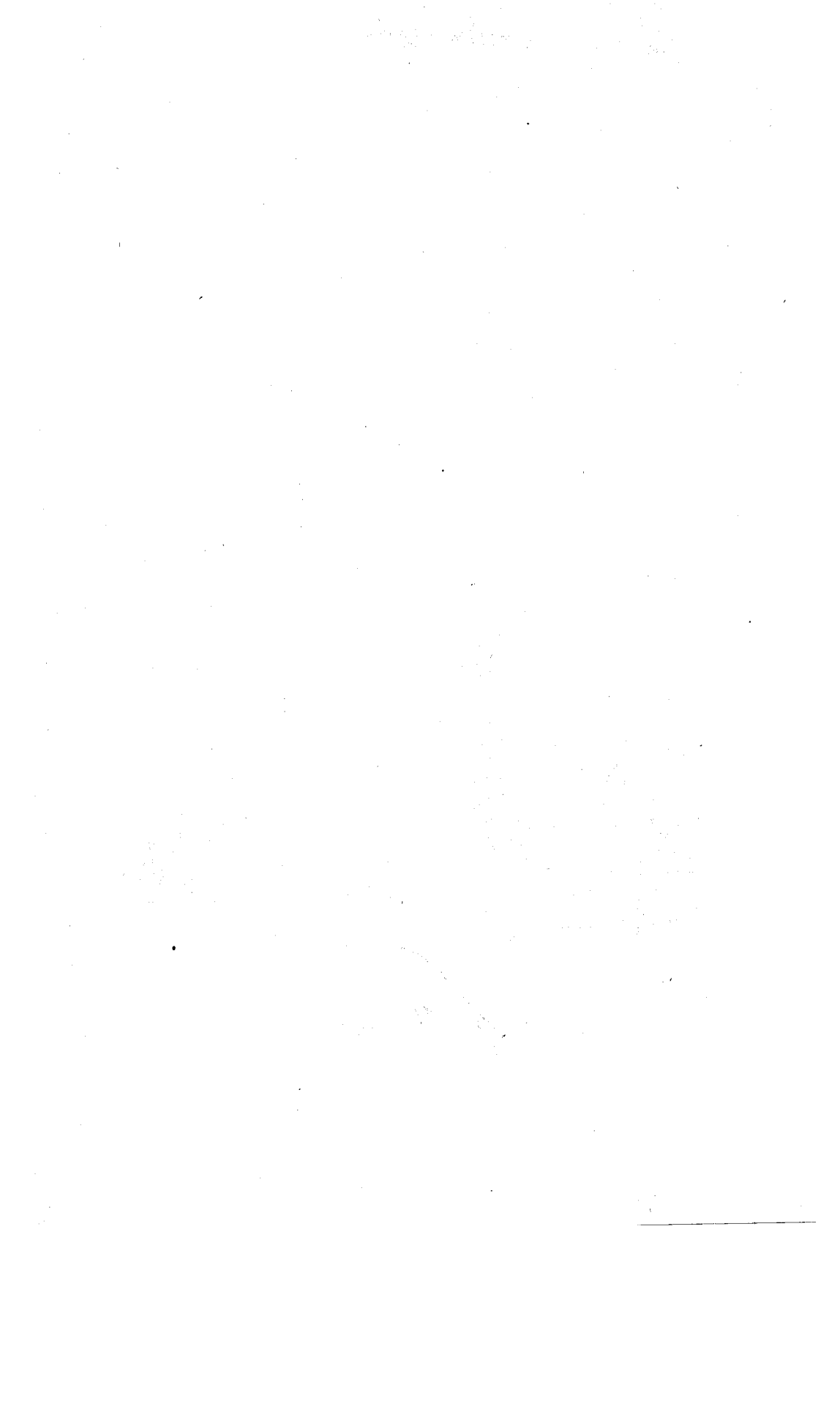
SIR HORACE PLUNKETT

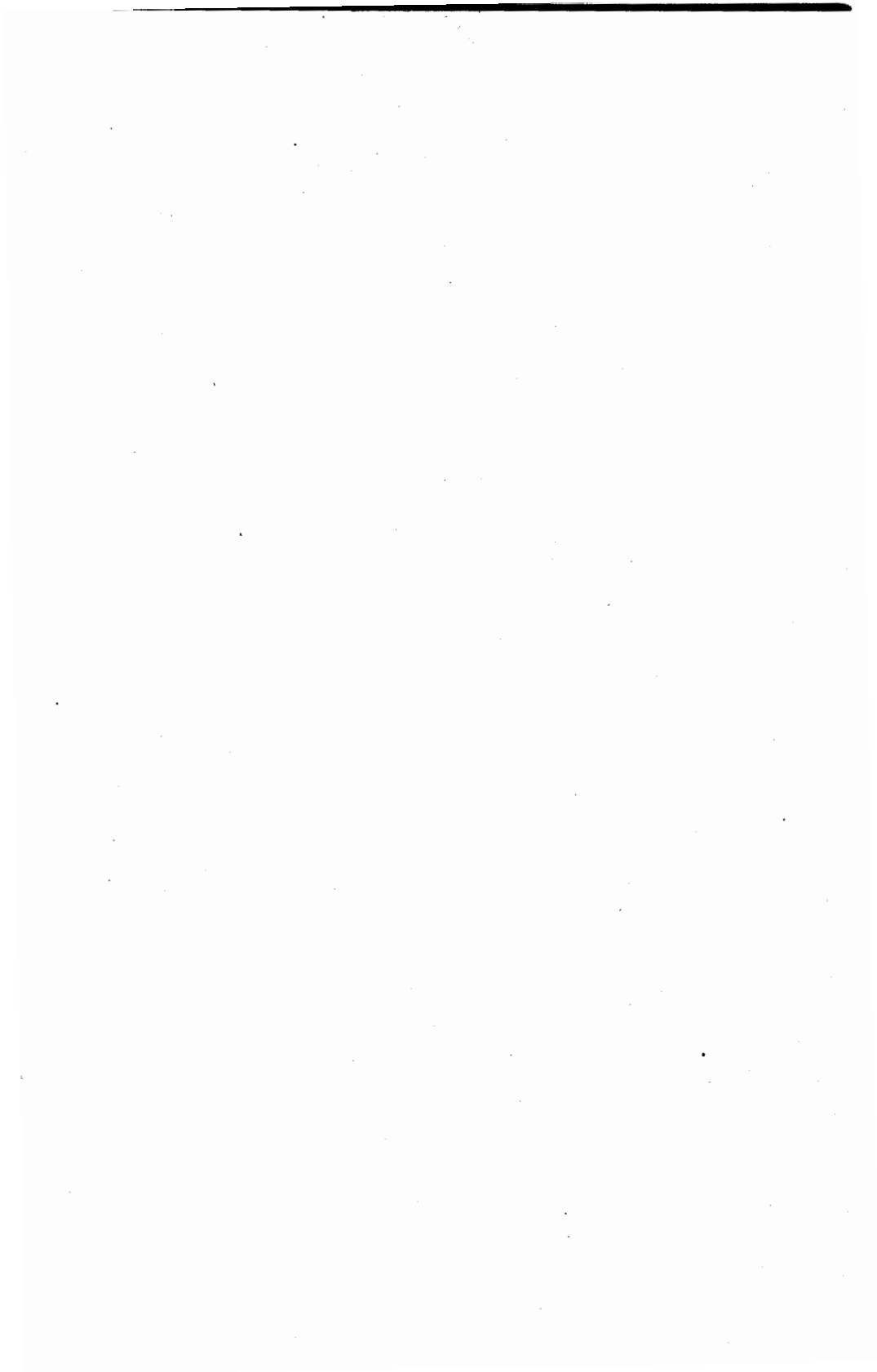






W. H. H. H.





THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

Arranged as a Narrative

BY

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THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

1915-1917

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CHAPTER I

THE PATIENCE OF WOODROW WILSON

If war comes with Germany, it will be because of our unpreparedness and her belief that we are more or less impotent to do her harm.

House to Wilson, July 19, 1915

I

PRESIDENT WILSON had refused to permit the United States to be drawn into the European War by the sinking of the *Lusitania*. The historian may approve or disapprove the wisdom of his course, viewed in the light of after events; but he may not question the President's motives. His decision was not based upon timidity, for to stand out against the outburst of popular emotion in the Eastern States demanded far more courage than to yield to it. Wilson was sometimes cautious, but he was always brave, and his willingness to negotiate resulted from an unshakable conviction that he owed it to America and the world to keep out of war unless the Germans definitely forced it upon us.

It would not have been difficult for him to stimulate a general war spirit had he wished to use the submarine's attack upon American citizens as a text. It would have been simple to create for himself the glory that surrounds the chief of a belligerent Power. Instead, he chose a harder road, and one that compelled him to travel through months of anxiety and personal humiliation, but always in the hope that he might save the United States from the horrors of war and, as chief of the one great neutral state, might end the

2 INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

agony in which Europe was caught. Upon him fell the abuse of Entente sympathizers in America and the ill-concealed gibes of the British and French. Most difficult of all for him to meet, however, were the evasive tactics of the Germans, who for more than three months dragged out the negotiations over the submarine warfare, until even the President's patience was stretched to a gossamer tenuity.

To Wilson's note of May 15, demanding that the German Government disavow the act of the submarine commander who sank the *Lusitania* and give assurances that such acts would not be repeated, they retorted a fortnight later, May 28, that the *Lusitania* was an armed cruiser and transport and, as such, a vessel of war. The President, in his reply of June 9, did not permit the issue to become confused. While he denied the truth of the German allegations, he declared them irrelevant; he placed his protest on higher and less technical ground:

'The sinking of passenger ships [he wrote] involves principles of humanity which throw into the background any special circumstances of detail that may be thought to affect the cases, principles which lift it, as the Imperial German Government will no doubt be quick to recognize and acknowledge, out of the class of ordinary subjects of diplomatic discussion or of international controversy. . . . The Government of the United States is contending for something much greater than mere rights of property or privileges of commerce. It is contending for nothing less high and sacred than the rights of humanity, which every Government honors itself in respecting and which no Government is justified in resigning on behalf of those under its care and authority. . . .

'The Government of the United States cannot admit that the proclamation of a war zone from which neutral ships have been warned to keep away may be made to operate as in

any degree an abbreviation of the rights either of American shipmasters or of American citizens bound on lawful errands as passengers on merchant ships of belligerent nationality. It does not understand the Imperial German Government to question those rights. It understands it also to accept as established beyond question the principle that the lives of non-combatants cannot lawfully or rightfully be put in jeopardy by the capture or destruction of an unresisting merchantman, and to recognize the obligation to take sufficient precaution to ascertain whether a suspected merchantman is in fact of belligerent nationality or is in fact carrying contraband of war under a neutral flag. The Government of the United States therefore deems it reasonable to expect that the Imperial German Government will adopt the measures necessary to put these principles into practice in respect of the safeguarding of American lives and American ships, and asks for assurances that this will be done.'

It was this note, sent on June 9, that led to the resignation of Mr. Bryan. His difference with Wilson was basic, for he was willing to submit the dispute with Germany to arbitration and to limit the rights of American citizens by warning them not to travel on merchant ships of the belligerent Powers or on those carrying munitions. Wilson, while he was willing to give to Germany ample opportunity to alter the policy she had proclaimed, was determined not to sacrifice nor even to debate any American rights. In all his notes he merely announced them.

II

Colonel House was on the Atlantic at the moment when Mr. Wilson sent his second note to Germany. The voyage was without incident except for the convoy which Mr. Balfour had not forgotten and which indicated in some degree the position of international importance which

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Colonel House had attained. The American press made much of it.

‘Mystery [stated the *New York American*¹] surrounds the nature of the important despatches which Colonel House brought back to America yesterday. It was the first time since the start of the war that foreign warships had escorted an American ship through the war zone. The unprecedented step was made the more significant by the fact that the British steamer *Orduna*, which left Liverpool three hours ahead of the *St. Paul*, was unconvoyed as was also the *Adriatic* which arrived in Liverpool at about the same time carrying munitions of war. . . .

“Two destroyers were sent by the British Admiralty to convoy us through the war zone,” said Captain F. M. Passow. “. . . There is no doubt the destroyers were sent to protect the despatches carried by Colonel E. M. House.”

Colonel House, as one might guess, was more disturbed than flattered by the public expression which the British Admiralty thus gave to the high value which it placed upon his safety, since the effectiveness of the Colonel’s missions depended largely upon their strictly unofficial character.

‘*June 6, 1915*: Much as I appreciate this attention [he wrote on shipboard], if I had known it was to be done in such a noticeable way, I should have prevented it. I thought the destroyers would be at a distance and not be noticed, and that we would have the protection without the excitement which has been caused by it. I have many misgivings as to what the American press may say, and also as to whether I might not lessen my influence as an intermediary of the President. . . .

‘*June 13, 1915*: It was a restful and pleasant voyage.

¹ June 14, 1915.

Dudley Malone came down to Ambrose Light in a revenue cutter to meet me. . . . He boarded the *St. Paul*, and I the revenue cutter. Dudley had all the news. . . . I received a wireless from Sir Horace Plunkett while at sea, telling me of Mr. Bryan's resignation. Dudley said it was generally conceded that I could have the appointment if I desired it. I dismissed the idea at once, stating that under no circumstances would I take it, even if the President desired me to do so. Dudley asked me not to make a final decision, because he thought the President had a right to insist upon my acceptance. I replied that the President would not consider tying me down to departmental details when I was doing the work I had in hand, for I could be far more useful to him and to the country by carrying on as I had been doing. . . .

'June 20, 1915: Attorney-General Gregory arrived on the ten o'clock train this morning. He told me practically everything of importance that has happened in the Cabinet since I have been away, more especially concerning the two notes to Germany and Mr. Bryan's resignation.

'He said the President read my cable of May 9 to the Cabinet on Tuesday, May 11. He opened his remarks by stating that he wished them to hear my views as to the answer which should be made to Germany, and they knew the confidence he had in my judgment and ability to see a situation clearly. The cable was then read and favorably commented on.

'Mr. Bryan told Gregory later that the only objection he had was that the cable was read to the Cabinet before he, Bryan, had seen it. He thought the President should have read it to him first and given him an opportunity of discussing it before it was submitted to the Cabinet.

'After reading my cable, the President read them a memorandum he had made and which embodied the note as it was finally sent to Germany. While the discussion was going on, Bryan showed some heat and said there were some members

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of the Cabinet who were not neutral. The President turned to him and said, with a steely glitter in his eyes, "Mr. Bryan, you are not warranted in making such an assertion. We all doubtless have our opinions in this matter, but there are none of us who can justly be accused of being unfair." Mr. Bryan apologized and the incident passed.

'Gregory said this was the second time since he had been in the Cabinet that the President had set his jaw so firmly. The other time was when X had in some way transgressed the proprieties.

'Bryan did not plan to attend the Cabinet meeting the day he offered his resignation, but the President suggested that he be invited, and all the Cabinet welcomed the suggestion. Mr. Bryan told Gregory after he had resigned that there had been inserted in the note a sentence which he, Bryan, had written, and which had been eliminated. After the resignation and before the note was published, Bryan said the sentence was reincorporated in it. Gregory said, however, Mr. Bryan was mistaken, and the sentence was discussed at the Cabinet meeting when his resignation was offered and at which Mr. Bryan was present. They had been discussing the note for some minutes before Mr. Bryan appeared, and whether that sentence had been covered before or after Mr. Bryan came in, is not of importance for the reason that the entire message was upon the table and was handed Mr. Bryan to read. This is also the President's recollection. Mr. Bryan evidently wishes it to appear that he resigned because the President refused to include a certain sentence modifying the note, and, after he resigned, the sentence was used.

'Another interesting incident Gregory told, which I was able to corroborate by a despatch sent me by Gerard, was that Mr. Bryan prepared a letter after the first note was sent to the German Government, to the effect that they should not consider the note seriously, that it was meant in a "Pickwickian sense." The President refused to sign this letter.

Gregory enlarged upon the stupidity of such a suggestion. I agree that it would have ruined the President. It would have been saying to the American public, "We are standing firm in demanding our rights," and behind their backs it would be saying to the German Government, "We merely send this note to deceive the American people, and do not mean what we say." It occurred to both of us that, if the President had consented to do this, it would have been akin to treachery.

'I told Gregory that Gerard cabled me at London that Mr. Bryan had said to the Austrian Ambassador that the note was not to be taken seriously.

'*June 21, 1915* [conference with the British Ambassador]: We had two hours together. We went over the ground carefully, I telling him of the European situation and he giving me the happenings here since I left. I called his attention to the fact that he was being quoted as saying the President was pro-German. He admitted this and said he had done it for the President's protection. I replied that the result of it had been that there was a general feeling throughout England and France that the President was pro-German, and it had taken me a long while in both countries to combat the work which he and Jusserand were innocently doing over here. I advised him in the future to say nothing upon the subject, or to maintain that the President was observing strict neutrality. . . .

'*June 22, 1915*: The German Ambassador came this afternoon at five, and we had a very satisfactory talk. I told of my reception in Germany and of how gratified I was at its cordiality. We discussed the prospects of peace, and I explained conditions in Germany somewhat better perhaps than he knows them at present. He gets his information directly from the Foreign Office, and I happen to know they are at cross-purposes with the military authorities. Bernstorff knows something of this, but not the full extent.

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'He still clings to the idea that Germany would be willing to make peace on the basis of evacuation of Belgium and France. I told him the civil Government would be willing to do it and the military Government was divided, but the people would not consent to any such terms, largely because they have been misled by exaggerated accounts of victory. . . . He talked sensibly and rather as a neutral than as a belligerent. I am told he has the habit of doing this in order to draw one out and get one's true opinions. I think better of Bernstorff than most people who know him, and if he is not sincere, he is the most consummate actor I have ever met.'

The passing of Mr. Bryan eliminated at least one factor that blurred Wilson's determination to compel from Germany a relaxation of the submarine campaign, and henceforth the President could be sure of a Cabinet ready to support unanimously any measures that might be necessary to carry through this policy. The Secretary of State was beloved by those who came in close contact with him, but the predominant emotion evoked by his resignation, at least in diplomatic circles, seems to have been one of relief.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, June 10, 1915

DEAR HOUSE:

. . . I inspired the leader in to-day's *Times*, wh. says that Bryan's going will make little or no difference. But some of the other papers make a sensation of it; and it has attracted much attention. But they all sum him up pretty accurately.

My own comment to you is simply this: 'My son, beware of cranks. They are sure at some time to turn the wrong way and to break your arm or to hit you in the belly or to do some other improper caper — always, too, at an inopportune time. I tell you, beware of cranks.'

But Mr. Bryan would not feel complimented if he knew that for these two days we've all gone about our work in the Embassy without more than some slight passing allusion to his resignation, as one might speak of the weather. It hasn't occurred to any of the men that it is an event of any importance.

But one American wrote me a letter saying he now wanted another passport; he had never cared for the one he has because it bore the signature of W. J. B., and now he *knows* that that passport's no good.

The Wilderness is becoming populated. There are others who ought to join him — for their country's good — in the Bad Lands of dead men who don't know they are dead. They talked themselves into greatness and, not knowing when to stop, also talked themselves out of it. . . .

Heartily yours

W. H. P.

Mr. Lansing, hitherto Counsellor of the State Department, was ultimately chosen as Secretary of State, and the question of his successor arose. House regarded the position as of the first importance, for upon the tact, the firmness, the legal ability of the Counsellor would largely depend the tone of official relations with the belligerents in these days of irritating crises.

Colonel House to the President

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
July 7, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

When Phillips was here Sunday he said that Lansing was anxious to get a Counsellor for the State Department as soon as possible, for the reason they were very short-handed. . . .

I suggested Solicitor-General Davis as being a desirable

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man for Counsellor, and, after conferring with Lansing, Phillips wires me in code: 'Davis the ideal man. We hope it can succeed.'

McReynolds was here Sunday, and he told me that Davis ranked as one of the greatest Solicitor-Generals the Department had ever had. This opinion seems general, for Gregory shares it and so does almost every member of the Supreme Court.

Davis would probably hesitate to leave the Department of Justice for the State Department, but, if you approve, I think it might be arranged. The State Department needs some such man, and a good Solicitor-General can be found more easily than a good Counsellor.

There is another feature about Davis that appeals to me, and that is, his appointment would be warmly received by members of Congress and Democrats generally. The Department needs some strengthening in that direction, and this would do it.

If you think this suggestion a good one, please let me know so I may confer further with Lansing as to the best means of procedure. The matter will have to be handled with some tact, otherwise he may not accept. Then, too, Gregory should be consulted before any tender is made.

I am hoping when you go to Washington you will motor down to Manchester and stay the night with us. You would lose but little time by doing this. If your car was sent to Manchester, you could leave here, I think, at five o'clock and reach Washington at the same time that you would be leaving Cornish earlier in the day, and I know you would enjoy the trip down.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

President Wilson replied to House's suggestion of Davis that, although he would be admirable wherever he might be

placed, he was the best Solicitor-General of the last twenty years. It seemed unwise to transfer him from the Department of Justice.

The appointment to the Counsellorship was delayed for a month, while all available material was sifted with care and a determined opposition maintained against the pressure exerted for using the office as a reward for purely political services. Ultimately, and with House's warm approval, Mr. Frank L. Polk, Corporation Counsel of New York, was selected. He was one of the few who possessed the three qualifications that House had laid down as essential, — firmness, tact, legal ability.

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

August 14, 1915

DEAR MR. LANSING:

. . . He [Polk] has an attractive personality and he will be loyal to you to the core.

He comes as nearly being without ambition except to serve, as any man I know. He tried hard to help Mayor Mitchel select another man for Corporation Counsel, but took it himself as a matter of duty and loyalty to Mitchel.

I think you will find him most helpful as a sort of Assistant Secretary of State. He has a good deal of political instinct and can speak the language of the members of Congress. At the same time, he is such a cultured gentleman that he will be of great value to you in dealing with the Diplomatic Corps. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

'August 15, 1915: Frank Polk arrived from Bar Harbor to see me before going to Washington. He was gratified over the thought that he had been selected for Counsellor of the

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State Department. I told him we had gone at the task of choosing with the thought that any man in America would accept the post during this critical time in the country's history, and he should therefore feel doubly complimented. . . .

'I outlined something of his duties as I imagined Lansing would want them to be, and I took away the lingering doubt in his mind as to his qualifications for the place. . . .'

III

To Colonel House, the difficulties of the course chosen by President Wilson in the crisis with Germany were perfectly clear, although he was willing to assist him to carry it through if possible. War could not be avoided, he felt, unless Germany changed her policy. This would depend upon the outcome of the struggle, which then and always continued in Berlin, between the Chancellor and von Tirpitz.

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

NEW YORK, June 17, 1915

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

. . . It is too early to give a final opinion as to the sentiment in America, but I think that it is fairly accurate to say that the vast majority of our people desire the President to be very firm in his attitude towards Germany and yet avoid war.

The two things are rather inconsistent. It is the general belief that war will be avoided, although I have not changed my opinion that it is inevitable unless Germany changes her policy in regard to submarine warfare.

Mr. Bryan's resignation simplifies the situation somewhat. . . .

With warm regards and good wishes, I am
Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

*Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House*¹

BERLIN, June 16, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... I think that the firm tone in the President's note will make the Germans climb down. There seems to be a general disposition to be pleased with the note and an expectation that matters can be arranged. The great danger is that the Germans may again get the idea that we do not dare to declare war. In such case they will again become difficult to handle. Von Gwinner said yesterday that if the *Mauretania* sailed it would be treated like the *Lusitania*. Zimmermann and von Jagow are both quite pleased with the tone of the note. They both talk now of keeping Belgium, the excuse being that the Belgians hate the Germans so much that if Belgium again became independent it would only be an English outpost. . . .

I am sorry to report that while authorities here think the idea of freedom of the seas good, they think the idea of freedom of land too vague. They want to know exactly what it means and say the seas should be free because they belong to no one, but land is private property of various nations, and compare the situation to a city street where every one is interested in keeping the streets free, but would resent a proposal that their houses should also be made common meeting-ground if not property. Unfortunately for Germany and the world, the German armies are winning and this will be considered a complete vindication of the military and caste system and everything that now exists. As Cleveland said, we are confronted by a condition and not a theory. *Germany will never agree directly or indirectly to any freedom of land or disarmament proposal.*

I think everything will work out all right on the *Lusitania*

¹ Excerpts from this and succeeding letters from Ambassador Gerard have been published in the form of diary notes in his *Face to Face with Kaiserism*.

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note and that Bryan will regret leaving and losing part of the credit for a success.

The Emperor will probably see me soon. He has been rabid on the delivery of arms from the U.S.A. question, but like all Germans, when they see we cannot be scared into a change of policy, he is making a nice recovery.

Yours ever

JAMES W. GERARD

BERLIN, June 22, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

The Government yesterday suppressed the *Tageszeitung*, a newspaper for which Reventlow has been writing. . . . Reventlow, an ex-navy officer, is a follower of von Tirpitz and is bitterly opposed to America in the present crisis. It is said that he once lived in America and lost a small fortune in orange-growing. I shall have this verified. At any rate, this suppression means that the Chancellor has at last exhibited some backbone and will fight von Tirpitz. The answer of Germany depends on the outcome of this fight. It is possible that von Falkenhayn and the army party may sustain the Chancellor as against von Tirpitz. It is quite likely that a sort of safe-conduct will be offered, in the note, for ships especially engaged in the passenger trade. Much stress will be laid on English orders to merchant ships to ram submarines. . . .

Many commercial magnates have arrived in town to impress the Government against war with America; but some are in favor of the continuance of bitter submarine war, notably your friend von Gwinner who sees his Bagdad railway menaced by possible English success in the Dardanelles.

There is, as usual, great expectation of a separate peace with Russia. . . .

Yours ever

JAMES W. GERARD

The contest between the Chancellor and the navy went in favor of the latter, at least for the moment; so much was apparent when the German reply to Wilson's note was received on July 8. Beginning with a formal approval of the rights of humanity, which in the circumstances seemed to many Americans an ill-chosen stroke of irony, the body of the note was made up of complaints of British restriction of trade and anti-submarine methods. It maintained the principle that neutral citizens travelling in the 'barred zone' on the high seas, did so at their own risk. It concluded with the suggestion which Gerard had prophesied, that Americans might cross the seas upon neutral vessels which, if they raised the American flag, would be assured special protection, or upon 'four enemy passenger-steamers for passenger traffic,' for the 'free and safe passage' of which the German Government would give guaranties. Of Wilson's demand for a promise that acts like the sinking of the *Lusitania* should not be repeated, there was no hint.

Germany thus avoided the issue and proposed that the United States should keep out of trouble by yielding their sovereign rights. 'The Foreign Office, I am sure,' wrote Ambassador Gerard, 'wanted to make some decent settlement, but were overruled by the navy.'

Colonel House was in no doubt as to the character of the reply that Wilson should send. He also exposed the distortion of facts upon which rested the argument that the submarine campaign was merely an answer to the British food blockade.

Colonel House to the President

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
July 10, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

In thinking of your reply to the German note, the following has occurred to me:

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The Government of the United States is unwilling to consent to any suggestion looking to the abridgment of the rights of American citizens upon the high seas. If this Government were willing to bargain with the German Government for less than our inalienable rights, then any belligerent nation might transgress the rights of our citizens in other directions and would confidently count upon our trafficking with them for concessions.

This war has already caused incalculable loss to the neutrals of the world, and this Government cannot lend its consent to any abridgment of those rights which civilized nations have conceded for a century or more.¹

The soul of humanity cries out against the destruction of the lives of innocent non-combatants, it matters not to what country they belong; and the Government of the United States can never consent to become a party to an agreement which sanctions such pitiless warfare.

Since your first note, the German Government has not committed any act against either the letter or the spirit of it; and it may be, even though they protest that they are unable to meet your demands, they may continue to observe them.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. In answer to their contention that Great Britain is trying to starve their people, it is well to remember that Germany refused to modify her submarine policy even though Great Britain would agree to permit foodstuffs to enter neutral ports without question.

¹ It is interesting to compare this sentence with Mr. Wilson's letter to Senator Stone in the spring of 1916, refusing to approve the Gore-McLemore resolution which warned Americans not to travel on armed merchant vessels. See pp. 216, 217.

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MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
July 12, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Here is a copy of a letter which comes from Bernstorff this morning.

I have told him that there should be some way out, and if I found he could be of service I would let him know. Do you think there would be any profit in seeing him? Perhaps I might tell him something of the tremendous effort this country would make in the event of war, in order to convince the world that we were not as impotent as was thought and in order to deter any nation in the future from provoking us into hostilities.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

The President replied expressing entire agreement with the suggestion of House for standing firm against compromise with Germany and every restriction of American rights to travel freely on the high seas. He intimated that it was not the business of the United States Government to arrange passenger traffic, but to define neutral and human rights. He agreed that House should see Bernstorff and impress upon him that some way out must be found, and that they must continue to abstain from submarine attacks without warning, unless they deliberately wished to prove that they were unfriendly and desired war.

The essential weakness of Wilson's position, as House perceived, was that any protests he might send to Germany rested purely upon moral influence, since the country was in no way prepared to support its diplomatic arguments by force. The situation had arisen which the Colonel had foreseen nine months before, when he vainly urged upon the President the need of an immediate naval and military reorganization. Convinced that the evasions of Germany

would continue so long as she could count upon American unpreparedness, he again took up the argument in favor of preparation for war; it was, he insisted, the best insurance against war with Germany in the existing crisis, and the only means of securing a relaxation of the submarine campaign. The strength of his conviction was not lessened by the news that Mr. Bryan planned a trip to Europe as Apostle of Peace, where, House feared, the impression of American pacifism would be intensified by the Commoner's speeches.

'*July 10, 1915:* The truth of the matter, I feel [recorded House], is that the President has never realized the gravity of our unprepared position. I have urged him from the beginning that this country prepare for eventualities. I urged him early in the autumn to start in with some such programme, and, in my opinion, it should have been started the day war was declared in Europe. If we had gone actively to work with all our resources to build up a war machine commensurate with our standing among nations, we would be in a position to-day to enforce peace.

'If war comes with Germany because of this submarine controversy, it will be because we are totally unprepared and Germany feels that we are impotent. The trouble with the President is that he does not move, at times, with sufficient celerity.¹ Take, for instance, the covenant we desire with South America. Nothing has been done with it since I laid it down in January. He places the blame upon Mr. Bryan's shoulders, and that, of course, is true as far as Mr. Bryan is concerned; but, nevertheless, he should have pressed the matter himself or through some one else competent to handle

¹ Comment by Colonel House, October 29, 1925: 'I did not mean to suggest that the President was a slow thinker or afraid of action; upon occasion he made up his mind like a flash and assumed a decisive policy. In the problems of Mexico and Preparedness, however, there was so much to be said on both sides that he delayed a decision, balancing the arguments, awaiting what would seem to him a clear-cut issue.'

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it. Even since I have been back, I have been unable to get him to move, and a month or more has been wasted. I am afraid it will drag along until it is too late to put it through. I see the same propensity for lagging in the Mexican situation. There is something which needs the most vigorous treatment, and yet it drags its weary length from day to day. There is no more reason why this should not have been settled in January, when I urged him to act, than now.'

Colonel House to the President

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
July 14, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... Ever since I was in Germany last year and saw the preparation that she had made for war, I have wondered at the complacency of her neighbors. I feel that we are taking a terrible gamble ourselves in permitting our safety to rest almost wholly upon the success of the Allies, and I wonder whether the time has not come for us to put our country in a position of security.

I wonder, too, whether we did not make a mistake in not preparing actively when this war first broke loose. If we had, by now we would have been in a position almost to enforce peace.

If war comes with Germany, it will be because of our unpreparedness and her belief that we are more or less impotent to do her harm.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
August 8, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... I was sure Bryan contemplated a trip to Europe in behalf of peace. If he goes, he will return a sadder, if not wiser, man.

I believe I know the temper of the American people at this time well enough to be certain that, upon the question of preparedness, you will be able to lessen his ever-diminishing influence.

General Wood was here yesterday. He gave some interesting information. He said the camp at Plattsburgh was turning out far better than any one could anticipate, that the material that came to them was of such a high order of intelligence that it took but little time to teach them the rudiments.

He is very anxious for you to fill the gaps in the regiments. He considers that the main thing to be done at present. He said this could be done by merely giving the order. . . .

If I were in your place, I would give this order at once. It will have a good effect. . . .

He recommends strongly, of course, a modified Swiss system. He thinks if our young men from eighteen to twenty-two had two months a year for four years, we would soon have a citizen soldiery that would practically make it unnecessary for us to have a standing army.

Wood is anxious to go to Europe and see something of the war as it is conducted to-day, and I agree with him there — for there is not an American soldier of great ability who has the remotest idea of how war is carried on now. One cannot get it from reports; one must see it. He said he could go over without any publicity and he could get to the front without its being known.

While our people do not want war, I am satisfied that eighty per cent of them see for the first time the danger of our position. New conditions have arisen that seem to me to make it the part of wisdom to heed. . . .

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

The President, however, at this time spent more thought

upon means of keeping the country at peace than he did upon the need of preparedness. He pondered carefully his reply to German evasions, and to the suggestion that American citizens refrain from travelling upon belligerent ships except as designated by the Germans. At times he was bombarded by pacifist arguments delivered by those ready to surrender every right for the sake of peace. When he sent these to House, the latter refused to be impressed. He was himself, perhaps, the most sincere pacifist in America; but he was convinced that any yielding to Germany would merely strengthen von Tirpitz and make Berlin more uncompromising. If a strong reply were delivered to Germany, she might yield; any hint of weakness would encourage her to proceed upon the course she had undertaken. Nor did he put any confidence in the peace feelers sent out from Berlin, for he had seen Germany too recently and at too close range.

Colonel House to the President

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
July 15, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I have talked with a great many people and mostly those from a distance, and, without exception, they have expressed a wish that a firm answer be sent. When pressed further, they have told me that in their opinion the country was willing to accept the consequences.

I shall try and get hold of Bernstorff in a few days.

I have a feeling that Germany will not commit what we would consider an overt act, unless, indeed, such talk as Mr. Bryan is indulging himself in should influence them to do so. . . .

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
July 17, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . Jane Addams comes on Monday. Hapgood and Crane thought I should see her. She has accumulated a wonderful lot of misinformation in Europe. She saw von Jagow, Grey, and many others, and, for one reason or another, they were not quite candid with her, so she has a totally wrong impression.

It is believed that Germany is willing to make peace now upon the basis of evacuation of Belgium, France, and Russian Poland; and this impression gains force by Bernstorff's constant iteration that this is true, and his further statement that if England would agree to let foodstuffs enter Germany, they would cease their submarine policy.

These tactics have a tendency to make people believe that we should treat Germany in the same spirit of compromise as she seems herself to evidence. It also has a tendency to create the feeling that we are favoring England at the expense of Germany.

Sight is lost of the fact that England will be called to an accounting for any infringement of our property rights at sea, as soon as Germany has been reckoned with for the more serious offence of killing Americans and other non-combatants.

Sometime I believe you should give out a statement which will clear up these points. If Germany is willing to evacuate Belgium, France, and Russian Poland, and is willing to give up her submarine warfare if the embargo on foodstuffs is lifted, she should have a chance to say so officially; for immediately she reaches this decision, peace parleys may begin. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

According to Mr. Gerard's messages, evacuation of conquered territory was the last thing the Germans had in mind. Their victories over Russia gave tremendous impetus of confidence, while the refusal of Wilson to place an embargo upon munitions and his protests against submarine warfare intensified their animus against the United States.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, July 20, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . Perhaps it is worth a war to have it decided that the United States of America is not to be run from Berlin. The people here are firmly convinced that we can be slapped, insulted, and murdered with absolute impunity, and refer to our notes as things worse than waste paper. I hear this is said by persons in very exalted station. They feel that our 'New Freedom' is against their ideas and ideals, and they hate President Wilson because he embodies peace and learning rather than caste and war.

Politically it will be an asset to have the German-Americans against him. . . .

I hear this last week for the first time of growing dissatisfaction among the plain people; especially at the great rise in food prices. Germany is getting everything she wants, however, through Sweden, including copper, lard, etc. Von Tirpitz and his press bureau were too much for the Chancellor — the latter is not a good fighter. Zimmermann, if left to himself, would of course have stopped this submarine murder.

I hope the President never gives in on the arms [export] question; if he ever gives in on that, we might as well hoist the German Eagle on the Capitol.

In a war way Germany is winning, but after all this is only the beginning; another winter campaign will find much dissatisfaction here. . . .

Ever yours

J. W. GERARD

IV

Although determined to give Germany every opportunity to change her naval methods, President Wilson was at least not deceived by the casuistry of the German arguments justifying the submarine campaign. His reply was conceived with skill. Avoiding all dialectic, he refused to admit their defence of the submarine attack as a retaliatory measure consequent upon British methods of restraining trade or attacking submarines:

‘Illegal and inhuman acts, however justifiable they may be thought to be against an enemy who is believed to have acted in contravention of law and humanity, are manifestly indefensible when they deprive neutrals of their acknowledged rights, particularly when they violate the right to life itself. . . .’

The President then went on to show that the experience of two months, illustrated by the case of the *Armenian*, where warning was given by the submarine, showed that it was possible to lift the practice of submarine attack above the criticism of inhumanity and illegality it had aroused. In a tone of rather friendly irony, he refused to abate any jot or tittle of American rights, renewed his demand for a disavowal of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and in more serious tones emphasized his warning that repetition of ‘acts in contravention of those rights must be regarded by the Government of the United States, when they affect American citizens, as deliberately unfriendly.’ The final sentence had the tone, if not the form, of an ultimatum.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, July 27, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I think the Note marvellous, a veritable masterpiece. I sent a cable advocating some concession and so my conscience is clear. I was afraid that the hate against America here had warped my judgment and now I am glad that the President has taken the strong course. . . .

The Note is received with hostility by press and Government. Of course, as you have seen, the party of frightfulness has conquered those of milder views, largely owing to the aggressive press campaign made by von Tirpitz, Reventlow and company. The Germans generally are at present in rather a waiting attitude, perhaps wishing to see what our attitude toward England is, but this will not affect their submarine policy. The Foreign Office now claims, I hear, that I am hostile to Germany, but that claim was to be expected. Of course I had no more to do with the Note than a baby, but it is impossible to convince them of that, so I shall not try. . . .

Germany has the Balkan situation well in hand. Roumania can do nothing in the face of recent Russian defeats and has just consented to allow grain to be exported to Austria and Germany, but has, I think, not yet consented to allow the passage of ammunition to Turkey. The pressure, however, is great. If not successful, perhaps German troops will invade Serbia so as to get a passage through to Turkey.¹

A minister from one of the Balkan States told me the situation of Roumania, Greece, and Bulgaria was about the same, each state can last in war only three months. So all are trying to gauge three months before the end and come in on the winning side.

The Bulgarian Minister of the Public Debt got in here by mistake the other day, insisting he had an appointment; he

¹ The attack upon Serbia was launched two months later.

had an appointment with the Treasurer, Helfferich, whose office is near by. This shows, perhaps, that Bulgaria is getting money here.¹

The Germans are sending back to Russia, Russians of revolutionary tendencies, who were prisoners here, with money and passports in order that they may stir up trouble at home. . . .

It is not pleasant to be the object of the hate of so many millions, as the Germans naturally find in poor me a present object for concentrated hate. Enclosed is a specimen anonymous letter in which the kindly writer rejoices that so many Americans were drowned in the Chicago disaster. This shows the state of mind.

The Emperor is at the front, 'somewhere in Galicia.' They keep him very much in the background, I think with the idea of disabusing the popular mind of the idea that this is 'his war.' . . .

I am afraid the late Secretary of State mixed matters considerably — certainly he told Dumba and Bernstorff things which were reported here — were told to me — and put me and the authorities here a little 'off' as to the President's intentions. If we have trouble with Germany, he will be responsible. He gave the idea of weakness here. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

Affairs had approached a crisis. The 'overt act,' which Colonel House feared, was still uncommitted, but this was apparently more the result of circumstance than of intention. In Berlin the extremists were largely in control, and so far as their attitude toward the United States was concerned, it was clear that the warnings of Wilson, speaking for an unarmed nation, produced the maximum of irritation and the

¹ Bulgaria was in fact receiving loans from Germany, preparatory to entering the war.

minimum of effect. Wilson, not unnaturally, refused to trust the candor of Bernstorff. On July 29 he wrote House that he believed the German Ambassador was not dealing frankly with us, and suggesting that the Colonel again try to make him impress upon Berlin the danger of the course they were pursuing. Bernstorff complained that the President unfairly concentrated his protests upon Germany while he shut his eyes to the infractions of international law by the British. Ambassador Gerard seemed to regard a break between the United States and Germany as merely a matter of time.

Ambassador von Bernstorff to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 27, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

... The present situation is not pleasant. In the last American note such strong language was used that I am afraid I will not be able to do much in the matter. Nevertheless I am doing my best, but my efforts will certainly fail if the expected American note to England does not use just as strong a language as that employed toward us.

At present nobody in Germany believes in the impartiality of the American Government. That is the great difficulty of the situation. Very much ill feeling has been created on both sides of the ocean and any — not 'deliberately unfriendly,' but — unintended, unfortunate, incident may bring about war any moment. . . .

We must *certainly* stop publishing sharp and unsatisfactory notes. I do not think that public opinion in either country can stand that much longer. If I cannot persuade my country to give an answer, we will have to trust to our good luck and hope that no incident will occur which brings about war.

Very sincerely yours

J. BERNSTORFF

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, August 3, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... The Chancellor is still wrong in his head; says it was necessary to invade Belgium, break all international laws, etc. I think, however, that he was personally against the fierce Dernburg propaganda in America. I judge that von Tirpitz has, through his press bureau, so egged on the people that this submarine war will keep on and the Germans will be utterly astonished and hurt when the war is on.¹ After all it is necessary. Von Jagow confessed to me that they had tried to get England to interfere with them in Mexico, and the Germans 'Gott strafe' the Monroe Doctrine in their daily prayers of Hate.

Warsaw, as I predicted officially long ago, will soon fall. This keeps the Balkan States out.²

No great news — we are simply waiting for the inevitable accident. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

¹ With the United States.

² That is, Rumania and Bulgaria will not join the Entente.

CHAPTER II

THE ARABIC CRISIS

Liners will not be sunk by our submarines without warning and without safety of the lives of non-combatants, provided that the liners do not try to escape or offer resistance.

Bernstorff to Lansing, September 1, 1915

I

GERARD's forebodings of the 'inevitable accident' were tragically justified on August 19, when the British liner *Arabic* was torpedoed and sunk by a submarine off Fastnet. She was outward bound, headed for New York, a neutral port, and thus could carry no contraband. The attack was delivered without warning. Two Americans were lost.

It is interesting to note that even under such provocation President Wilson was in no way affected by the personal emotions which such a flagrant disregard of his warnings must have aroused — and he was far from meek-tempered; but solely by the responsibility which he felt had been laid upon him. He turned to House for help.

On August 21 he wrote him demanding his advice. What should he do? On two points his mind was clear. In the first place, the people of the United States counted upon him to keep them out of war; in the second, it would be a calamity to the world at large if we were drawn actively into the conflict and so deprived of all disinterested influence over the settlement. He concluded by saying that he was well but desperately lonely; the letters of House came, he said, like the visits of a friend.

Colonel House's reply to the President's appeal for advice placed before Wilson three alternatives, and excluded the possibility of despatching another diplomatic note of protest, which he believed would be tantamount to a confession of

political anæmia. Wilson might immediately break diplomatic relations by dismissing Ambassador Bernstorff; he might call Congress and place upon its shoulders the responsibility for war or peace; he might privately inform Bernstorff that a disavowal and complete surrender by Germany on the submarine issue could alone prevent a rupture. House favored the first alternative, although he believed that it meant war. But he refused to press it upon the President: 'He knows full well my views,' recorded the Colonel. The decision which might throw into war a nation of a hundred million must be taken by those upon whom the official responsibility would rest.

Colonel House to the President

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
August 22, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

My heart has been heavy since the *Arabic* disaster, and my thoughts and sympathy have been constantly with you.

I have hoped against hope that no such madness would seize Germany. If war comes, it is clearly of their making and not yours. You have been calm, patient, and just. From the beginning they have taken an impossible attitude which has led them to the brink of war with all nations.

Our people do not want war, but even less do they want to recede from the position you have taken. Neither do they want to shirk the responsibility which should be ours. Your first note to Germany after the sinking of the *Lusitania* made you not only the first citizen of America, but the first citizen of the world. If by any word or act you should hurt our pride of nationality, you would lose your commanding position overnight.

Further notes would disappoint our own people and would cause something of derision abroad. . . .

DIPLOMATIC BREAK WITH GERMANY URGED 31

To send Bernstorff home and to recall Gerard would be the first act of war, for we would be without means of communication with one another and it would not be long before some act was committed that would force the issue.

If you do not send Bernstorff home and if you do not recall Gerard, then Congress should be called to meet the emergency and assume the responsibility. This would be a dangerous move because there is no telling what Congress would do in the circumstances. . . .

For the first time in the history of the world, a great nation has run amuck, and it is not certain that it is not a part of our duty to put forth a restraining hand. Unless Germany disavows the act and promises not to repeat it, some decisive action upon our part is inevitable; otherwise we will have no influence when peace is made or afterwards. . . .

I am, with deep affection

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

'If I were in his place [the Colonel noted on August 21], I would send Bernstorff home and recall Gerard. I would let the matter rest there for the moment, with the intimation that the next offence would bring us actively in on the side of the Allies. In the meantime, I would begin preparations for defence and for war, just as vigorously as if war had been declared. I would put the entire matter of defence and the manufacture of munitions in the hands of a non-partisan commission composed mostly of business men — men like John Hays Hammond, Guy Tripp, and others of that sort. I would issue an address to the American people and I would measurably exonerate the Germans as a whole, but I would blister the militant party in Germany who are responsible for this world-wide tragedy. I would ask the German-Americans to help in redeeming their fatherland from such blood-thirsty monsters.'

And on the following day, commenting upon Wilson's sense of responsibility to the world to keep the United States at peace:

'I am surprised at the attitude he takes. He evidently will go to great lengths to avoid war. He should have determined his policy when he wrote his notes of February, May, June, and July. No citizen of the United States realizes better than I the horrors of this war, and no one would go further to avoid it; but there is a limit to all things and, in the long run, I feel the nation would suffer more in being supine than in taking a decided stand. If we were fully prepared, I am sure Germany would not continue to provoke us.'

From Gerard, House received the impression that popular confidence in Berlin was such that no adequate reply would be given to the President's last *Lusitania* note, and that, as regards the sinking of the *Arabic*, the Government would simply await another protest from Wilson and file it for reference. German optimism ran high.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, August 24, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

Successes in Russia have made people very cocky. Hence, probably, the torpedoing of the *Arabic*. Also great hope of Bulgaria coming in with Germany; there is no more dissatisfaction with the war heard. . . .

It is more and more apparent that the Emperor is only a figurehead in the war. He seems to have but little power, and is kept away and surrounded. . . . The Reichstag session has developed no opposition. . . .

If Bulgaria comes in, Germany will undoubtedly take a strip in Serbia and keep a road to Constantinople and the

East. The new Turkish Ambassador has just arrived. The old one was not friendly to Enver Bey and so was bounced; he remains here, however, as he fears if he went to Turkey he would get some 'special' coffee. The hate of Americans grows daily. . . .

Yours ever

JAMES W. GERARD

Before Wilson had decided which of the three alternatives he would follow, for he was clearly determined not to waste ink and paper upon another note, Ambassador von Bernstorff suddenly awoke to the gravity of the crisis. He promised that, given time, he would obtain from Berlin concessions sufficient to prevent the rupture that threatened. What was necessary was the assurance that Germany would cease to torpedo merchant ships without warning and without protection for the lives of the passengers; what was also necessary was a disavowal of the attack upon the *Arabic*. This was the least that could be considered, and there seemed no chance of securing so much. He begged that the United States take no immediate action, in order that he might have the opportunity to bring pressure upon Berlin. President Wilson's patience at last showed signs of weakening.

On August 25 he wrote to Colonel House asking his opinion of Bernstorff's request for a suspension of judgment, and admitted his suspicion that they were merely sparring for time in order that any action we might take would not affect the unstable equilibrium in the Balkans. Did House regard the suspicion as too far-fetched? And how long should he wait? When the United States Government asked for the German version of the *Orduna* sinking, they simply pigeon-holed the demand and nothing had yet been heard from them.

Wilson wrote also that he had thought with solicitude of

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a possible outbreak of German-Americans in the United States, in case of a break with Germany, but where and how should the Government prepare? Every clue had been followed up, even the most vague, but nothing had been discovered sufficient to form a basis even for guessing. What had House in mind, in what direction should any concentration of force be directed or precautionary vigilance be exercised?

Colonel House to the President

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
August 26, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I am *always* suspicious of German diplomacy. What they say is not dependable, and one has to arrive at their intentions by inverse methods. I do not think your suspicions are far-fetched and it is quite possible they are playing for time. I have a feeling, however, that they may weaken and come to your way.

As to being prepared for a possible outbreak, I have this in mind: Attempts will likely be made to blow up waterworks, electric light and gas plants, subways and bridges in cities like New York. This could be prevented by some caution being used by local authorities under the direction of the Government.

For instance, Police Commissioner Woods tells me he has definitely located a building in New York in which two shipments of arms have been stored by Germans. They were shipped from Philadelphia. He is trying to trace the point of shipment and other details. No one knows of this excepting myself. . . .

I am told there are only two hundred men at Governor's Island. I think there should be at least a regiment. What trouble we have will be in large cities, and it is there where precautions should be taken. I do not look for any organized

rebellion or outbreak, but merely some degree of frightfulness in order to intimidate the country. . . .

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

One advantage of the apparent proximity of war was that it compelled the Government at last to grasp the need of preparing the armed forces of the United States. The crisis gave a practical example of the futility of the *laissez-faire* policy, which had obviously failed to prevent diplomatic quarrels and had merely encouraged the Germans to proceed without regard to American protests. So much Wilson and Daniels confessed, as they took the first steps toward an increase of the navy. Colonel House followed the change of policy, which he had so strongly urged, with interest and enthusiasm. He kept in touch equally with the preparations for meeting the local disturbances which seemed possible in case the rupture with Germany were not averted.

'August 26, 1915: Police Commissioner Arthur Woods came at ten-thirty . . . to advise with me concerning the coördination of the Secret Service organizations in the Department of Justice and the Treasury Department with that of New York City. He told of what was being done about the Germans. . . . I promised to put him in touch with both McAdoo and Gregory, and later in the day I did this when I met Gregory in Boston.

'Upon my return to Manchester, I found a telephone call from Secretary Daniels. He is in Gloucester, on the *Dolphin*, and wanted to see me. I got in touch with him later and we had a conference of an hour. He told of his activities in the navy and of his conference with the President concerning naval estimates. Daniels wishes the President to indicate the sum he is willing to recommend Congress to appropriate, and then he, Daniels, wants to partition this sum out in the way most fruitful to the navy's needs.

'The President wished him to make a statement of what he thought the navy should have, rather than the other way about. I approved the President's method rather than his. I urged him to ask for all that was necessary to make the navy second only to that of Great Britain, and easily superior to any other Power.

'Daniels said this would take \$200,000,000 or more, just for construction purposes. I told him it did not matter if it took \$300,000,000 or \$400,000,000, for the country demanded it and it should be done. He promised he would go at it in that spirit. . . .'

II

In the meantime, von Bernstorff worked feverishly to secure from Berlin some concession sufficient to tide over the crisis. The German civil Government hesitated, fearing the navy officials and public opinion and therefore not daring to settle the matter by a frank disavowal, but finally conceding enough to prevent a break.

On August 29, Bernstorff wrote to House, suggesting that Germany was ready to yield to the demand of Wilson and to promise that the submarine warfare on passenger liners should cease. House sent the letter to the President. Wilson answered that he trusted neither the accuracy nor the sincerity of Bernstorff, but that he would consider any offer of conciliation.

Warned that he must be explicit, the German Ambassador on September 1 wrote formally to Mr. Lansing:

Ambassador von Bernstorff to Secretary Lansing

WASHINGTON, *September 1, 1915*

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY:

With reference to our conversation of this morning, I beg to inform you that my instructions concerning our answer to your last *Lusitania* note contain the following passage:

'Liners will not be sunk by our submarines without warning and without safety of the lives of non-combatants, provided that the liners do not try to escape or offer resistance. . . .'

I remain, my dear Mr. Lansing, very sincerely yours

J. BERNSTORFF

Germany thus yielded on the main issue, and it may fairly be said that Mr. Wilson had won a great diplomatic victory. The President had been working to safeguard a principle by compelling from Germany a written acknowledgment of its validity: the principle that if submarines were used, they must observe the established rules of warning, visit, and search, and also provide for the safety of non-combatants. Henceforth attacks such as those upon the *Lusitania* and *Arabic* could not be made except in violation of the promise given by the Germans. So much had the President won, and without the exercise of force.

But the victory was not clean-cut. No formal disavowal was made of the sinking of the *Lusitania* or the *Arabic*. Furthermore, the German promise was implied rather than explicit. They had given orders to the submarine commanders to abide by Wilson's demands, but they evidently reserved the right to change those orders whenever conditions suited them.¹ Three days after Bernstorff gave his pledge, a submarine sank the Allan liner *Hesperian*. And a letter from Mr. Gerard indicated that, whatever promises the German Government made, the Navy would act as it pleased.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, September 7, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . The navy people frankly announce that they *will not stop submarining*, no matter what concessions are made by

¹ At least, so they stated in the spring of 1916.

the Chancellor and Foreign Office. We have outlined this in cables and now the torpedoing of the *Hesperian* proves it.

The Chancellor still seems very much afraid of von Tiritz and his press bureau.

Zimmermann told me it was all a great diplomatic victory for the United States.

A friend told me the change in policy here was at the request of the *Pope* and that in return the Pope was to work for peace which Germany now desires. This friend's 'dope' is usually correct. . . .

As a result of recent breakdown and fundamental causes, I hear the Kaiser is very bitter against the President, but I don't think that this is novel or will make the President lose much sleep. . . .

I am much bothered now by presence of alleged Americans — correspondents, accelerators of public opinion, etc., in German pay. They make it difficult stepping and are dangerous spies. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

III

Although Germany's promise that liners would not be sunk without warning was sufficient to prevent an immediate break in relations, few believed that the issue was definitely settled. Neither the American Government nor public opinion could be satisfied unless a complete disavowal of the sinking of the *Arabic* followed. Neither Gerard nor the German Ambassador believed that Berlin would make it.

Von Bernstorff's efforts, however, were intensified by a decisive step taken by President Wilson early in September, which indicated to Germany that even Wilson's patience was not infinite. The Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Dumba, had been so indiscreet as to entrust to an American correspondent, James F. J. Archibald, important despatches

destined for the Vienna Government. The correspondent was arrested by the British, the despatches published. They proved the intent of the Austrian Embassy to assist in the crippling of munitions plants, and the coöperation of the German military attaché, von Papen, in an effort to disorganize American industries exporting to the Allies. A letter of von Papen to his wife was also published, in which he wrote: 'I always say to these idiotic Yankees that they had better hold their tongues.' Its publication did not serve to allay the warmth of American feeling.

Wilson at once requested the recall of Ambassador Dumba, and Bernstorff became uneasy. He redoubled his efforts to win concessions from Berlin.

Colonel House to the President

ROSLYN, LONG ISLAND
September 17, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Bernstorff was here yesterday. He said his main trouble was in getting his people to believe that this Government was in earnest. He told me in confidence that he thought the sending of Dumba home had done more to make Berlin realize the gravity of the situation than anything else.

They consider him [Bernstorff] pro-American in his views and are inclined to discount what he says, believing that it is done for the purpose of getting more favorable action.

He thought there would be no more objectionable acts and that, if we could get over the question of disavowal for the *Arabic*, there would be smooth sailing. He did not know how far Berlin would go in disavowing the *Arabic*, but he thought he could get them to say that from the evidence presented they believed the submarine commander was mistaken in thinking the *Arabic* tried to ram him.

I told him to get his Government to go as far as they would and then let me find unofficially from you whether it was

acceptable. If it was acceptable, he could present it to the State Department officially.

We conversed at some length concerning the sentiment in this country. I told him that while our people west of the Atlantic seaboard were averse to war, they were willing to trust your judgment and would sustain you to any length which you thought proper to go. I told him I had arrived at this conclusion after very exhaustive inquiries. He admitted it was true. . . .

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

The President replied on September 20, expressing his perplexity over Bernstorff's attitude. In his letters to House the Ambassador seemed to be one person, in his interviews with the newspapermen he was quite another. Wilson was at a loss to know which, if either, was the genuine Bernstorff. The Ambassador, he felt, was anxious to save the Berlin Government from any formal disavowal of the sinking of the *Arabic*, but Wilson did not see any possibility of yielding; the country would regard him as too easy, any general promise of better intentions on Germany's part as utterly untrustworthy. The President expressed definitely his conviction that the Germans were moving with intentional and exasperating slowness, but he felt himself under bonds to the people of the United States to show patience to the utmost.

Throughout the month of September, House worked with Bernstorff to secure the formal disavowal of the sinking of the *Arabic*, without which, as Wilson perceived, no trust whatever could be put in German promises. The Colonel was not optimistic. On September 12, after a conversation with Mr. Polk, the new Counsellor for the State Department, he recorded: 'Polk understands for the first time our true relations with Germany, and he feels it will be difficult, if not impossible, to avoid a rupture.'

'September 16, 1915: The German Ambassador telephoned and asked for an interview, which I gave him at half-past five o'clock. He remained for nearly an hour and was not in a hopeful mood. I encouraged him as much as possible in the work he was doing for peace. I let him know that the President was determined about certain things and it would be well if his Government would heed his, Bernstorff's, advice as to the seriousness of the situation. . . .

'I had overwhelming evidence that the President would be sustained in any action he might take. The fact that he has been so patient and has tried so hard to avoid war, gives the people confidence in his judgment as to what is necessary in the premises.

'It was arranged that when it came to the wording of the disavowal regarding the *Arabic*, it should be given to me first unofficially, in order that there might be no mistake made by a premature publication of something entirely unsatisfactory. . . .

'September 28, 1915: The German Ambassador called this morning. . . . I took occasion to tell Bernstorff what a mistake it was to have undertaken German propaganda in this country. I laid it at the door of Dr. Dernburg and he permitted it to remain there. I said if Germany won, they would not need us; but if she failed, I could see much service which this country might render them. It therefore seemed to me the part of wisdom to keep on friendly relations with us and not antagonize us. He spoke inadvertently of the German vote. I replied that the President was wholly unconcerned about his own political fortunes, and, even so, the Democratic Party was unconcerned as to the German vote for the reason it was always given to the Republican Party. I think this came as something of a surprise to him. I wish to make it clear, however, that he did not speak of the German vote in an offensive way, but merely as a matter of public concern.

‘When he left, he apologized for taking so much of my time and thanked me for my many acts of courtesy to him.’

The situation would have been easier for Bernstorff to deal with if there had been any one in supreme control in Germany. The letters of Ambassador Gerard gave an extraordinary picture of the political confusion there, which contrasted forcibly with the efficiency of German military organization. Of victory they seemed confident, but there was no agreement as to how they would use it. Councils were equally divided on the problem of how to answer Wilson’s demands for a disavowal of the *Arabic* sinking. And through the story ran a thread of petty espionage and propaganda which seemed more suitable for a cinema than for the successors of Bismarck.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, September 20, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

As usual waiting. Lansing does not let me know what is going on and von Jagow says he is also in the dark. Lansing very kindly sent me a copy of the note von Bernstorff wrote him, *five days after* it had appeared in the *London Times*. I really think the Ambassador on the job should be kept informed.

As I predicted to you, the invasion of Serbia by German and Austrian troops has commenced. This is to cut a road to Bulgaria, and then it is expected Bulgaria will join Germany and the road to Constantinople and Egypt will be open to German troops.

There is great expectation that Hindenburg’s present operation will catch a great Russian army.

A newspaper writer was prosecuted for writing against the annexation of Belgium. The *Bund Neues Vaterland* got out a

circular about that event, but their rooms were 'pulled' by the police and the circulars confiscated. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

BERLIN, *September 27, 1915*

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . Pamphlets on the idiocy of 'Annexation,' etc., have been seized by the police and the printers and authors jailed. It is hard to know *where* the Government stands on this question. I think they don't know themselves. Now the idea is to annex the Baltic Provinces of Russia and Courland, give Poland to Austria and give up Belgium and Northern France for a great indemnity. . . .

I hear more and more people say that President Wilson must be the peace mediator. You see people here rather suspect that the Pope has too many axes to grind in Europe, while the President has no interest one way or the other. You are liked and trusted here and if there is any chance of immediate peace (which I doubt) you will be called on to represent the President.

Of course I have been doing what I could in the *Arabic*, etc., situation and hope it will come out all right. I have heard nothing lately, but Admiral Holtzendorff, the new head of the naval staff, will not stand bossing from any one. He is a fine old seaman.

The Chancellor, of course, and the Foreign Office are against 'frightfulness' and see how ridiculous it would be to bring us in the war; but if we are dragged in — in spite of their efforts — they will as usual be most unfairly blamed. And German 'diplomacy' will again be ridiculed — without reason. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

P.S. An American girl named — who lived in Berlin

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and was a friend of a prominent member of the Reichstag and also sang in the 'Black Cat' Cabaret, was paid \$3000 by Bernstorff to lecture in America. What a ridiculous propaganda!

BERLIN, October 1 (?), 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... Have had several talks with Chancellor lately — also von Jagow, and pumped them about peace — there is no prospect now. If Bulgaria and the Balkans move it means new stakes on the table and continuance of the gambling. Lately they talk here of keeping Bulgaria. *The trouble is no one knows what they want.* The Chancellor and the K. merely try to follow, while seeming to lead, public opinion. . . .

Correspondents back to-day from West say Germans are still calm and confident. English broke through first lines of trenches, but then did not know what to do. Germans claim losses of French and British were very great. Instructions found on English prisoners were good, but stopped short of telling them what to do when they broke through first line. . . .

A telegram addressed to us here came in the other day with a stamp on it as follows:

ABDRUCK FUER A. A.

ORIGINAL IST BEFUERDERT.

A. A. means Auswaertiges Amt (Foreign Of.) so translation is: 'Copy for Foreign Office. Original has been forwarded.'

This proves that all our telegrams are sent to Foreign Office to be read; by mistake they sent us the copy for the Foreign Office. . . .

Query: Why should Bernstorff be cabling to one Cormorar or similar name on the island of Guam unless there was a plot to cut our cable or steal news or despatches? . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

IV

From this chaos, Bernstorff, who, whatever his interest in German propaganda, was sincerely desirous of staying in Washington, finally extracted a disavowal for the sinking of the *Arabic*. Few persons realized how near to a complete rupture the two nations had come. On September 13, House wrote to Gerard: 'Things seem to be going from bad to worse and I cannot tell you how critical they are at this moment.' On the following day, to Grey: 'The situation shifts so quickly from day to day that it is hard to forecast anything. A few weeks ago it looked as if our troubles with Germany might be over. But now the situation is more tense than it has ever been, and a break may come before this letter reaches you.'

The Colonel gave full credit to Bernstorff's anxiety for peace.

On October 6, he wrote Gerard: 'I have seen much of Bernstorff during this *Arabic* crisis and I want to say again that, in my opinion, there is no German of to-day who deserves better of his country than Bernstorff. I hope you will impress this upon his Government. If it had not been for his patience, good sense, and untiring effort, we would now be at war with Germany.' And some weeks later: 'We all feel that Bernstorff deserves great credit — just how much may never be known until after this terrible war is over.'

On October 2, Bernstorff telephoned House that he had received sufficient authority from Berlin to satisfy Wilson's demands, and three days later he sent to Lansing the necessary formal letter. At the last moment the German Ambassador was compelled to act upon his own initiative, eliminating Berlin's demand for arbitration of conflicting evidence regarding the *Arabic's* intention to ram the submarine. He explained to Colonel House how he had himself made the change, after the President and the Secretary of State insisted upon it.

'The orders issued by His Majesty the Emperor [he informed the United States Government] to the commanders of the German submarines — of which I notified you on a previous occasion — have been made so stringent that the recurrence of incidents similar to the *Arabic* case is considered out of the question. According to the report of Commander Schneider of the submarine that sank the *Arabic*, and his affidavit as well as those of his men, Commander Schneider was convinced that the *Arabic* intended to ram the submarine. On the other hand, the Imperial Government does not doubt the good faith of the affidavits of the British officers of the *Arabic*, according to which the *Arabic* did not intend to ram the submarine. The attack of the submarine, therefore, was undertaken against the instructions issued to the commander. The Imperial Government regrets and disavows this act, and has notified Commander Schneider accordingly. Under these circumstances my Government is prepared to pay an indemnity for the American lives which to its deep regret have been lost on the *Arabic*.'

'It is a diplomatic victory for the United States,' remarked von Bernstorff to a friend; and as such the historian must regard it. But it produced, not a settlement of American problems of neutrality, but merely another breathing space. Barely a month later, the *Ancona* was torpedoed by an Austrian submarine. It looked like beginning at the beginning with Austria, as Wilson wrote to House. The President caught himself wondering if they had noticed at Vienna what was going on in the rest of the world. It seemed clear, at all events, that the Central Empires were playing for time and that their promises could not be trusted. Furthermore, the connection of the German military and naval attachés with plots against munitions factories, as well as the attacks of both pro-German and pro-Entente elements upon the President, combined to produce a confusion that robbed

German concessions on the submarine issue of all significance. Colonel House asked the President for vigorous action.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, November 21, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Would it be possible immediately to let some of the obnoxious underlings of the offending Embassies go? And would it not be possible to sever diplomatic relations with Austria because of the *Ancona*?

I do not believe it would be well to go through the same process as was done with the *Lusitania* and *Arabic*. When you laid down the law, and Germany agreed to comply, you were laying down the law to all belligerents, and her disavowal and renunciation of her submarine policy should have bound her allies as much as it bound her.

I believe you will find that the Central Powers will now do almost anything to keep from an open rupture.

I hope you will ask Congress to give the Government more power to deal with the crimes committed by the hyphenates. It seems to me that power is needed to deport undesirables just as it is given the immigration authorities. The country is ready and waiting for action, and I believe it would be a mistake to send further notes. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson did not approve the suggestion of an immediate diplomatic rupture with Austria. Instead he sent a sharp note to Vienna, drafted by Mr. Lansing and untouched by the President; 'it lacks nothing in vigor — Lansingesque,' wrote House, who saw the note before it was sent. It was successful in eliciting a rather churlish disavowal and a promise of reparation. The two German attachés, von Papen and Boy-Ed, Wilson sent home. However, neither

48 INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

Berlin nor Vienna seemed in a chastened mood, for the former complained of Bernstorff's concessions and the latter soothed Dumba with titles.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, October 19, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . Von Jagow told me that Bernstorff, while not exactly exceeding his instructions in his *Arabic* note, had put the matter in a manner they did not approve. . . .

Dumba has been made a *noble* — 'von und zu.'

Best wishes to Mrs. House.

Yours ever

J. W. G.

For a time the tempest in relations with Germany sank into a lull. The President's patience, which excited thinly veneered contempt in Allied countries, was nevertheless commended by the press of the United States, with the notable exception of certain Republican newspapers. West of the Mississippi and south of the Ohio, in three fourths of the country, neither the war nor our quarrel with Germany aroused much feeling. People were making money. Even in the East, closer to the conflict and more hostile to Germany, there was some truth in House's observation: 'I notice that the old men, and sometimes the women, are the most bellicose people we have.' Probably it would be possible to scrape along until the next crisis, which might or might not be worse than the last.

CHAPTER III

AMERICA AND THE ALLIES

There was one mistake that, if made, would have been fatal to the cause of the Allies . . . a breach with the United States.

Viscount Grey of Fallodon, 'Twenty-Five Years'

I

'My chief puzzle,' said Wilson to House, in late September, 1915, 'is to determine where patience ceases to be a virtue.' It was indeed a puzzle, for the President felt himself responsible to opinion as a whole — as he expressed it, 'under bonds' — and at this period there was no crystallized opinion in the United States. Along the Atlantic seaboard, in many circles, Wilson's patience had long ceased to evoke respect and threatened to become a perennial source of ribaldry. But in the Middle and Far West the President's strength lay chiefly in his refusal to enter a war which few persons cared about and fewer still understood.

Certain critics have interpreted the President's policy in terms which, for the sake of historical accuracy, deserve refutation. They have asserted especially that his insistence upon neutrality, in the face of continued provocation, resulted from a lingering tenderness toward Germany. There is much evidence that tends to invalidate the supposition. The records of Colonel House show that Wilson was appalled by the German disregard of the Belgian Treaty and that, despite the irritations caused by Allied control of neutral trade, he looked upon the Allies as the defenders of civilization. Mr. T. W. Gregory, Attorney-General, tells of the pressure brought to bear upon Wilson to institute retaliatory measures against the Entente for interference with American trade. Some of the members of the Cabinet were willing to consider an embargo upon munitions. President Wilson re-

plied to their arguments: 'Gentlemen, the Allies are standing with their backs to the wall, fighting wild beasts. I will permit nothing to be done by our country to hinder or embarrass them in the prosecution of the war unless admitted rights are grossly violated.'

Some months later, Mr. Brand Whitlock saw the President in Washington. It was December, 1915. The Ambassador to Belgium thus reports his conversation:

'I said: "Mr. President, I am officially representing the interests of Germany as well as of the United States and I can say honestly that I am officially neutral in all things; but I ought to tell you that in my heart there is no such thing as neutrality. I am heart and soul for the Allies." Wilson responded at once: "So am I. No decent man, knowing the situation and Germany, could be anything else. But that is only my own personal opinion and there are many others in this country who do not hold that opinion. In the West and Middle West frequently there is no opinion at all. I am not justified in forcing my opinion upon the people of the United States and bringing them into a war which they do not understand."' ¹

This sense of responsibility to public opinion in America, which Wilson felt so keenly, was reënforced by a sense of responsibility to mankind, which he expressed to House when he said: 'It would be a calamity to the world at large if we should be drawn actively into the conflict.' Later, in his message to Congress, December 7, 1915, he said:

'It was necessary, if a universal catastrophe was to be avoided, that a limit should be set to the sweep of destructive war and that some part of the great family of nations should keep the processes of peace alive. . . . It was mani-

¹ Conversation with the author, December 10, 1924.

festly the duty of the self-governed nations of this hemisphere to redress, if possible, the balance of economic loss and confusion in the other, if they could do nothing more. In the day of readjustment and recuperation we earnestly hope and believe that they can be of infinite service.'

Curiously enough, it was to be this same sense of responsibility to the world at large that brought him later to insist upon the full coöperation of the United States with Europe in forming a reorganized international system.

Let us also add that Mr. Wilson was attracted to a policy of neutrality because of a constitutional tendency to postpone a decision upon a matter in which he saw a balance of opposing arguments. Like most of us, he disliked facing an unpleasant situation and he hoped that something might 'turn up' to improve it and obviate the need of positive action. It is the vice of the scholarly temperament, which balances good against evil so carefully that it is impossible to discover a clear course.

The patience which Wilson displayed in the face of German diplomatic evasions and his obvious determination to keep the United States out of the war, produced, inevitably, an unfortunate impression upon Allied peoples. The British and French were in no mood to analyze his policy objectively nor to make allowance for conditions in the United States which they did not understand. They regarded themselves as the defenders of civilization and they believed that they were fighting the battles of America, which either from cowardice or greed remained aloof and gathered a golden harvest from its sale of munitions. Their irritation increased, unreasonably but by no means unnaturally, after the German victories of 1915, the conquest of Russian Poland, the advance of the Austro-German armies in the East, the continued failure of the Allies at Gallipoli, and the futility of Allied attacks in France. Had they been triumphant in the

summer of 1915, the sympathy of America and the benevolence of its neutrality would perhaps have satisfied them; but smarting from the losses and setbacks of the campaign, they looked upon the one great neutral as a slacker.

Allied leaders, while they doubtless shared popular regret at the aloofness of the United States, realized that they must take the situation as they found it. They appreciated better than the ordinary citizen the negative value of American neutrality, and they never forgot that Wilson had it in his power, by a stroke of the pen, to hamper seriously the Allied war effort.

‘There was one mistake in diplomacy [writes Grey in his memoirs] that, if it had been made, would have been fatal to the cause of the Allies. It was carefully avoided. This cardinal mistake would have been a breach with the United States, not necessarily a rupture, but a state of things that would have provoked American interference with the blockade, or led to an embargo on exports of munitions from the United States. Germany, on the other hand, did make this cardinal mistake.’¹

The more far-seeing leaders, especially in Great Britain, realized also that if the victory they hoped for were not to be wasted, American aid would be necessary to assure the peace. They wished not merely to meet the present danger of German domination by complete military triumph, but to lay the ground for a future international organization that might prevent a repetition of the catastrophe, and in this task the moral and material influence of the United States would be invaluable. It was all the more vital that if Wilson refused to enter the war against Germany, he should at least become sympathetic with the ultimate war aims of the Allies and that relations between them and the United States should remain cordial.

¹ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years* (Frederick A. Stokes Company), II, 160.

Of all the Allied statesmen no one was more anxious to preserve American friendship than the British Foreign Secretary, and no one appreciated more clearly its value to the Allies both during and after the war. The difficulties which Sir Edward Grey faced, however, were numerous and complex. He must contend with the rising tide of anti-American opinion in Great Britain, and with the demands of the public and all the war-making agencies for a tightening of the blockade, regardless of American protests. He must meet also the equally strong anti-British opinion of American shippers whose interests were infringed by British restrictions. It was fortunate that in the closest friend of President Wilson he had an active sympathizer.

Colonel House realized acutely the delicacy of Grey's position and he did all in his power to assist him. Like Grey he was anxious to bring about the close understanding with the British which he believed was demanded by the interests of America and the world. He explained to his British friends the factors that lay behind Wilson's policy of neutrality and impressed upon them the danger inherent in the blockade that interfered with American trade. He urged Wilson, on the other hand, not to press our protests over-hard, and he worked with the British Ambassador to discover a *modus vivendi*. However sharp might be the interchange of official notes, he hoped to maintain through personal contact the underlying bases of Anglo-American friendship.

That the British Foreign Secretary appreciated both the spirit and effect of House's efforts is apparent from what he says of the Colonel in his memoirs:

'His mind was always practical [writes Grey]. He was not less studious of the means by which an end was to be accomplished than he was of the end itself. . . . House followed public affairs with the close attention and informed himself about them with the industry and zeal of a man who lives

for a public career. Yet a public career was what House desired to avoid for himself; his mind therefore worked with all the keenness of one who feels the spur of ambition, but with the free impartiality of one whose ambition is quite impersonal. He longed to get good accomplished and was content that others should have the credit.'¹

II

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

FALLODON, NORTHUMBERLAND
June 6, 1915

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I am very glad to hear from Drummond, my private secretary at the Foreign Office, that a cypher has been arranged which you can use with me direct. This is a most satisfactory arrangement.

If, as you think, the United States drifts into war with Germany, the influence of the United States in the general aspects of the peace will be predominant and perhaps decisive, for it is the one country that can neither be beaten nor exhausted. (I mean by the general aspects of peace, those which are concerned with preserving peace in the future, as distinct from local and particular conditions such as the destiny of Alsace and Lorraine, which are purely European.)

But the dilemma I foresee is that the desire of the people of the United States to keep out of war with Germany may lead to burying the *Lusitania* issue inconclusively, in which case Germany will disregard and the other belligerents will hope for little from American influence in the future and the tendency will be to discount it.

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

¹ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years* (Frederick A. Stokes Company), II, 125.

33 ECCLESTON SQUARE, LONDON, W.

July 14, 1915

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . I have now returned to London, and take up work tomorrow. . . .¹

I see that it will naturally take very great provocation to force your people into war. If they do go to war, I believe it is certain that the influence of the United States on the larger aspects of the final conditions of peace will prevail, and I am very doubtful whether anything short of being actually involved in the war will stir your people sufficiently to make them exercise, or enable the President to exercise, on the terms of peace all the influence that is possible. Personally, I feel that the influence of the President would be used to secure objects essential to future peace that we all desire.

The more I have meditated on past events, the more continually I have come to the point that the refusal of a Conference in July last year was the fatal moment that decided the question of peace or war. Austria had presented a tremendous ultimatum to Serbia. Serbia had accepted nine tenths of that ultimatum. Russia was prepared to leave the outstanding points to a Conference of Germany, Italy, France, and ourselves. France, Italy, and ourselves were ready: Germany refused. After that came reports that Germany was mobilizing, the announcement that Russia had mobilized, the ultimatum from Germany to Russia, and all the rest.

The invasion of Belgium, I believe, decided the opinion of people in England, who were not thinking much of foreign policy or at all of war, to enter the war at the beginning; but the great question of peace or war for Europe was decided, and the death warrant of millions of men was signed, when the Conference was refused.

¹ Because of imminent danger to his eyesight, Grey had been compelled to give up active work for a month.

If neutral nations and the opinion of the world generally had been sufficiently alert to say that they would side against the party that refused a Conference, war might have been avoided. Peace in future years, after this war is over, seems to me to depend greatly upon whether the world takes this lesson to heart sufficiently to decide promptly if ever such a crisis occurs again.

I spent nearly the whole of June at my home in Northumberland, wearing dark glasses and not reading at all, but fishing a little and moving about constantly amongst flowers and trees, seeing for the first time shrubs and trees in flower, many of which I had planted with my own hands twenty-five or twenty-six years ago; for I had not been at home in June for nineteen years. There was really something reassuring in the indifference of Nature to the war, and its unconsciousness of it when one was in the country away from the actual theatre of the war. Now, I am feeling something of what I hear that wounded or invalided soldiers feel when the time comes for them to return to the trenches.

I greatly miss your presence in London, and should be much refreshed by a talk with you.

The immediate danger to my sight is removed for the present and I am to try whether I can do my work, with a minimum of actual reading with my own eyes, without reviving the trouble.

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
July 8, 1915

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

... Your letters are of much value, and they give me a good opportunity of bringing your views directly to the President in a way which is more effective than if stated by me.

We are still waiting for Germany's reply to our last note, and on it will depend our course of action. The sentiment of the country continues to be clearly against war, and I have serious doubts whether the President would be strongly sustained by Congress in the event he decided upon drastic action, unless, indeed, Germany goes beyond the limit of endurance.

In the event our immediate differences with Germany are composed, there will at once arise a demand for an adjustment of our shipping troubles with England. There is an influential element here that persists in pressing this issue to a conclusion, and it is something of which the President must take cognizance.

Is there not a way by which some of the responsibility England bears may be transferred to France? You will remember the *Dacia* incident was immediately forgotten when France seized her.

Would it not be possible for Jusserand to be given a hint to come more to the fore in this controversy? There is a feeling in the State Department that he is the most forceful representative that the Allies have here. The Russian Ambassador seems to be a negative quantity, and Sir Cecil's nervous temperament sometimes does not lend itself well to the needs of the present moment.

You will understand, of course, how confidential this is and that it is merely my personal view and for your information alone. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, July 21, 1915

DEAR HOUSE:

. . . We are in deep water with this Government. They made the mistake of putting themselves legally wrong by the

Order in Council of March 11, and the cotton men and the meat men are being stirred up (being already angry) to keep our State Department active. I fear this Government will have to put cotton on the contraband list. The agitation for it has become almost irresistible. And the Government has bungled so many things that it has lost its courage and is generally under fire. Sir Edward is very despondent about the American situation. The best thing they could do would be to rescind the Order in Council (which would be humiliating to them); then put cotton on the contraband list, but buy and pay for as much as would go to Germany; and let other (minor, non-contraband) things come and go (they are of little value).

It is a curious thing to say. But the only solution that I see is another *Lusitania* outrage, which would force war.

‘Graveyard.’

W. H. P.

Colonel House to the President

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
July 22, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

In regard to our shipping troubles with Great Britain, I believe that if we press hard enough they will go to almost any limit rather than come to the breaking point. But, in so doing, we would gain their eternal resentment for having taken advantage of their position, and our action would arise to haunt us — not only at the peace conference, but for a century to follow. . . .

If it came to the last analysis and we placed an embargo upon munitions of war and foodstuffs to please the cotton men, our whole industrial and agricultural machinery would cry out against it. . . .

I am glad Lansing is coming for the week-end. I always

understand your motives.¹ You do not know what a comfort it is that there is such a perfect understanding between us and to feel that our friendship is beyond the reach of mischief-makers.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*June 27, 1915*: I reached Manchester this morning [wrote House in his journal] and am having a delightful and quiet time. The British Ambassador, whose summer place is at Pride's, had already telephoned, and I called on him in the late afternoon and discussed with him the question of embargo and their long-delayed reply to our note upon that question.

'*August 2, 1915*: The British Ambassador came this afternoon. We discussed the cotton situation and his Government's attitude regarding neutral trade. He confirmed the opinion which I expressed to the President and Secretary Lansing, that the British Government would go any length rather than have a serious break with us. He also confirmed my opinion that they would never forgive us if we pressed them to a point beyond what they considered fair, and took advantage of their unfortunate position.

'I advised him to cable Sir Edward Grey to bring the French, Italian, Belgian, and Russian Governments to the fore so that this country might see that it was not Great Britain alone that was holding up our trade, but that it was done at the earnest insistence of all the Allies. That England, herself, could not do otherwise even if she wished to, because the other nations demanded such a policy.

'I explained that this would help us in dealing with the question as much as it would them. He spoke in the kindest

¹ An answer to a note of Wilson in which the latter said he did not wish to make a special visit to House, lest people might think that he was not satisfied with Lansing, who was newly appointed.

terms of the cotton farmers and thought they were being misled by demagogues and speculators who were acting under German direction. He said there was a certain Senator who could be diverted from his antagonism, but that his Government refused to use such means to sustain their side. He thought the matter could be worked out satisfactorily to all by the Allies agreeing to buy so much cotton at a price which would net the farmer ten cents f.o.b. ship. That is, the Allies would agree to maintain the price at that figure.

'I made him understand how necessary it was that England should not bear the entire burden, and I shall look with interest at future developments in this direction. This is along the line of my recent advice to Sir Edward Grey. . . .

'August 6, 1915: I arranged to meet the British Ambassador at the home of our mutual friend, Hetty Higginson. We meet at Hetty's because we believe we can do so without notice. We discussed cotton and the relations between Great Britain and the United States. I showed Sir Cecil the letter I wrote Page. . . . I wished him to know that I felt strongly the injustice the Allies are doing the President and our people. He is to give me a memorandum of his arguments in the neutral shipping controversy, in order that I may forward it directly to the President. . . .'

Colonel House to Ambassador W. H. Page

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
August 4, 1915

DEAR PAGE:

Your letters of the 20th and 21st came this morning and add something to the depression of the day.

Sir Edward and you cannot know the true situation here. I did not know it myself until I returned and began to plumb it. Ninety per cent of our people do not want the President to involve us in war. They desire him to be firm in his treat-

ment of Germany, but they do not wish him to go to such lengths that war will follow. He went to the very limit in his last note to Germany. . . .

If the President had followed any course other than the one he has, his influence would have been broken and he would not be able to steer the nation, as he now is, in the way which in the end will be best for all. He sees the situation just as you see it and as I do, but he must necessarily heed the rocks.

His judgment and mine was that last autumn was the time to discuss peace parleys and we both foresaw present possibilities. War is a great gamble at best, and there was too much at stake in this one to take chances. I believe if we could have started peace parleys in November, we could have forced the evacuation of both France and Belgium and finally forced a peace which would eliminate militarism both on land and sea. The wishes of the Allies were heeded, with the result that the war has now fastened itself upon the vitals of Europe, and what the end may be is beyond the knowledge of man.

I am sorry there is any one in England who thinks so ill of the President as to write 'A Merry Ballad of Woodrow Wilson.' It is the same sort of unjust criticism which is being levelled at England for not doing her share in this war. She has really done more than her share and is to-day the only obstacle between Germany and complete success. No one a year ago would have thought that England's part was more than to clear the seas and hold them free for the commerce of the Allies. But to-day she is criticized for not being able to cope with Germany on land.

And so it is with America. A year ago the Allies would have been content beyond measure if they could have been assured that munitions of war would go to them from here in such unrestricted volume and if they had known that the President would demand of Germany a cessation of her submarine

policy in regard to the sinking of merchantmen without warning, to the extent of a threat of war.

What neutral nation has done so much? The shipping of Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Spain has been sunk without warning and innumerable lives lost. Each of those nations, I take it, had passengers upon the *Lusitania*, and yet not one has raised a voice in protest and no criticism has come from the Allies. . . .

It is not altogether clear to Americans that we could not well take care of ourselves if needs be. Our hopes, our aspirations, and our sympathies are closely woven with the democracies of France and England, and it is this that causes our hearts and powerful economic help to go out to them, and not the fear of what may follow for us in their defeat.

Your friend always

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
August 4, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Page is in a blue funk. So also is Sir Edward. To read Page's letters, one would think the Germans were just outside London and moving rapidly westward upon New York.

As soon as our affairs with Great Britain become less acute, I think it would be well to send for Page and let him have thirty or forty days in this country. The war has gotten on his nerves and he has no idea what the sentiment of the people in this country is in regard to it.

Now that the fortunes of war are for the moment going against the Allies, the feeling among them becomes more prevalent that we are not doing our share, and that which I feared might happen seems nearer to-day than ever, that we will soon be without friends anywhere.

They do not realize the diversity of races here, our isola-

tion and consequent inability to see the bogies they set up. Nor do they altogether understand or appreciate the potential help we are giving them from an economic standpoint.

It is a difficult situation and gives me no little concern.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Ambassador W. H. Page

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
August 19, 1915

DEAR PAGE:

Your letter of August 4 came yesterday. No one knows better than I the difficulties under which you are laboring. I can understand quite well the inadvisability of what you term 'a nagging policy' and the futility of it.

I think the view here is that something of the kind is demanded and that if it were not done, it would arouse a suspicion of favoritism. I doubt whether anything that we could do, short of intervention, would satisfy the Allies now that the fortune of war seems to be going against them; and even should they win, the loss of men and treasure will be laid at our door. . . .

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Lord Bryce

MANCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
August 12, 1915

DEAR LORD BRYCE:

. . . If the President had done as many of his French and English friends desired, he would not to-day be able to guide the nation so sanely and safely along the lines of right and justice. The firmness of his notes to Germany made only a part of his popularity; the other part comes to him from the fact that he has not involved this country in war. If war

finally is our fate, then the people will be ready for it and they will give him unstinted support, because they will recognize he has done all that was humanly possible, with honor, to avoid it.

I wish your people understood this better. I wish they understood the difficulties under which the President has labored. I wish they knew with what courage he has resisted all efforts to force him to change our policy in regard to the shipment of munitions of war, and in regard to his treatment of the question of neutral shipping.

I wish, too, they might remember that this nation is one of many nationalities, and that he has to recognize many diverse elements in our make-up. They should stop for a moment and consider whether their criticism of us for not entering the conflict is just. . . . Other neutral countries, with far more involved than ourselves and who might give at this time far greater momentary help, have remained silent and have given the Central Powers as much aid as was possible by permitting their countries to be the mediums of shipments of foodstuffs and raw materials. . . .

I am writing you these things, dear Lord Bryce, because of all men in Great Britain you know our difficulties. You know our sympathies and our ideals, and it is through you that I hope some measure of our troubles and perplexities may reach your people. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Lord Bryce replied to Colonel House on August 26, and in sympathetic vein. He went so far as to say that House's report of the confidence of the American people in President Wilson confirmed what he himself had been thinking and saying: that no President since Abraham Lincoln had had the same hold upon the nation. The United States seemed to him to have placed its policy and its fortunes in the hands of

Wilson, saying, 'You know better than we what is fit to be done. Go on; we will support you.' There was hardly a precedent for this in all American history.

Bryce's estimate of British opinion was that the utterances of some of the dailies and at least one of the weeklies were far from representing the sentiments of the thoughtful sections in England. It was natural that 'the man in the cars,' hearing that the vast bulk of Americans sympathized with the Allies and feeling that the British were fighting a Power whose unscrupulous ambition threatened the world and who would be a disagreeable neighbor to America if the British fleet were out of the war, should jump to the conclusion that America ought to join in the conflict. But he insisted that those who understood American history and the genuinely pacific mind of the American people, knew how strong was the tradition against intermixture in European complications and how many facts and sentiments had to be considered by those who guided American policy. He added that he had tried, once or twice publicly and often privately, to enforce this view and he knew that it was widely held by those who understood something of American conditions.

In answer to House's question as to his own view, he wrote that in the early days of the war American interests seemed to him only slightly affected. Now, however, it had become plain that a victorious Germany would threaten America and every maritime nation. If she dominated the seas, she would be dangerous in the West Indies and probably in South America. He insisted, furthermore, that the methods by which Germany carried on war against non-combatants on land and sea were a step back toward savagery and a challenge to civilized mankind. For her to emerge triumphant after the free use of such methods, would be a great misfortune for human progress, to which America, 'the most humane of nations' as he called her, could not be indifferent.

These two phases of the war, Bryce believed, had changed its aspect for neutral nations. They went far beyond the original causes and merits of the struggle. Far more than the fortunes of Great Britain was now involved.

He closed with an expression of hope that House would write him, and promised that whenever good could be done he would convey House's opinion to quarters in which it would be useful.

Sir Horace Plunkett to Colonel House

DUBLIN, August 23, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

... It is a little difficult to gauge the feeling over here in regard to the President's handling of the crisis which first demanded your return to the United States in June.¹ Among the people whose opinions count most, with me at any rate, the feeling towards him is one of profound respect for the dignified position he has taken up, as you pointed out in that fine letter to Page of August 4th, between the two extremes, Bryan and Roosevelt. The pronouncement of the latter in to-day's papers, calling for deeds not words, etc., is more than usually platitudinous, and, if I might import an Americanism, will cut no ice over here. But going outside thinking people and talking to minor officials and the ordinary man of business, there has been a strong growing impression which can be best summed up in the words, America ought to come in but won't. Now, since this last outrage² seems like a direct negative to the President's proposals for the avoidance of a serious breach, people are beginning to read his past utterances with care and seem to me to be enormously impressed with the high principles he has stood for, and his refusal to be drawn aside from his great resolve by diplomatic casuistry. If you are forced to come in I feel that those

¹ The *Lusitania* crisis.

² Sinking of the *Arabic*.

of us who will get to work at a proper presentation of Wilson's attitude, will have a splendid text in his own words. . . .

Yours ever sincerely

HORACE PLUNKETT

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

LONDON, August 26, 1915

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . I get out of London to my cottage for a day at the end of the week. The work comes to me there, and waking or asleep the war is always present inside one. But the indifference of natural things, the beauty of them unaffected by our troubles, the seasons progressing as they did before the war, give a certain assurance that there are elemental and eternal things which human catastrophes, such as this war, cannot shake.

I have said nothing about the sinking of the *Arabic* because it is to us only one amongst several incidents every week of sinking merchant and passenger vessels without regard to civilian lives. But people here are of course watching with intense interest what you are going to do about it. There is I think disappointment that the feeling in America is not more combative. The ruthless invasion of Belgium by Germany, the revelations of the crimes committed there, the sinking of the *Lusitania* and now of the *Arabic*, each in turn produces emotion and indignation in America which seems to evaporate; and people here become less hopeful of the United States in taking a hand and more critical of the President.

On the latter point I tell people what an American said to me the other day; viz. that if the President said he must take action against Germany he would have the whole country behind him, but *solely* because he had convinced the country that he had done his best to keep out of war; they must accept it, though they desired to avoid it.

If I could feel that your people were sure to say, sooner or later, 'though we have no concern with territorial changes between the belligerents themselves, who must settle things of that kind by themselves, there can be no peace till the cause of Belgium is fairly settled in the interest of public morals and future peace,' I should be content.

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

Sir Horace Plunkett to Colonel House

DUBLIN, *October 1, 1915*

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

. . . I hold more strongly than ever that, should the United States be drawn into the conflict, it would be a determining factor in bringing it to an early conclusion. But I am quite happy now about this eventuality because I feel confident that the President will not only take part in the war if he ought to do so, and stay out if he ought not, but, if he does come in, he will bring the people so overwhelmingly with him that no domestic complications will impair the fighting efficiency of the Republic. My chief fear for the future, so far as your country is needed to help in the making of it, is that, in the misunderstanding by the belligerents of the attitude of the leading neutral, the opportunity may not come for the President's mediation. . . .

As I said in a hurried note from London [September 27], Arthur Balfour understands very clearly — and this understanding is the first fruits of your readily acquired intimacy with him — the importance of having the issues upon which the British Empire may appear to be insufficiently regardful for the interests of the United States, frankly faced and clearly explained. . . .

I shall weary you if I go on, so I will only tell you, in the strict confidence with which we write to each other, of one thing that Grey said to me and which I think you ought to

know. I asked him to tell me straight whether he wished the United States to come in, whether he believed that their doing so would hasten the conclusion of the war and whether he had any fears that it would embarrass the British envoys in the peace congress that would follow. He seemed to realize the tremendous effect your intervention would have. He said that, in his private capacity, he hoped you would intervene, but that, of course, he could never in his official capacity express any such hope or desire. As regards the attitude of the United States in negotiation for peace, he said that the mere fact that the whole world would know that, unlike any other belligerent, they had come in for the single purpose of warring against war, would give them a tremendous influence in devising a scheme of peace. And, he added, Germany would have to accept any terms insisted upon by the United States, as her economic life could not possibly be reconstructed without the good will of your country. . . .

Yours sincerely

HORACE PLUNKETT

III

It was fortunate that the influential statesmen both in England and the United States were fully determined to maintain Anglo-American friendship, for otherwise the force of circumstances must have compelled the breach which Grey feared. The tightening of the British blockade in the early summer, the single weapon which at the time could be used effectively against Germany, had evoked a storm of complaints from American shippers, who insisted that Wilson and the State Department were truckling to the British and were careless of American interests. They demanded retaliation.

'Strong protests [said a Washington despatch¹] have been pouring into the State Department for three weeks against the British position. The Southern cotton men; the Eastern dye importers; export houses with Chicago, Kansas City, and St. Louis connections, have all united in demanding action permitting them to fill orders already in their hands for goods destined for Scandinavia and Holland.

'Senator Hoke Smith, of Georgia, mouthpiece of the Southern cotton-growers, has protested personally to the White House and the State Department against British interference with cotton exports. He has warned the President that if England and France are not compelled to modify their interference, it will be a difficult matter to prevent the next Congress from passing an embargo resolution.'

Secretary Lansing agreed with Wilson and House that a breach with the Allies must be avoided. 'In no event,' he wrote the Colonel, 'should we take a course that would seriously endanger our friendly relations with Great Britain, France, or Russia, for, as you say, our friendship with Germany is a matter of the past.' But it was none the less essential that the infractions of international law involved in the maintenance of the Allied blockade should not be passed over. After assuming such a strong tone in the controversy with Germany, Wilson must maintain American principles as against Allied methods; otherwise American impartiality might fairly be called in question and the American position in a future crisis with Germany might be seriously weakened.

All summer Washington waited for an adequate reply from the Allies to the protests already sent. None came, and with the momentary settlement of the crisis with Germany the State Department prepared another and a sharper note, which was despatched on October 21. Colonel House had

¹ June 23, 1915.

canvassed the whole matter with Spring-Rice, and at his suggestion the Ambassador sent a warning to his Government of what they might expect.

‘September 27, 1915: After lunch [wrote House] the British Ambassador called. He understands, or pretends to understand, the great difficulties under which the President is working and to appreciate the position he takes. We talked of the international loan now pending, and he expressed considerable concern regarding its success. He seems to be in a better frame of mind, not so nervous, and very reasonable in his discussion of the subjects covered.’

Ambassador Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey

[Telegram]

WASHINGTON, October, 1915

You may expect pretty strong communication. Until popular opinion is convinced of necessity of taking sides (which it is not) Government must be impartial. Policy of pin-pricks against one or other party will only give people impression of prejudice and one-sidedness. What is non-essential can be arranged by give and take; what is essential can be referred under existing treaties to arbitral decision.

SPRING-RICE

Mr. Page, in London, was emphatically opposed to the State Department's decision to send another note of protest, presumably because he was not in a position to understand the feeling against the British which their blockade stimulated in American export circles. He wrote frequently and forcibly to House, emphasizing the growing tide of resentment against Wilson in Allied countries, which threatened friendly relations and made his own position so difficult. The Colonel was not unsympathetic, but he pointed out that the United States could never hope for popularity in

Great Britain so long as they remained neutral. It was futile to try to win British esteem by a supine acquiescence in Allied trade restrictions. Nothing short of actual intervention against Germany would satisfy Allied opinion, which was apparently not impressed even by the promise that Wilson had wrung from the Germans not to sink liners without warning, a promise that postponed ruthless submarine warfare and gave a respite to Allied shipping.

Colonel House to Ambassador W. H. Page

NEW YORK, October 6, 1915

DEAR PAGE:

I sympathize with you thoroughly in the position which events seem to have brought upon you. It was inevitable unless this country actively joined the Allies. I remember before Italy went in, how she was criticized in both France and England.

The President has gained the greatest diplomatic triumph of this generation, but I doubt whether the Allies will consider it so, because it leads us further away from intervention.

We have given the Allies our sympathy and we have given them, too, the more substantial help that we could not offer Germany even were we so disposed — and that is an unrestricted amount of munitions of war and money. In addition to that, we have forced Germany to discontinue her submarine warfare. . . .

I am sorry beyond measure that it seems to be our part to be without friends on either side, but that is the usual fate. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

'I had a twenty-five-page autograph letter from Walter Page [recorded House some weeks later]. He is in one of his

most pessimistic moods. . . . The trouble with Page is that he sees but one side of the question. He is correct in thinking that the State Department does not couch its notes in the best diplomatic language.

'[But] Page overlooks the fact that there is just as much irritation here caused by the British procrastination as they feel over there. In the one instance it is a question of a direct tone with a kindly purpose, and, in the other, a kindly tone with no kindly intention. We have been exceedingly patient with Great Britain and have done as much as any neutral nation could to aid her, without actually entering the war. On the other hand, the British have gone as far as they possibly could in violating neutral rights, although they have done it in the most courteous way.'

Another controversy also threatened with Great Britain which might lead to even more serious consequences. This concerned the German complaint that if a submarine were forced to give warning when stopping a merchant vessel, the latter, which was armed for 'defence,' could sink the submarine. House had had correspondence with Balfour over this difficult problem and he took it up with Lord Reading, who had come to the United States to negotiate financial problems.

'*October 2, 1915:* I called at the Biltmore at ten to see Secretary Lansing, and we had an hour's conference. . . . Lansing takes the ground that if we are to hold the Germans responsible for sinking ships without warning, we must also insist that merchantmen be unarmed. If a merchantman is armed, and we insist that submarines do not sink without warning, the advantage is all with the merchantman and against the submarine. . . .

'I can see the English point of view better than Lansing does, but I do not consider it wholly fair. . . .

'I asked Mr. S. R. Bertron to invite Lord Chief Justice Reading to lunch at his home and to have no one else excepting the three of us. Bertron gave us a beautiful lunch; the food was delicious and the appointments perfect. After lunch he left Reading and me together and we talked for more than an hour. I told him of the controversy that had arisen between Great Britain and the United States concerning the change in maritime laws. I did not mention Balfour or Sir Horace Plunkett by name, but I told him I had received letters from England outlining the English viewpoint and I had taken the matter up with Lansing an hour or two ago and had found how many difficulties were involved.

'What the British Government desire is that, on the one hand, we shall demand of Germany that no merchantman shall be sunk without warning, and, on the other hand, that merchantmen shall, as in times gone by, have the right to arm. I mentioned my conference with Lansing on this subject, in which Lansing did most of the arguing, holding that they could not have their cake and eat it too; that it was manifestly unjust to the submarine to give merchantmen warning and then permit them to fire upon the submarine and sink it while she was giving the warning.

'Reading was greatly interested and was evidently hearing of the question for the first time. I told him it was in its incipiency and that it had only been tentatively mentioned, but that as soon as our pressing differences with Germany were settled, it was certain they would bring up this point and argue the injustice done them.

'I called Reading's attention to the growing discontent and criticism of the President's policy in the English press. I cited several cartoons and much written matter. He was exceedingly sorry, but thought it was almost impossible to control the press in such matters. The Government knew and appreciated the President's position, but the lay public

did not; consequently the criticism. He spoke as if he would take the matter up with his Government and find whether something could not be done to right it. I called his attention to the fact that it was more to England's advantage than to ours to have good relations between the two countries continue. I also told him the President was too big to heed such criticism, but that his friends, supporters, and admirers through America would resent it, and the resentment would take the form of anti-British feeling. . . .'

Resentment in America against the British, however, was pale in comparison with the anti-American feeling aroused in England by the reception of the note of protest regarding the holding-up of cargoes. Ambassador Page sent to House a letter of twenty-three sheets, in which the storm of British emotion lost nothing by the telling, and which illustrated by specific anecdotes the degree of America's unpopularity. 'I don't wish to be offensive to you,' said a Londoner to an American salesman. 'But I have only one way to show my feeling of indignation towards the United States, and that is, to have nothing more to do with Americans.'

More serious was the fact that the reaction of British public opinion seemed to be mirrored in the Ambassador at Washington, upon whom depended largely the friendly official understanding between the two countries, which, House insisted, could be preserved despite British methods and American notes of protest. Spring-Rice knew that a strong communication was on its way, but he was apparently unprepared for the force of its phraseology.

'*October 14, 1915*: I had arranged with the British Ambassador [wrote House] to meet him at Billy Phillips' home. I dismissed the White House car a block from there and walked, in order to avoid notice. I at once began to discuss the note, but found the Ambassador in one of his highly

nervous states. He started to talk in a very disagreeable way of the United States. Among other things he said, he supposed I knew that the record would forever stand that when the laws of God and man were violated, there came no protest from us,¹ but that when our oil and copper shipments were interfered with, a most vigorous protest came. . . .

'In discussing the contents of the note which we purpose sending to Great Britain, he said: "No matter how low our fortunes run, we will go to war before we will admit the principle of blockade as your Government wishes to interpret it. If we acquiesced, it would be all to the advantage of Germany, whom you seem to favor; Germany has neutral ports like Malmö and Copenhagen which are just as much German as Bremen or Hamburg, but Great Britain has none; and the rule you wish to lay down would isolate us in the event our enemies could blockade our coasts. On the other hand, no amount of blockade which Great Britain could bring to bear, would shut off Germany."

'I made the suggestion of arbitration and asked him to make it to his Government. I did not like the tenor of his talk and, as is my custom, became more and more silent. In the course of the conversation, he said: "At one time this country was composed of pure rock, but now it is composed of mud, sand, and some rock; and no one can predict how it will shift or in what direction."

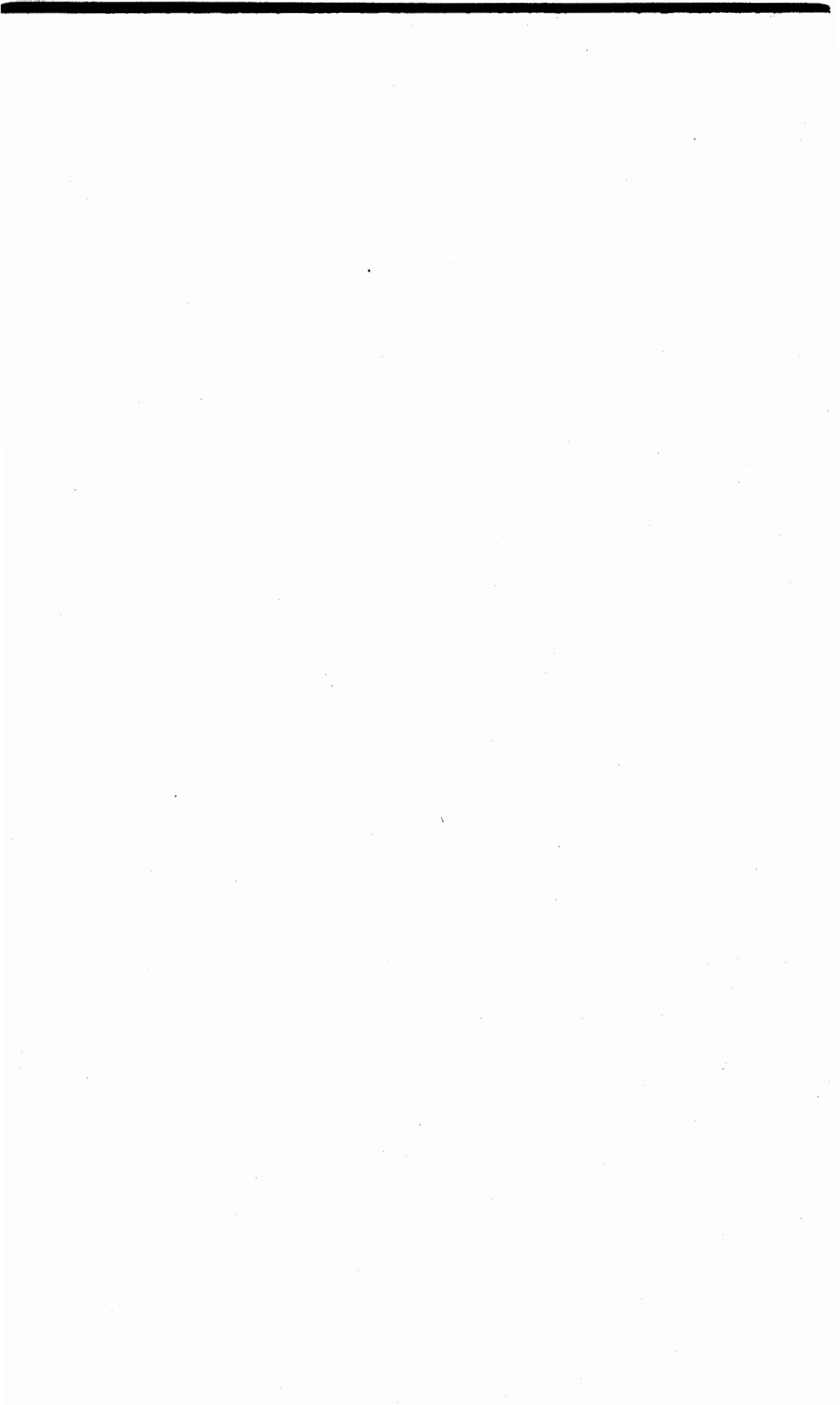
'I incidentally mentioned Bernstorff's name and spoke of the Germans. This put him in a fine rage, and he said: "I would be glad if you would not mention Bernstorff's name in my presence again; I do not want to talk to any one who has just come from talking to him or to Germans. At this moment I do not know how many of my relatives have been killed in England by the raid of the German Zeppelins last night."

¹ An exaggeration, in view of the number of notes of protest Wilson had sent to Germany.



Photograph by Underwood & Underwood

SIR CECIL SPRING-RICE



‘At this point I lost my temper, and told him I regarded his remarks as an insult, and I would not permit him to say such things to me. I denied that he represented either his Chief or his Government and declared that his views were not their views, and I knew of no official anywhere who was serving his country so badly as himself. He replied that, if I felt that way, he had better relinquish his post and go home. I advised him to use his own discretion as to that, but, as far as I was concerned, I did not intend to have any further discussion with him.

‘When the Ambassador saw the length to which I was willing to go in severing relations with him, he became apologetic and asked me to forgive him. His feelings, he said, were very much wrought up by the bad news he had received from home, and because of the anxiety he felt regarding last night’s raid. I replied that he should be able to look at public affairs quite apart from his private interests. And as to my discussing Bernstorff with him, he must know how necessary it was in my work to see him, and that I intended to do this no matter how much feeling he might have upon the subject.

‘He again asked me to forgive him and to continue our good relations. He insisted that he regarded me as a friend and very much appreciated my advice and help. He spoke of the President in the highest terms and said he wished to God Great Britain had such a man directing her destinies, since there was no one in the world to compare with him. He said at no time had he ever felt anything but the kindest and greatest respect for both the President and me, and whatever criticism he had made was directed at an element in this country which he was sure we disapproved as thoroughly as he did himself. He said it was because of his affection for me that he spoke as he had done; that if he had not had the greatest respect and friendship for me, he would have been diplomatic and not given his real mind.

'The upshot of it was that while he said things derogatory to the United States and praised the President and me, I praised Great Britain and spoke in a derogatory way of him. I accepted his apologies and we parted amicably. He went immediately to the State Department and told the incident to Phillips. Phillips came to see me and said the Ambassador was much disturbed and asked him to come and talk with me about it. I told Phillips to please reassure Sir Cecil and tell him I was sorry it had happened and had forgotten it, and that everything would continue between us as usual, as far as I was concerned. . . .

'It is due Sir Cecil to say, in explanation of many of his moods and actions, that he was sent over as Ambassador in 1913 and was so ill when he came that he could not perform his duties at first. He took a long rest at Dublin, New Hampshire, and Sir William Tyrrell was sent by the Foreign Office to help. In 1914, when the war burst forth, Spring-Rice was in London and should have been kept there. Washington was no place for a nervous and delicate Ambassador. It was unfair to him and unfair to us. He is a cultivated, high-minded, and scholarly gentleman and, when normal, is of the very best type of British diplomat.'

The tilt with the Colonel steadied Sir Cecil's nerves, and during the following weeks he exerted himself in every way to smooth over the difficulties between the two Governments. But it was hard to say how long the mood might last.

Colonel House to Ambassador W. H. Page

NEW YORK, October 29, 1915

DEAR PAGE:

. . . Polk said yesterday over the telephone that Sir Cecil had changed his attitude entirely in regard to the embargo and our shipping troubles, taking the American side almost more strongly than we do ourselves and asserting that, in his

opinion, his Government has made and is making a series of mistakes. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

House was far more deeply disturbed by the evident despair of so fair-minded and cool-headed a statesman as Sir Edward Grey. He wrote the Colonel frankly that, in his belief, the British could not cease their interference with neutral trade directed towards Germany through neutral ports, without danger of losing the war.

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

33 ECCLESTON SQUARE, LONDON
November 11, 1915

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . I do not know what our reply will be to your Note about Blockade and Contraband. The Note is before our Legal Advisers.

My feeling in reading it was that, if we admitted all its contentions, it would be tantamount to admitting that, under modern conditions, we could not prevent Germany from trading, at any rate through neutral ports, as freely in time of war as in time of peace, and that we must either continue the difference of opinion with your Government, or give up definitely and openly any attempt to stop goods going to and from Germany through neutral ports.

The friction and trouble that we have over this matter are so great that I have often wished, in despair, to give it up; but that would go near to abdicating all chance of preventing Germany from being successful.

After fifteen months of practical experience of war under modern conditions, I am convinced that the real question is not one of legal niceties about contraband and other things, but whether we are to do what we are doing, or nothing at

all. The contentions of your Government would restrict our operations in such a way that Germany could evade them wholesale, and they would be mere paper rights, quite useless in practice.

I cannot help feeling that, if we had done all the things that Germany has done in the war, and if we had instigated, as Germans have apparently instigated, criminal plots on American soil, American opinion would have pushed resentment home against us more than it has done against Germany.

As it is, it looks as if the United States might now strike the weapon of sea power out of our hands, and thereby ensure a German victory.

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

IV

The United States was caught between the belligerents, her neutral rights threatened by the war methods of each side. The moment that comparative tranquillity seemed to be secured in relations with Germany, the spectre of the trade controversy with the Allies presented itself.

Colonel House believed it possible to worry along, but he was convinced that in the process the moral credit of the United States with the world would disappear and at the end of the war we should find ourselves without friends. This would be bad enough in case of an Allied victory. It might be fatal if the Allies failed.

Already House had asked himself whether they could defeat the Teutonic coalition without American help. He was appalled by the German triumphs of the autumn, which were inevitably followed by corresponding diplomatic success. The defeats of the Russians led directly to the entrance of Bulgaria on the German side and to the complete conquest of Serbia. The Turkish defences at Gallipoli stood firm.

Rumania had veered away from the Allies and was negotiating with the Central Powers. The German road to the East was open and apparently secure. Italian progress towards Trieste was painfully slow and costly. French and British gains on the western front were measured in yards and their losses in thousands of dead.

On October 1, Ambassador Gerard wrote: 'Of course I may be affected by the surroundings, but it seems to me Germany is winning this war.' On November 2: 'Germany seems to be winning this war, to us here. Efforts to starve her out will not succeed. . . . The military are careless of public opinion of neutrals; they say they are winning and do not need good opinion. I am really afraid of war against us after this war — if Germany wins.' On November 16: 'The German people are still absolutely, and probably justifiably confident in the results of the war.'

The United States could not risk a German victory, House insisted, nor could our Government look forward to an indefinite quarrel with both belligerent groups: with the Germans over submarine 'accidents,' plots, and propaganda; with the Allies over their restrictions upon trade. 'Shall we ever get out of this labyrinth?' Wilson asked of House. 'Only by adopting a positive policy,' was the Colonel's reply.

CHAPTER IV

A PLAN TO COMPEL PEACE

It will not do for the United States to let the Allies go down and leave Germany the dominant military factor in the world.

House to Counsellor Polk, October 11, 1915

I

IN the autumn of 1915, Colonel House recognized three alternatives which lay open to President Wilson. He might drift upon events, trusting that the persistent difficulties which arose with each belligerent group could be met separately and safely. He might push the still unsettled dispute with Germany over the disavowal of the sinking of the *Lusitania* to a point where a break would be inevitable, and thus bring the United States into the war on the side of the Entente. Or he might openly demand a peace conference, stating that the United States would support whichever group would agree to terms securing Europe from the threat of militarist aggression, and would enter the war against the side which refused. If war came in this fashion, it would come indeed as a crusade for peace.

The first two plans he dismissed. A continuance of the drifting policy, punctuated as it must be by sporadic quarrels with both Germany and the Allies, signified the loss of friendship with the Allies and perhaps the victory of German militarism. The second course — a break with Germany over the wording of the disavowal of the *Lusitania* outrage — seemed ridiculous after such long negotiations; if the rupture was to come on this score, it should have immediately succeeded the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and not when the issue was six months old. After accepting Germany's apology for sinking the *Arabic*, how could Wilson lead the country

into war on the ground that Germany omitted this phrase, or that, in her *Lusitania* disavowal?

There were elements of obvious weakness in the third plan. The Allies believed that they would wear Germany down and they would be certain to regard any suggestion of mediation as a move to save her from the consequences of defeat. They wanted no compromise which would leave Germany in a position later to renew the struggle, and they felt that a complete military victory offered the only security. But what House had in mind was no compromise with German militarism. The terms he would suggest meant, indeed, virtual defeat for the Pan-German ideal — complete restitution by Germany, full guaranties against future war. Either Germany would or would not accept such terms. If she accepted them (contrary to all public and private intimations), the Allies would have secured their avowed purposes. As Foch remarked three years later, 'The only object of fighting is to obtain results.'¹ If Germany would yield the results demanded by the Allies, there was no value in further fighting. It was altogether probable, however, that Germany, apparently victorious and certainly undefeated, would refuse such terms. In such a case House proposed that the United States should join the Allies to enforce them, and he suspected that without American aid they could not be enforced. His suggestion thus would be practically to guarantee Allied victory with the assistance of the United States.

Another factor had to be considered. The military unpreparedness of the United States was such that the Germans were likely to be as unaffected by threats of American intervention as the Allies would be unattracted by the promise of our assistance. Colonel House wrote, some years later, 'The United States might have changed the course of

¹ 'On ne fait la guerre que pour ses résultats,' reported by Captain Mantoux, the interpreter during the inter-Allied councils that led to the drafting of the armistice terms, October, 1918.

history had we armed to the teeth at the beginning of the war and waited for the proper opportunity to intervene. This, I think, was the big mistake, for both the Allies and Germans would have heeded any threat of intervention, and we might have intervened pretty much on our own terms.'¹ Fortunately, President Wilson, in the autumn of 1915, had revised his earlier ideas and was now ready to go before the country with a demand for vigorous preparation. In his speech before the Manhattan Club he confessed his change of mind, and he soon undertook an active campaign for preparedness in the pacifist centres of the Middle West. If he would push the movement with energy, despite the precious time that had been lost, America might yet dispose of the material strength necessary to carry through House's plan.

There was a third factor and the most vital of all. Hitherto the cardinal object of Wilson's policy had been to keep the United States out of the war. Would the President accept House's proposition, which looked directly toward military intervention? Would he be willing to tell the Germans that, unless they agreed to terms involving restitution and guaranties against military aggression, he would bring the United States into the war on the side of the Allies? One evening in September, he and House were discussing the problems of neutrality in the President's study in the White House. 'Much to my surprise,' wrote the Colonel, 'he said he had never been sure that we ought not to take part in the conflict and, if it seemed evident that Germany and her militaristic ideas were to win, the obligation upon us was greater than ever.'

The casual remark encouraged House to develop his idea of a positive policy. A few weeks later, Wilson came to New York and the Colonel laid it before him.

'I outlined very briefly [he noted] a plan which has oc-

¹ Letter to the author, April 6, 1925.

curred to me and which seems of much value. I thought we had lost our opportunity to break with Germany, and it looked as if she had a better chance than ever of winning, and if she did win our turn would come next; and we were not only unprepared, but there would be no one to help us stand the first shock. Therefore, we should do something decisive now — something that would either end the war in a way to abolish militarism or that would bring us in with the Allies to help them do it. My suggestion is to ask the Allies, unofficially, to let me know whether or not it would be agreeable to them to have us demand that hostilities cease. We would put it upon the high ground that the neutral world was suffering along with the belligerents and that we had rights as well as they, and that peace parleys should begin upon the broad basis of both military and naval disarmament. . . .

‘If the Allies understood our purpose, we could be as severe in our language concerning them as we were with the Central Powers. The Allies, after some hesitation, could accept our offer or demand and, if the Central Powers accepted, we would then have accomplished a master-stroke of diplomacy. If the Central Powers refused to acquiesce, we could then push our insistence to a point where diplomatic relations would first be broken off, and later the whole force of our Government — and perhaps the force of every neutral — might be brought against them.’¹

‘The President was startled by this plan. He seemed to acquiesce by silence. I had no time to push it further, for our entire conversation did not last longer than twenty minutes.

¹ Colonel House had in mind a striking historical parallel which came to him from his historical reading. In the summer of 1813, after the battle of Bautzen, Austria offered mediation between Napoleon and the Allied Governments, intimating that, unless Napoleon resigned the major part of his conquests outside of the natural boundaries of France, she would join his enemies. Napoleon refused the terms proposed, Austria entered the war on the side of the Allies, and participated in the grand coalition that led to his downfall.

'October 11, 1915: Frank Polk took lunch with me. I told him something of the plan I had outlined to the President, concerning our enforcing peace before the Allies reached a position where they could not be of assistance in the event we had war with the Central Powers. I am looking at the matter from the American viewpoint and also from the broader viewpoint of humanity in general. It will not do for the United States to let the Allies go down and leave Germany the dominant military factor in the world. We would certainly be the next object of attack, and the Monroe Doctrine would be less indeed than "a scrap of paper." . . . Polk thought the idea was good from every standpoint, and he hoped the President would finally put it through. . . .'

Not long afterwards, in Washington, House discussed the same matter with Lansing, who, despite the sharpness of his notes to the British, was strongly pro-Ally in sympathy. The Colonel emphasized again the fact that the interests of the United States and of civilization were altogether opposed to a German victory.

'Lansing agreed [wrote House] and was willing to advise a strong course. He seems not to be afraid, and concurs in my opinion that Mr. Bryan did more to endanger the peace of this country than any other man, by his "peace at any price" policy.'

II

House's proposition would not meet the approval of those Allied statesmen who looked forward to utilizing their prospective victory as a means to extensive annexations and crushing indemnities. They were doubtless perfectly sincere in their protestations of a desire for justice and a stable peace, but they interpreted 'justice' so as to conform with the particular interests of their own nation and the stability

of peace as meaning the political destruction of the enemy. The Russians, British, and French had signed treaties which carved up the regions of the Near East with little regard for the interests of their inhabitants, they had brought Italy to their side by promising territories which were certainly not Italian in character; French aspirations extended far beyond Alsace-Lorraine, and Tsarist Russia had plans for the Poles who might be liberated from Austria and Prussia, which did not include independence.

It was by no means the thought of House that the United States should enter the war to assure such aspirations, which the Allies were careful not to confess publicly; and it was probable that many of the allied leaders would prefer to forego American aid rather than give up their dreams of conquest, even though it meant the squandering of many lives. But there were other statesmen in Europe, of the type of Sir Edward Grey, who demanded victory not for selfish nationalistic purposes so much as to build a new system which might abolish competitive armaments and provide an international organization to keep the peace. House hoped that to secure the greater end they might give up their idea of a peace by conquest, especially if in so doing they could have the help of America. He counted particularly upon Grey himself, who made it plain that in his mind the chief object of the war was to prevent future wars and that this end could be secured only through the coöperation of the United States.

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

LONDON, August 10, 1915

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . My own mind revolves more and more about the point that the refusal of a Conference was the fatal step that decided peace or war last year, and about the moral to be drawn from it: which is that the pearl of great price, if it can be found, would be some League of Nations that could be

relied on to insist that disputes between any two nations must be settled by the arbitration, mediation, or conference of others. International Law has hitherto had no sanction. The lesson of this war is that the Powers must bind themselves to give it a sanction. If that can be secured, freedom of the seas and many other things will become easy. But it is not a fair proposition that there should be a guaranty of the freedom of the seas while Germany claims to recognize no law but her own on land, and to have the right to make war at will. . . .

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

LONDON, *August 26, 1915*

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . Several neutrals have pressed me about a Conference of neutral States to be formed so that it may be ready to undertake mediation whenever it is opportune. I have said that no one could resent any efforts of neutrals which were impartial and independent to promote peace, but I did not think a Conference of neutrals would be of much use unless the United States was in it.

If the end of this war is arrived at through mediation, I believe it must be through that of the United States. All our efforts are of course concentrated on saving ourselves and our Allies by securing victory in the war. But it is in my mind continually that the awful sufferings of this war will, to a great extent, have been in vain unless at the end of it nations are set and determined together that future generations shall not fall into such a catastrophe again.

And though a great number of people in the United States and everywhere may be indifferent, absorbed in things of the moment and in material interests, you have a great body of reflecting public opinion so disposed that it can give a great impulse and guidance to this idea. Therefore I look forward

to the help of your country under the guidance of the President and impelled by this section of public opinion in those larger conditions of peace, which looking to the future, interest neutrals as much as belligerents. . . .

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

LONDON, *September 22, 1915*

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . To me, the great object of securing the elimination of militarism and navalism is to get security for the future against aggressive war. How much are the United States prepared to do in this direction? Would the President propose that there should be a League of Nations binding themselves to side against any Power which broke a treaty; which broke certain rules of warfare on sea or land (such rules would, of course, have to be drawn up after this war); or which refused, in case of dispute, to adopt some other method of settlement than that of war? Only in some such agreement do I see a prospect of diminishing militarism and navalism in future, so that no nation will build up armies or navies for aggressive purposes. I cannot say which Governments would be prepared to accept such a proposal, but I am sure that the Government of the United States is the only Government that could make it with effect. . . .

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

This last letter from Grey reached House at the moment that the Colonel was casting about for a method to translate his ideas into a definite policy, and it seemed to provide the opportunity he desired. He immediately took it to Wilson, who agreed that House should draft an encouraging reply to Sir Edward as the first step toward offering American help, if Germany refused the terms they had in mind, which coin-

cided with the public war aims of the Allies. In his notes the Colonel wrote of the reply: 'This is one of the most important letters I ever wrote.' It indicated to the British a way of salvation from the German threat and a means of enforcing a stable peace. Wilson at once approved the letter, making only minor changes in the original draft, one of which was to add the word 'probably.' The President declared the proposal to be altogether right and he 'prayed God' it might bring results.

'October 19, 1915: Miss Denton and I decided [wrote House] that instead of putting the letter in code, we would send it as a 'split message.' I wrote a letter of explanation to Sir Edward, so that when he receives the two letters he will know how to put them together, just as one would a picture puzzle. I hope they may carry safely. We took the precaution to mail them in separate post-offices.'

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

NEW YORK, October 17, 1915

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

... It has occurred to me that the time may soon come when this Government should intervene between the belligerents and demand that peace parleys begin upon the broad basis of the elimination of militarism and navalism. . . .

In my opinion, it would be a world-wide calamity if the war should continue to a point where the Allies could not, with the aid of the United States, bring about a peace along the lines you and I have so often discussed. What I want you to know is that, whenever you consider the time is propitious for this intervention, I will propose it to the President. He may then desire me to go to Europe in order that a more intimate understanding as to procedure may be had.

It is in my mind that, after conferring with your Government, I should proceed to Berlin and tell them that it was

the President's purpose to intervene and stop this destructive war, provided the weight of the United States thrown on the side that accepted our proposal could do it.

I would not let Berlin know, of course, of any understanding had with the Allies, but would rather lead them to think our proposal would be rejected by the Allies. This might induce Berlin to accept the proposal, but, if they did not do so, it would nevertheless be the purpose to intervene. If the Central Powers were still obdurate, it would probably be necessary for us to join the Allies and force the issue.¹

I want to call your attention to the danger of postponing action too long. If the Allies should be unsuccessful and become unable to do their full share, it would be increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for us to intervene. I would have made this proposal to the President last autumn, but you will remember that it was not agreeable to the Allies.

It might be well for you to cable me under the code we have between us, unless you prefer to send a letter. The understanding will be that the discussion is entirely between you and me until it is desired that it be broadened further. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

On November 9, Sir Edward cabled to the Colonel to ask if the proposal was to be taken in conjunction with Grey's proposal for a League of Nations after the war, as made in his letter of September 22. To this House, with Wilson's approval, answered in the affirmative. The President had begun to break away from his earlier lack of interest in world problems and was ready to take the first steps toward the

¹ On the copy of the letter is endorsed in long hand opposite this paragraph: 'I have expressed myself badly, and I do not mean to be unfair to Berlin. E. M. H.' The 'probably' in this sentence was added by President Wilson.

position of world eminence he was soon to hold. House encouraged him constantly in this course.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, November 10, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . It seems to me that we must throw the influence of this nation in behalf of a plan by which international obligations must be kept, and in behalf of some plan by which the peace of the world may be maintained. We should do this not only for the sake of civilization, but for our own welfare — for who may say when we may be involved in such a holocaust as is now devastating Europe?

Must we not be a party to the making of new and more humane rules of warfare, and must we not lend our influence towards the freedom of both the land and sea? This is the part I think you are destined to play in this world tragedy, and it is the noblest part that has ever come to a son of man. This country will follow you along such a path, no matter what the cost may be.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

III

Colonel House did not conceal from himself the difficulties which his proposition would confront in the United States as well as in Europe. It involved a complete revolution of American policy that would tax Wilson's powers of leadership, and at a time when public confidence in the President seemed none too firm. The middle course which he had tried to follow made him the target for every pro-Ally and every pro-German, for the hysterical criticism of chauvinists as well as for that of pacifists.

'I do not like the general outlook this morning [wrote

House on November 17]. We are beset on all sides, both at home and abroad. By "we" I mean the Administration. The part that gives one faith in the course we are pursuing, is that all the critics differ violently among themselves as to the remedy. I have no doubt that it is the right course and will so prove itself, provided it is not made impossible by the extremists here and abroad. It is all very clear in my mind now what this country should do. The question is, Can the President do it unmolested? The convening of Congress puts a new and disturbing element into the situation. The constant changes in the Cabinets in France and England do likewise. The irrational . . . Ambassador may at any time precipitate matters. I am glad my philosophy holds me serene. I do the best I can each day and give the best advice to the President of which I am capable, and let it rest at that.'

All through the autumn House urged patience upon the extreme pacifist leaders who desired Wilson to call an immediate peace conference, regardless of the stern fact that until the ground was prepared neither the United States nor all the neutrals in combination could hope to make any impression upon the belligerents. The Colonel was himself invited to participate in the naïve adventure supported by Mr. Henry Ford, who planned to inaugurate peace through the despatch of a shipload of enthusiastic pacifists in whom zeal outran information. House's sense of the practical and of the ridiculous combined to save him from an acceptance, but he kept in continuous touch with pacifist leaders whose sentimental influence was not to be underestimated, a factor which might be turned into more effective channels.

He maintained also his relations with pro-Ally friends whose influence in the war area, together with that of the British journalists whom he guided, might help to prepare the way for the policy he and the President had in mind. Thus House kept many wires in his fingers.

'September 1, 1915: Dr. Jacobs and Miss Emily Balch [he recorded] came in the afternoon by appointment. Dr. Jacobs is the Dutch lady who called the Women's Peace Conference at The Hague in May, over which Jane Addams presided. They had just been to Washington and the President, in a letter which they showed me, referred them to Lansing and to me. Their interview with Lansing was thoroughly unsatisfactory from their viewpoint. They claimed he was pro-Ally and very unsympathetic with their suggestion that the United States should call together all neutral countries in order to make peace overtures. I tried to show them how utterly impracticable their plan was, while evidencing the deepest sympathy with their general purpose. I am to have an interview with Dr. Jacobs later in New York. . . .

'October 25, 1915: David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University, telegraphed asking for an appointment. . . . He is President of the American Peace Society, and at their last convention in San Francisco they passed resolutions concerning peace proposals, which they authorized him to submit to the President.

'Jordan said he realized I knew more about the subject than any one and he desired to see me before seeing the President, in order that he might know how to talk to him and how far he should go into the subject. I told in a few words what I had done before the war and since. I let him know that the President was probably the best-informed man in the world as to what could or could not be done, and there was no one more eager to serve than he in the direction indicated. I thought, however, that efforts to force the issue hurt rather than helped the situation. Jordan seemed quite satisfied with my explanation, and said he would merely present the resolution to the President and would not bother him with arguments. He asked to see me again upon his next visit to New York, after he has seen the President.

'November 9, 1915: H. C. Hoover called early this morning

to say good-bye. He sails at twelve. He expressed gratitude for the help I have given him in his troubles. I urged him to impress upon the Germans in Belgium and elsewhere the futility of making Zeppelin raids upon London. I have taken this up with Bernstorff and with Government officials in Berlin, but it seems to have had but little effect. Hoover said he had reason to believe that the German General Staff disapproved them, but the matter is in the hands of the naval authorities, who, failing to do anything in their own department, have been exploiting the Zeppelins. I doubt if any man and his *entourage* have ever done a nation greater harm than von Tirpitz has done Germany. He has accentuated the brutality of his people and has never allowed the world to forget what a triumph of German arms would mean to civilization. . . .

'November 14, 1915: Sidney Brooks called at 11.30 and we motored through the park discussing international questions. I am trying to give him an insight into the President's policy without telling him too much, but enough to get favorable cables and articles from his pen. Northcliffe has sent him over to write for the *Times* and *Daily Mail*. . . .

'He told of his interview with Roosevelt yesterday. Roosevelt is bitter against the President. He calls his foreign policy pusillanimous and avers that his one object now is to defeat him for reëlection. I told Brooks that, for the first time in his career, Roosevelt was up against the real thing when it came to political sagacity, courage, and a well-equipped thinking machine. . . .

'November 15, 1915: Sidney Brooks called this morning very much disturbed by a leading editorial in the *New York Tribune* antagonistic to the President's foreign policy. I told him to calm himself and not be disturbed by what he saw in the *New York* papers. He said I reminded him of the saying that "England never looked beyond New York, and New York never looked beyond the Palisades."

'He thought the President was making a mistake in not sending Bernstorff home immediately. He thought if he did, it would rally all hesitating Republicans to his support. I again asked him to reserve judgment and have confidence in the ultimate outcome. I was positive in my statement that the President would not permit the Republicans or the Republican papers to dictate his policy. Brooks outlined a cablegram to his London papers that he wanted me to O.K., which I did. I even let him hint in the cable that, contrary to the general opinion, the United States was not through with this war and that at the proper time and in the proper way, her influence would be felt. . . .

'*November 21, 1915*: Misses Jane Addams, Lilian Wald, and von Schwimmer of Vienna called by appointment this afternoon. It was the same old story of trying to get the President to appoint a peace commission jointly with other neutral nations, to sit at The Hague and to continue making peace proposals until accepted. I explained that the President could not do this officially. They then wanted to know whether he would object to an unofficial commission doing it, and I thought he would not. As usual, I got them into a controversy between themselves, which delights me since it takes the pressure off myself. . . .

'*November 22, 1915*: Frau Selenka of Munich, one of the flock of pacifists who are besieging me, called in the afternoon. She displayed some glimmering of reason when she intimated that perhaps the President knew better than they as to the proper time to make a move in the direction of peace. I complimented her upon her acumen. She calls herself "an internationalist," but I think she might better be described as a German with broad sympathies which are anti-military.

'Henry Ford, the automobile manufacturer, called by appointment. He also came in the rôle of pacifist. He brought with him David Starr Jordan's secretary, a young man who did most of the talking, despite the fact that I indicated

very clearly that I wished to talk to Mr. Ford. Ford's views regarding peace were so crude and unimportant that I endeavored to lead him into a more fruitful field; but just as soon as I got him discussing his great industrial plant at Detroit and the plans for the uplift of his workmen, the young man would break in and turn the tide of conversation into another channel. Ford, I should judge, is a mechanical genius . . . who may become a prey to all sorts of faddists who desire his money. . . .'

Colonel House to Ambassador Gerard

NEW YORK, December 1, 1915

DEAR JUDGE:

. . . Henry Ford has been urging me to go on his peace ship, which I have not considered for a moment. Some of the women pacifists suggested this adventure to him, I think, and perhaps in a moment of enthusiasm he consented. I believe he will regret it later. Of course there is no need to tell you that the Government are not interested in it, either directly, indirectly, or otherwise, for it cannot bring any results. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

IV

Toward the close of November, Colonel House received from Grey the reply for which he had been so anxiously waiting. Even though House had made what amounted to an offer of American help to end the war on a basis of organized guaranties against militarism, he had not expected a categoric acceptance, for he recognized the influences among Allied leaders which would make them hesitate. Would they forego the broad annexations they had promised themselves, would they have the imagination to realize that by pressing House's suggestion they could in all probability bring the

United States into the war? Even with such doubts in mind, the Colonel was frankly disappointed by the mildness of interest taken by Sir Edward Grey. The British Foreign Secretary was apparently so certain that the Allies would refuse the plan that he had not discussed its possibilities with them. He must have a more definite offer before pressing the matter, and he made it plain that the Allies would be suspicious of any peace conference.

‘I do not see how they could commit themselves in advance to any proposition [he wrote], without knowing exactly what it was, and knowing that the United States was prepared to intervene and make good if they accepted.’

The remainder and by far the longer portion of the letter emphasized the feeling in Allied countries that Wilson had not shown himself friendly and, by refusing to accept the principle of the Allied blockade, was threatening to strike the weapon of sea power from the hands of Great Britain.

‘*November 25, 1915*: Sir Edward is evidently taking a pessimistic view of the situation [wrote the Colonel]. He had not received my cablegram when he wrote, but, even so, the offer which I made in my letter — which was practically to ensure victory to the Allies — should have met a warmer reception. The British are in many ways dull. . . . The richer we grow through the acceptance of their insistence that we sell them munitions of war, the more unpopular we become. They cannot look at the situation fairly, and perhaps we could not under like circumstances. . . . I loathe the idea of our making money out of their misfortune, but nevertheless it is inevitable; and if we refused to give economic aid in this way, our name would have been anathema just the same. . . .’

The proposal made by Colonel House was, on the face of

it, conceived quite as much in the interest of the Allies as in that of America; to carry it through would involve an immense, an incalculable sacrifice on the part of the United States. There was something of the spirit of *Alice through the Looking Glass* in the British assumption that by preparing to help them Wilson would be asking a favor, and he might have been forgiven if he had immediately dropped the whole plan.

But both Wilson and House were too eager to accomplish what might prove a decisive stroke, to permit the proposition to be blocked by what seemed misunderstanding of American motives. Obviously the Allies interpreted our protests against trade restrictions as evidence of unfriendliness to the Allied cause; they were also suspicious of Wilson and did not believe that he would actually bring the United States into the war, no matter what the issue. These points demanded explanation. 'What is most needful at present,' wrote House to Grey, on December 7, 'is a better working understanding with you; and how this is to be brought about is uppermost in our thoughts. The machinery we are using is not altogether satisfactory.'

President Wilson was convinced that this understanding could not be brought about through the Ambassadors. He saw in Mr. Page's letters to him a lack of sympathy with his policies which led him to question Page's ability to explain the Administration point of view. Nor did it seem likely that the British Ambassador in Washington would prove capable of dispelling the clouds that threatened Anglo-American friendship. The constant friction resulting from the blockade question had so rubbed his nerves that officials of the State Department, even those who were most fond of him personally, admitted that it was not always easy to negotiate with Sir Cecil. 'X, who is ardently pro-Ally,' recorded the Colonel, 'said he left him feeling a sympathy for the Germans.'

100 INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

'November 17, 1915: I arranged with Sidney Brooks to see Frank Polk and discuss trade questions between our two countries. Polk says these are becoming serious; that the British Ambassador "blew off the lid" again on Monday and practically threw down the gauntlet. Brooks maintains that this is not the feeling in [British] Government circles, and I cannot believe that it is. . . .

'December 6, 1915: Sir Paul Harvey called to bring a message from the British Ambassador. I listened to it with scant courtesy, for it was a repetition of the Ambassador's comments upon the American policy, particularly as regards peace measures. I indicated my impatience to Sir Paul by saying the Ambassador must still be nervous and excited over the situation. I explained that all of us were careful in discussing matters with the Ambassador because of his excitability. I expressed the belief that the United States knew quite well what was best for her, perhaps better than the British Ambassador, and that he need not give himself any undue concern as to our safety. . . .'

Every day it became more obvious that the situation demanded some sort of action. A better understanding with the Allies was essential for the carrying-on of regular business, and all the more so if House's plan of American intervention were to be attempted. Mr. Lansing agreed thoroughly with both Wilson and House that matters could not be allowed to run their course dependent upon mere chance. He suggested that the time had come to disregard personal sensibilities and that a change of Ambassadors was necessary.

'November 28, 1915: I tried to impress upon Lansing [wrote House] the necessity of the United States making it clear to the Allies that we considered their cause our cause, and that we had no intention of permitting a military autocracy to

dominate the world, if our strength could prevent it. We believed this was a fight between democracy and autocracy and we would stand with democracy. I pointed out that it was impossible to maintain cordial relations with Germany, not only for the reason that her system of government was different in its conception from ours, but also because so much hate against us had been engendered that it would be perhaps a generation or two before it could die out. Germany was being taught that her lack of success could be directly attributed to us. It was evident that the Government there was looking for some excuse for failure, and the easiest and best, in their opinion, seemed to be the United States' "unneutral attitude in regard to the shipment of munitions of war, and the lending of money to her enemies." I thought also that unless we did have a complete and satisfactory understanding with the Allies we would be wholly without friends when the war was ended, and our position would be not only perilous but might become hurtful from an economic viewpoint.

'Lansing agreed to this and we discussed the best means of reaching an understanding. He thought they should recall the British Ambassador and send such a man as Lord Bryce, with whom we could talk understandingly.'

President Wilson, whose respect for diplomats was limited, and who saw little value in a change of Ambassadors, insisted that the speediest and surest method of reaching the desired end was to send House once more to England and France. There he would explain the factors that compelled American protests against the Allied blockade and the lack of basis for their suspicions of American unfriendliness. If conditions seemed favorable, he would also present the desire of the United States Government to help in winning the war, provided the victory were used to assure, not selfish territorial aspirations, but a real triumph of ideals.

'The President returned at five [continued House], and we had an uninterrupted conversation of an hour and a half. I went very thoroughly into the matters I had discussed with Lansing and in much the same way. He feels that we should let the Allies know how our minds are running, but he did not seem to think it could be done by a change of Ambassadors. . . . He thought my going was the only way properly to accomplish what we had in mind. He suggested that I might say to the British Government that we could not deal with "the highly excitable invalid" they had here to represent them. . . .'

'*December 15, 1915:* I called the President's attention to the impossibility of doing things quickly in London. Matters that he and I would settle in a day, would easily occupy a week or perhaps two there. I asked him to remember the slowness of the British mind, as exhibited even in such a crisis as this war. They have been a year and a half getting thoroughly awakened to the situation. The President wondered if I could not facilitate matters somewhat by going to France earlier than anticipated, and getting them to help push.

'As to Germany, he thought circumstances should determine whether I should visit there. We decided that unless I was invited, I should not go. The excuse for my going on the trip at all, was discussed at some length. Since I last talked with him about it, a new and better reason has occurred to me, and the President accepted it as being the one to use. That is, it is thought inadvisable to bring home any of our Ambassadors from the belligerent countries at this time; and, in order that they may have a more intimate knowledge of our position regarding pending international questions, at the President's request I am undertaking the journey. . . .

'I asked the President to again read me what Gerard had sent in regard to his interview with the Kaiser. He went to

the safe and got it out and read it to Lansing and me. They both criticized Gerard seriously for not sending the full text of his conversation. However, I asked them if he had not epitomized it all in the few lines he had sent and whether, if he had written a volume, he could have made it more pregnant. The upshot of what Gerard wrote was that the Kaiser said "he would attend to America when this war was over; that President Wilson's attitude regarding Germany eliminated him from any possibility of acting as mediator."

v

Colonel House was not greatly disturbed by the Kaiser's moods, since he was fully aware that control of affairs had long ago slipped from his grasp. None the less he studied the letters of Ambassador Gerard with care, for his mission to Europe, which Wilson had definitely decided upon, might be vitally affected by a new crisis in our relations with Germany. At any moment the dispute over the *Lusitania* disavowal, still unsettled, the propaganda that had brought about the dismissal of von Papen and Boy-Ed, or the sinking of the *Ancona* by an Austrian submarine, might lead to a break. This he hoped to avoid, at least for the moment. He believed that in the end the United States must enter the war in order to prevent a German victory and assure a lasting peace, but he wanted to make it plain to the world that Germany refused a peace based upon restitution and disarmament.

The problem was thus how best to clarify the issue, and it was not made easier by the fact that while the military masters of Germany were in no mood for the kind of peace House had in mind, there was much irresponsible discussion of German willingness to cease fighting.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, December 7, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . Of a sudden — peace talk. The Chancellor is waiting to address the Reichstag — waiting to get the sentiment of the members who are all in Berlin, and swim with it. Many members who are not Socialists, favor peace, and the Chancellor will be forced to make some sort of a declaration on why they are fighting and for what.

A banker told me yesterday that they are sick of the war, that the big industrials are making big money (Krupps, etc.) and making the war last by insisting on keeping Belgium (in order to control the European steel, iron, and coal trade) and that the Junkers (Prussian county squires) are also in favor of continuing the war, as they get three or four times the former price for their products and are getting work done by prisoners at six cents a day. He said the 'Kaufleute' (business people) will have to pay the cost of the war and that the Junkers will not be taxed. . . .

Hindenburg is out with an interview saying it is not yet time for peace. This is a Government measure to stamp out peace talk among the Reichstag members.

Best wishes to Mrs. House.

Yours ever

J. W. G.

BERLIN, December 14, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I think the German press has received orders to step softly on the von Papen-Boy-Ed recall. The greatest danger now lies in Austria, and over the *Ancona* note. Here there is a large body of manufacturers, ship-owners, etc., who at the last moment declare themselves against war with the U.S.A. and use their influence to that end. But in Austria with no such interests to help toward peace and with

a lot of rattle-headed Orientals (for Hungarians are such) in charge of the Foreign Office — almost anything may happen. However, pressure from here may be brought to bear. . . .

Von Jagow also tells me confidentially that Rintelen¹ was sent to America to buy up the products of the Du Pont Powder Company, and that if he did anything else, he exceeded his instructions. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

BERLIN, *January 3, 1916*

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . On fair authority — a man who called on von Tirpitz recently was told by von T. that he, von T., was watched like a spy and all his letters opened. Von T. said that Hindenburg was the real ruler of Germany, that anything Bethmann said was censored by H., and that H. was now against reckless submarine war, but that any substantial defeats in the field would make him change his mind. Von T. said that the K. was losing his mind and spent all his time praying and learning Hebrew. . . .

Yours

J. W. G.

Ambassador von Bernstorff was appalled by the dismissal of the German attachés, and regarded the situation as critical. He naturally hailed the Colonel's mission to Europe with enthusiasm, for it offered, he believed, some hope of coming to an arrangement if not peace.

'December 2, 1915: The German Ambassador telephoned [recorded House] and asked for an interview. Knowing the important matters pending, I asked him to come at once. I found him visibly shaken. It is the first time I have seen his

¹ German secret service agent.

equanimity disturbed. Lansing told him yesterday that he intended to send home both the German military and naval attachés, and Bernstorff was evidently nervous about himself. . . . Bernstorff thought we were gradually drifting into an alliance with the Allies and that the newspapers would at once begin a hue and cry against him, hoping to have him also sent home. . . .'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, December 16, 1915

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . . Bernstorff was in this morning. He pleaded very strongly against sending a sharp note to Berlin. He thought if given time he could get an apology and indemnity for the *Lusitania*. He does not believe it can be done at once.

The Reichstag dissolves Saturday. After that, he thinks, something can be accomplished without danger to his Government. Popular opinion, he believes, will not sustain such an apology as will satisfy us. But he believes it may be given out later in a way that his public will not get it in its full form.

He is inclined to believe Austria will meet our requirements in the *Ancona*.

I spoke to him in regard to my trip, telling him it might not extend beyond London, but that would depend upon his Government. . . .

He declared I would be welcome in Germany if any one would be upon such a mission.

He maintains that there are no plots instigated by Germans brewing here, and that we would find it out sooner or later. He thinks this belief is the main cause of friction and is causing your determination to sever relations.

I let him know that there was a feeling among Americans that if Germany was successful, she would finally quarrel with us, with or without provocation; and if this feeling

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could be overcome, and it could be by the elimination of militarism, the hostility would immediately die out. He admitted this.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, *December 22, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Bernstorff has just been in. He has heard from his Government. They would like me to come directly to Berlin to discuss peace upon the general terms of military and naval disarmament.

Bernstorff understands that I must go to London first, and he will so inform his Government. Their feeling was that it would be better to come to Berlin first. In my opinion, this would not do.

In the conversation which Bernstorff repeated to his Government, I said I believed if they would consent to a plan which embraced general disarmament, you would be willing to throw the weight of this Government into the scales and demand that the war cease. That we were not concerned regarding territorial questions or indemnity, but we were concerned regarding the larger questions which involved not only the belligerents but the neutrals also.

The Allies will take care of the territorial and indemnity questions, and we need not go into that at this time. If we start with such discussions, it would involve us in controversies that might be endless and footless.

I believe we ought to move with circumspection and not permit the German Government to lead us into an attitude that would place us in a disagreeable position with the Allies. It is possible they will undertake this. I am always suspicious of their diplomacy. However, knowing this in advance, I feel we can avoid any pitfalls. But we cannot be, I think, too cautious.

It will be of great value if you will write me now and then, when you have time, and in such a way that I may show the letter to some member of each Government where I should happen to be. Your messages last year to Poincaré and Delcassé did no end of good. They were indirect and therefore all the more appreciated. It is hard to estimate the effect of flattery and politeness upon Europeans, and this may be said of the British and Germans as well as of the Latin races. They value such things far beyond our conception . . .

I am, with deep affection

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

'December 17, 1915: This has been a busy day, gathering up the loose ends preparatory to leaving. The British Ambassador came at four and remained for an hour and a half. I have never seen him more entertaining, affectionate, and reasonable. He was all we know he can be on occasions. He complimented me so extravagantly that I almost lost countenance. He said he intended writing a history of his tenure of office at Washington, in order that he might give me credit for the things I had done and which otherwise would forever remain unknown. He harked back to the time when I had caught the offensive sentence in the message to Great Britain some year and more ago. He insisted, if that message had gone as first written, there could never have been good relations between England and the United States; the insult would have rankled forever. . . . How can I go to London and demand his head? I am trying to think of some way to save him, and it will probably result in some modification of the President's, Lansing's, and my wishes to have him recalled.

'I found in conversation with the Ambassador that X had talked rather too freely. . . . I found that Captain

Gaunt¹ must have told him that I had direct cable communication through code with Sir Edward Grey. It shows the utter impossibility of keeping such matters secret. It is necessary to tell certain people certain things, but when one does, they are sure to be repeated. The problem forever before me is, which is the better end of the dilemma. I am impressed more and more with the human characteristic to talk and to convey information that should properly be held in confidence. Most of the trouble in the world, I feel certain, is caused by conveying information or misinformation from one person to another and from one government to another. That which was information to start with, becomes misinformation before it reaches its goal, and an infinite amount of trouble and misunderstanding results.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *December 21, 1915*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... Sir Cecil was here the other day. He remained with me an hour and a half, and I have never seen him more amiable and reasonable. ... In his note asking for an appointment he closed by saying, 'With much love.' He is a queer Sir Cecil. He wished to know if he was doing anything wrong, or everything to please the State Department. It was rather a staggering question, and I had to tell him that some of his methods might be improved upon. He promised to do better. ...

Your devoted friend

E. M. HOUSE

The President wrote to House on December 24, expressing his irritation with the diplomats at Washington. Sir Cecil he felt to be puzzling and incalculable. Bernstorff was hardly

¹ British Naval Attaché, with whom, following his habit, House had established intimate relations.

more satisfactory, and Wilson agreed with House that it was necessary to get corroboration of everything he reported from Berlin. To House's request for instructions, the President replied that he needed none; the Colonel's letters exactly echoed his own views and purposes. The United States was interested only in the future peace of the world and in its guarantees. The essential guarantees, he insisted, were disarmament, military and naval, and a league of nations to secure each nation against aggression and maintain the absolute freedom of the seas. The necessity for House's mission, he pointed out, was the more imperative because of the demand coming from the Senate for further and immediate pressure upon England and her allies to remove their restrictions upon neutral trade.

VI

The great difficulty which the Colonel must overcome would lie in the task of persuading the Allies that his mission was not designed to inaugurate negotiations in which Germany might capitalize her present military advantage to secure a peace of compromise. They were determined not to consider terms which would simply reestablish the *status quo ante*; that is, another armed truce, a new era of competitive armaments leading up to a yet more devastating war. Of this determination House was fully informed.

On November 26 Lord Bryce had written to Colonel House, reminding him of their understanding that he would keep him informed when anything occurred regarding British views which House ought to know. He insisted that there was not the slightest change in British sentiment regarding the duty and necessity of prosecuting the war with the utmost vigor and listening to no suggestions for negotiations with the German Government. The British were certain that Germany would not listen to any terms they could propose, since those terms must include the evacuation of

Belgium, with ample compensation to her for all her suffering, and also, of course, the evacuation of Northern France and Luxemburg. Germany, on the other hand, he asserted, would insist upon indemnities, since without them bankruptcy stared her in the face.

Hence, said Bryce, there was nothing for it but to fight on. He had heard that Jane Addams, 'who ought to have known better after her journey around Europe,' and other women and some men of the extreme pacifist type, had been trying to engineer a movement for mediation; they might have spared themselves the trouble. The British were not in the least discouraged by the Balkan difficulties; and the Armenian massacres, which the German Government could have stopped, had heightened British antagonism against them as well as against the Turks. The rule of the latter over Christians, he insisted, must be extinguished once for all.

But Colonel House had no idea of suggesting that the war be ended on German terms. What he had in mind was rather to insist that the war should continue until the Germans accepted conditions that would guarantee the world against the militarist menace and make possible an organization to preserve the peace. If an undefeated Germany refused to yield on such terms, the United States would assist the Allies to secure the necessary victory, and to House it seemed more and more evident that of their own strength they could not win the victory. In return the Allies must agree to give over any plans of annihilating Germany in the political sense and of embarking upon a programme of wholesale annexations.

Thus the Allies were to be given an opportunity which, if they had the wit, they might utilize so as to bring the United States to their side.

CHAPTER V

A SECOND QUEST

Colonel House . . . I may be allowed to say after long and close experience . . . combines in an exceptional degree some of the most useful and attractive qualities of statesmanship, coolness of temper, independence of judgment, and complete personal disinterestedness.

Asquith, 'The Genesis of the War'

I

MUCH to his discomfort, the goings and the comings of Colonel House had developed into events of international interest. 'Colonel House,' said the *Springfield Republican*, 'is perhaps the only private citizen in America who could not go to Europe at this time, without attracting an attention worldwide in its scope.' The American press was filled with news of the mission, announcement of which was made by a Washington correspondent whose ability, in House's opinion, outran his discretion. Speculation as to its purpose varied from the hypothesis of an immediate peace conference to the theory that he was despatched to reprimand American Ambassadors in European capitals. 'Worldwide Attention,' 'An Interesting Mission,' 'Prospects of Peace,' 'Commonsense Diplomacy,' 'Discreet Envoy.' Such were typical headlines of representative newspapers, and every newspaper carried headlines for several days.

The more bitter of the anti-Administration papers raised the question of the President's constitutional power to appoint an 'agent of high diplomacy' without the approval of the Senate. But with certain notable exceptions American journalists, lacking any idea of what the real purpose of the Colonel's mission might be, approved it on the ground that it would demand diplomatic tact and in this respect Colonel House was without equal. 'Colonel House has proved him-

self a discreet and close-mouthed envoy in the past,' said the *Providence Journal*, which was none too cordial in general toward Wilson, 'and will doubtless maintain this reputation on his next expedition.' 'He will be welcomed in England,' commented the *Christian Science Monitor*, 'by newspapermen who . . . will be interested in continuing their study of at least one American who not only possesses the faculty of keeping what he knows to himself, but the even rarer and greater faculty of disabusing the interviewer of the notion that he knows anything that is important enough to print.' Colonel George Harvey was satiric but good-natured: 'Instead of sending Colonel House abroad, President Wilson should go to Europe himself to find out just what the people there think of him. . . . Wilson could leave Colonel House here to act as President during his absence.'

None of the journalists suspected the real significance of the mission. Few of them pretended as yet to understand House. But all of them recognized his influence.

'Although he holds no office and never has held any [wrote a correspondent], he far outweighs Cabinet officers and bureau heads in Washington affairs. He may not be the power behind the Presidential chair, but he is the power alongside of it. He is a figure without parallel in our political history. . . .

'Colonel House asks nothing for himself. He hates the limelight with an intensity that bars him from public office. He is neither philanthropist nor reformer. He is a connoisseur of politics. . . .

'Colonel House is one of the small wiry men who do a great deal without any noise. His is a ball-bearing personality; he moves swiftly, but with never a squeak or a rasp. He cannot be classified because there never has been any one quite like him. Therefore he has been called

“assistant President” — a new name for a new and puzzling figure.’¹

‘December 28, 1915: When we reached the pier [recorded House] there was the greatest array of newspapermen with cameras and moving-picture machines I have ever seen. There must have been fifty of them ranged up to do execution. I was perfectly pleasant, acceding to their demands, and posing for them something like five minutes. After that, I allowed reporters and photographers to keep me busy until the ship sailed. There were a number of friends to see us off.

‘Before leaving the pier, the General Manager of the Holland-America Line had our things moved from the cabin we had engaged to the cabin de luxe, consisting of a sitting-room, two bedrooms, and two baths. . . .’

With Colonel House on this trip as on all his others, went his wife regardless of the perils and inconveniences of war-time travel. Like her husband, she possessed the capacity for making and keeping friends in Europe; she had a taste for adventure and an extending ability for rising above physical discomfort. And from the early eighties she had shared with House every phase of his political adventures. After the war the statesmen of Europe wrote to her in the same tone of regard as that which they used with the Colonel himself. He was also accompanied invariably by his secretary, Miss Denton, without whose aid he could hardly have accomplished his negotiations; at his dictation she daily transcribed the record of confidential conferences, discreetly fulfilled the most delicate missions, coded and decoded despatches, maintained the never-ceasing correspondence which kept him in touch, no matter how rapid his movements, with all his sources of information in America and Europe.

Curiously enough, upon this particular voyage, Captain

¹ Atlantic City *Review*, December 26, 1915.

Boy-Ed, the overzealous German naval attaché, was a fellow passenger. House's natural friendliness toward newspaper reporters must have been strained when, after the voyage, an enterprising journalist combined separate pictures of himself, Boy-Ed, and Brand Whitlock, who was also on board, so as to manufacture an apparently amiable group.

The friendship with Whitlock which began at this time became closer as the years passed. 'He has the kindly human interest,' wrote House. 'He is not given to hate or recrimination. He knows literature and the fine arts. He knows our political institutions and our people and their aspirations. When peace comes, I think the President should send him higher up.'

Disembarking at Falmouth on January 5, Colonel House found that the estimate now placed by the British Government upon the significance of his visit was not less than that of the American public.¹

'January 5, 1916 [Falmouth]: We arrived this afternoon at three o'clock. The British Government had made arrangements to disembark our party. The balance of the passengers will not be allowed to leave the ship under twenty-four hours, because of examinations incident to the war. The naval officers who came on board had our baggage taken by

¹ Compare the following extract from a letter written by Plunkett to Balfour, later secretly printed for the information of the British Cabinet: '... For more than the life of a generation I have been in intimate touch with men and things in the United States. Interest in American agricultural problems has made me known to the three last Presidents and their Administrations. Thus also, some three years ago, I had the good fortune to become acquainted with Colonel House, with whom ever since I have been in frequent communication. If the story of President Wilson's actions through this crisis is ever told, not the least of the things to his credit will be the departure from all diplomatic precedents in availing himself of the services of this wise and far-seeing political observer and adviser. ...'

'105 MOUNT STREET, LONDON
'February 24, 1916'

hand to the railway station, engaged taxicabs, sleeping-car accommodations, and did everything possible to make our journey to London comfortable.'

Colonel House immediately began conversations with the British statesmen. He did not intend, however, to suggest his specific plan until he had formed an exact estimate of the factors necessary to success. He wanted first to explain American opinion on the trade dispute and to discuss the more general aspects of American coöperation in a world organization such as Grey and he himself had in mind.

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

LONDON, January 7, 1916

Arrived yesterday. Have had conferences with Grey and Balfour separately. The three of us will meet Monday to try to formulate some plan which I can submit to you and which they can recommend to their colleagues.

Their minds run parallel with ours, but I doubt their colleagues.

Grey is now in favor of the Freedom of the Seas provided it includes the elimination of militarism, and further provided we will join in a general covenant to sustain it.

Your action concerning the *Lusitania* and the *Persia*¹ will have a bearing on what can be done. Grey and Balfour understand, but their colleagues are doubtful as to your intentions regarding a vigorous foreign policy.

It would help in the conference Monday if you could cable

¹ The *Persia* was sunk December 30, 1915, in the Mediterranean. No evidence was forthcoming which could establish the responsibility of Germany, Austria-Hungary, or Turkey. In a memorandum delivered by Bernstorff, January 7, 1916, Germany stated that commanders of German submarines in the Mediterranean had been ordered to deal with enemy merchant vessels in that area as Wilson had required, and that officers disobeying this order would be punished. Apparently Germany was acquiescing in the American contention.

me some assurance of your willingness to coöperate in a policy seeking to bring about and maintain permanent peace.

EDWARD HOUSE

In reply President Wilson cabled to House that he might convey the assurance that he would be willing and glad, when the opportunity came, to coöperate in a policy seeking to bring about and maintain permanent peace among civilized nations. The cable may well be regarded as historic. It marked Wilson's definite embarkation upon a course which was to make him the foremost proponent of a league of nations. It was a clear-cut departure from the traditional American policy of isolation. The President, who, until the summer of 1915, had taken little interest in world affairs, now began to centre his whole being upon a line of action that might rescue the world from the disaster that had overtaken it.

Colonel House, in his talk with Grey, emphasized the value to the British of a general international covenant based upon disarmament and the Freedom of the Seas, and insisted that those were the basic conditions upon which the war might come to an end.

'*January 6, 1916:* It was gratifying [House recorded] to have Sir Edward meet me halfway. I thought the Freedom of the Seas would accomplish for Great Britain what her predominant naval power does for her now, but it would be less costly, more effective, and would not irritate neutrals. If the Freedom of the Seas was agreed upon as an international policy, the nation breaking the agreement would have to reckon with every other nation. If the pact I have in mind was in force, and Germany had broken it, every subscribing nation would be aiding Great Britain in her effort to punish the offenders. On the other hand, if Great Britain had broken the pact, she would be the one facing united opposition.

'He was gratified to hear me express my belief that public opinion in the United States had advanced to a point where it was reasonably certain we would enter some world agreement having for its object the maintenance of peace, if a workable plan could be devised.

'I thought it far better for the democracies of the world to unite upon some plan which would enable the United States to intervene, than for us to drift into the war by breaking diplomatic relations with the Central Powers. He concurred in this view.

'I confessed having advised the President against an actual break with Germany at this time, because I hoped we might come to some agreement along the lines now contemplated. I told him the President was in sympathy with this view. The Secretary of State, on the other hand, was insistent that we make an actual break with Germany.'

II

*Colonel House to the President*LONDON, *January 7, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... I was with Sir Edward for an hour and a half yesterday and dined with Balfour, and the three of us are to meet together Monday. When Sir Edward asked me what members of the Cabinet I wished to meet at lunch, I suggested that he have only Balfour since we were the only three who speak your language.

I told him if we failed to come to a better understanding with England and failed to help solve the problems brought about by this war properly, it would be because his Government and people could not follow you to the heights you would go.

Having Page's expression of their opinion in mind, I gave him what seemed to me to be the spirit of America. I asked him not to be misled by the motives which actuated New

York, Chicago, and some of the commercial centres, but to accept my word that we were not a people driven mad by money. On the contrary, I thought that no nation in the world had such lofty ideals and would be so willing to make sacrifices for them.

I recalled the fact that our population was made up of idealists that had left Europe for a larger freedom, and this spirit was as strong now as it had been at any time in our existence.

I talked to him about our shipping troubles at some length and urged him to make matters easier for you. He explained the difficulties he encountered, which he felt sure you did not fully realize. . . .

I touched lightly upon Spring-Rice and sowed the seeds for a further discussion.

He admits that things have gone badly for the Allies, but declares that England was never more resolute than now and that the outcome will be successful. I find all with whom I have talked so far of the same opinion. Their confidence seems greater now than it did when I was here before.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

LONDON, *January 11, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am seeing as many people as can be crowded into the waking hours and shall continue to do so until we leave on the twentieth. Soldiers, sailors, politicians, and editors are on my list.

Our friend, A. G. Gardiner,¹ was with me for an hour and a half yesterday. I gave him more time than to others because I wanted to increase, if possible, his already high opinion of you.

¹ Publicist and author of biographical studies on British statesmen which President Wilson particularly enjoyed.

These efforts have been merely to create a better and more favorable understanding of your purposes. But my real effort has been directed at Grey and Balfour. I did not think it wise to discuss intimate affairs with all the Cabinet, and these two were chosen because of my confidence in them which you share. It seemed better to place the responsibility directly on them.

The general line of my argument was that you had arranged a closer union of the Americas so if it was thought best not to enter a world-wide sphere, we could safely lead an isolated life of our own.¹ If this were decided upon, I told them, we would increase our army and navy and remain within our own hemisphere.

On the other hand, I explained, you believed that in order to justify fully our existence as a great nation, it might be necessary to bring to bear all our power in behalf of peace and the maintenance of it.

They wanted to know how far you would be willing to enter into an agreement concerning European affairs. I thought you would not be willing to do this at all, but you would be willing to come to an agreement with the civilized world upon the broad questions touching the interests and future of every nation. Such questions, for instance, as the general elimination, so far as practicable, of militarism and navalism. . . .

Balfour made the remark that he would see what concessions his colleagues would be willing to make to American opinion. I asked him to please not put it in that way, since we did not consider they were making any concessions whatever to us, but it was quite the other way round. We were willing to consider some means by which we could serve civilization, but, if we did, we felt it would be at a sacrifice of our own traditional policy and entailed some danger which does not confront us now.

¹ A reference to the Pan-American Pact.

I also told them that unless they were willing to approach the matter in an unselfish spirit, there was no need to attempt it at all.

They are so confident of ultimate military success that I endeavored to shake them somewhat, and I think I did. I asked if it were not within the bounds of possibility that Germany would push Russia further back in the spring and summer, giving her an excuse to make a separate peace upon terms which might be more favorable than if the Allies were victorious. If this were done, Germany might throw her entire weight on the western front and, without seeking to strike France a mortal blow, offer her equally favorable terms. They admitted this possibility.

Germany, I told them, considered she had but one antagonist and, before going under, would be willing to promise Russia a free hand towards warm seaports both to the south and west. She could return to France, Alsace and Lorraine, and could restore Belgium with the exception of Antwerp and the south of the Scheldt. This would leave her with the Austrian Empire practically a part of the German Empire and would secure a free hand in Asia Minor, Egypt, India, and parts of Africa, as her ultimate goal.

Under such conditions British sea-power, I thought, would not last three months — not because it might be defeated at sea, but because all nations would protest against the restrictions on trade. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

III

During his two weeks in England, House renewed the personal intimacies he had formed on previous visits. The variety of his contacts was surprising. He had the gift of the accomplished listener, which led people to pour confidences into his ear, and also a genius for quiet persuasion

which helped him to explain the point of view taken by the Washington Government. Many of his conferences might have been described as trivial, except that they solidified the personal understanding which lies at the bottom of successful diplomacy.

'*January 6, 1916*: Sidney Brooks invited Mr. Balfour, St. Loe Strachey, and A. H. Pollen to meet me at dinner at Brooks's Club. I was nearly a half-hour late, being detained by my conference with Sir Edward Grey.

'Every one was in good form, especially Balfour, and we had a delightful evening. The conversation was mainly of passing interest. Balfour told of the activities of the British submarines in the Baltic. He said the German submarines were not as effective, either in construction or as well manned, as the British; that if they were, they would be a serious menace to Great Britain. . . .

'*January 7, 1916*: Page lunched with me. He was full of the growing unpopularity of the President and United States in Great Britain. He questioned whether the President would ever take decisive action concerning the *Lusitania* or similar matters. He thinks the feeling against us here is caused by inaction over the *Lusitania*. He asked whether I thought the President would be offended with what he had written and cabled him. I thought it quite likely. . . .

'I have been here (England) but little more than twenty-four hours and already the entire two weeks I plan to stay is taken up with engagements for luncheons and dinners.

'*January 8, 1916*: Eric Drummond, Sir Edward Grey's secretary, lunched with me. He has Grey's entire confidence and I spoke very freely to him. . . . I told him the present situation gave the best opportunity since the United States became a republic, for a closer understanding between our two countries. . . . The difficulty in the way of such an under-

standing was Great Britain's high-handed policy upon the seas — a policy that was not only irritating to us, but to all neutral countries as well. . . .

'H. C. Hoover called in the afternoon to tell of his tribulations in Belgium. The Germans, according to him, are not keeping the spirit of their agreement as to foodstuffs. They are levying tribute upon the Belgians and with the money are buying Belgian cattle to feed their army. This is contrary to the understanding with the British and French Governments. Hoover asked me to dine with him to meet some of the English pacifists, among them Hirst of the *Economist*. He believes the belligerents are tired and would welcome means of ending the conflict. I see no surface evidence of this.

'*January 9, 1916*: I dined with Page to meet Bonar Law and Levenson Harris. . . . Bonar Law is not a man whose mind runs in the same channel as mine, but I got along with him without undue argument. . . .

'*January 10, 1916*: I lunched with Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Balfour to discuss the real purpose of my visit to Europe. . . .

'Mr. Skinner, American Consul, called, and we talked of trade questions between Great Britain and the United States. He takes the American point of view as strongly as Page takes the British. He is a clear-headed, sensible fellow, and I believe is doing good work. . . .

'*January 11, 1916*: Clifford Carver invited the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mrs. McKenna, and the President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Runciman, for lunch. . . .

'McKenna and I discussed the ever-burning question of relations between Great Britain and the United States, and the part we should play. He was generous enough to say we had done a noble part by the Allies and that it would never be forgotten; that without the help we had already given them, it was quite possible the war would have ended last autumn, favorably to Germany. I expressed a hope he would

say as much to the British people. Both McKenna and Runciman repeatedly asserted that all criticism of the United States was done by irresponsible and ignorant people. . . .

'Lord Bryce called just after the luncheon party was over. . . . Bryce is to come again Thursday at ten o'clock for a further talk. I wish the benefit of his advice before I take up the discussion again with Grey and Balfour.

'Page had Lloyd George, Reginald McKenna, Austen Chamberlain, and Lord Reading to meet me. . . . It was curious to find McKenna and Lloyd George at the same table, for they have not been on speaking terms during the past few weeks. It was even more curious to see Chamberlain with the other three, for until the advent of the war it would have been impossible to have induced him to put his feet under the same table with them.

'Page started the conversation by saying that Mr. Chamberlain and others had asked him "what the United States wished Great Britain to do," and he requested me to give an answer. I replied, "The United States would like Great Britain to do those things which would enable the United States to help Great Britain win the war." Page generously said, "You have answered the question with more cleverness than I had the wit to do."

'My reply brought general approval, as naturally it would, and then came the discussion as to what Great Britain must do to help the United States help her. I went into our shipping troubles at some length and told them of the burden their restrictions placed upon the President.

'The question of atrocities came up, and I made the following observation: "England should be thankful for every act of frightfulness Germany has committed, for every man, woman, and child that has died at sea or on land, has died for England just as much as the soldiers in the field."¹

¹ Colonel House's argument was that German attacks on non-combatants brought home the proximity of the War to the British as nothing else could have done.

'January 12, 1916: I lunched with Page to meet Sir Edward Grey, Lord Robert Cecil, and Irwin Laughlin. . . .

'January 13, 1916: Lord Bryce called at ten o'clock and remained until noon. We had a good talk. I feel he knows America so well that he can understand and advise in the many perplexing questions confronting us. I suggested to Grey yesterday that he ask Bryce to go to the United States. Bryce does not wish to make a winter voyage, but is willing to do so should it become necessary. . . . Bryce sees as many difficulties in a visit to America as I saw in one in Europe. The wounding of ambassadorial dignity would be not the least of them. . . .

'I went to lunch at Brooks's to meet Garvin of the *Observer*, Spender of the *Westminster Gazette*, and Captain Hall of the Intelligence Department. The lunch was given by A. H. Pollen. . . .

'We dined at the Embassy. The other guests were Lord and Lady Northcliffe and Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Laughlin. Northcliffe talked rather foolishly about the length of the war, the blockade, the Dardanelles, the Kaiser's health, and gave us much misinformation.

'January 14, 1916: I called at Buckingham Palace at eleven o'clock and had a pleasant hour with the King. He was not at all pessimistic as to the attitude of the United States, but, on the contrary, as soon as I explained some doubts in his mind, he cordially agreed with our position. I made my usual argument concerning the submarine issue, the German-Americans, and our difficulties with Mexico which are troubling us afresh. He said he understood quite well why the President did not intend to permit Germany to force us into war with Mexico.

'Northcliffe said last night that the Kaiser was dying of tuberculosis of the throat. The King declared this was nonsense; that he merely had a carbuncle on the back of his neck. . . .

'I dined at the Savoy Hotel with Lord Reading and Mr. Lloyd George. They had a private dining-room. . . . Lloyd George had been to see "The Birth of a Nation" and was much interested in my account of the reconstruction period in the South. During dinner, while the waiters were present, we discussed matters in general, such as the American political situation and the coming campaign. I found George as ignorant as ever of our public men and affairs. . . .

'He believes Great Britain will not come out of the war any the worse. Life will be lengthened because of better habits and the training of youth. The productive power will be strengthened because the drones have all been put to work and will probably continue there. He estimated this would add more than a billion dollars to England's wealth, and that untold millions will be saved because of the simple lives people will lead from now. . . .

'*January 16, 1916:* Lady Paget dined with us and we went to the theatre with her. She has been spending the week-end at a house party where Lord Curzon was also a guest. She said he spoke with great bitterness of the United States. She thought it would be a good thing if Lloyd George became Prime Minister. . . .

'*January 18, 1916:* We lunched with Mr. and Mrs. Asquith to-day. Mrs. Asquith and I had considerable conversation. She can be delightful when she tries, and she seemed to try her best. Our conversation covered a wide range of men and measures, and I found her well-informed, alert, and intelligent. . . .

'I dined with St. Loe Strachey. The other guests were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Stamfordham, Captain Hall, and Colonel Hankey of the National Defence Board. Strachey sat at one end of the table and I at the other, with the Archbishop at my right and Stamfordham at my left. It was a quiet and pleasant dinner. The conversation was not exciting and embraced many subjects other than the

war. We discussed Lincoln, the Civil War, and features of the blockade during that time. We also talked of Mark Twain, Artemus Ward, and Josh Billings, and I found most of the company familiar with their writings. I was surprised to hear Stamfordham say that the late King Edward read Artemus Ward frequently.

'One of the curious phenomena the war has developed is the childlike belief which intelligent people have in stories circulated about spies, the cruelty of the enemy, and what not. One finds it here, in France, in Germany, and elsewhere. One such story has been going the rounds in London. It was told again at this dinner. The substance of it is that a distinguished American writer, whose sympathy was anti-German, went to Holland. The German Minister at The Hague invited him to go to Berlin and interview the Kaiser. A Zeppelin was to come for him, wait until the interview was over, and bring him back to The Hague. The American was delighted with the invitation and accepted. The Zeppelin called for him, and took him to an altitude which caused him to die of heart failure.

'It was thought to be a dastardly plot, and denounced in unmeasured terms. I asked if they knew the name of the American, and was told it was James Creelman. I unfeelingly punctured the story by telling them I knew Creelman well; that he had had diabetes for years, and died in a hospital in Berlin of that disease, and not in a Zeppelin. After I finished, there was a long silence, and I felt guilty of spoiling a favorite war pastime.

'*January 19, 1916:* At seven o'clock I went to No. 33 Eccleston Square. Sir Edward was awaiting me. He said the Prime Minister was giving a dinner to-night in honor of Aristide Briand, the French Premier, and he had been requested to invite me. There is no one to be present excepting important members of the Government and Ambassadors of the Allied countries; therefore I did not think it well to accept. . . .'

House might well feel complimented, not merely by this invitation, but by the invariable symptoms of confidence that were manifested to him. It was a rare tribute paid to his discretion and integrity that the ministers of governments should discuss the problems of the war with him, a foreign citizen, almost as though he were one of themselves, and that too at the moment when he was on the point of leaving for an enemy country. When, long after the war, they were asked to explain so extraordinary a situation, they replied simply: 'Well, you see, it was Colonel House.'¹

IV

The really important conferences into which House entered were those in which he discussed with Lloyd George, Grey, and Balfour the end of the war and the rôle of co-operation which the United States might play, if the British should agree to his plan of American intervention.

'*January 14, 1916* [conference with Lloyd George]: His view of what may happen during the spring and summer largely coincides with mine. The British, he tells me, will have four million men fully equipped and trained and with guns larger than any now in use. While he does not expect conclusive results, he believes the Germans may be thrown back at many points, much to the advantage of the Allies. . . . He thought by September first, the big battles of the summer would have been fought and that a forecast could then be made of what the final end might be.

'George believes the war could go on indefinitely, and will do so unless the President intervenes; but he does not think

¹ Conversations with Lord Grey and Lord Balfour, June, 1924. According to the best information available, Colonel House was the only foreigner who had ever been given the use of a British Foreign Office cipher code.

intervention, to be effective, should be offered until around September first. . . .

'He had looked upon the Freedom of the Seas as a German proposal. When he found it was mine and in accord with the President's views, he seemed to think better of it.

'He was insistent that the Turkish Empire must go, and that Poland should again become a nation. We discussed all these matters at considerable length. His mind acts quickly, largely upon impulse, and he lacks the slow reasoning of the ordinary British statesman. He was interested in my forecast concerning Asia, and in my conviction that Great Britain should make her plans some day to leave that continent. I thought that China in the future might play the same rôle Turkey has in the past, and be the cause of innumerable bloody conflicts.

'I tried to scare him as I have others regarding Russia making a separate peace.¹ . . . He thought if the United States would stand by Great Britain, the entire world could not shake the combined mastery we would hold over the seas. In this he is probably right. . . .

'What I was most interested in was George's insistence that the war could only be brought to an end by the President, and that terms could be dictated by him which the belligerents would never agree upon if left to themselves. Fantastic as this may seem, there is some truth in it; and if the President had taken my advice and increased the army of the United States in the early months of the war, as I strongly urged him to do, he would be in a position to-day to do what George wishes him to do this coming autumn.

'*January 15, 1916:* At half-past three o'clock, I walked to

¹ We may note the insistence with which House returns to this danger in his conversations, a danger finally realized in the peace of Brest-Litovsk, but which might perhaps have been averted if the Western Allies had handled the Russian problem differently.

No. 4 Carlton Gardens to meet Balfour and Grey. Grey arrived close upon my heels and we lost no time in getting deep into our discussion. A large map of southeastern Europe and Anatolia was upon the wall. I stood before the map and told them the story of my last night's meeting with Lloyd George and Reading. I gave them in detail the division of the world, as George outlined it, and the extraordinary part he would have the President play. I asked if they had discussed the matter with him. They replied, "Not at all; he has probably thought the thing out and seized upon your being in London to discuss it with you."

'Balfour and I did most of the talking — I proposing, he always objecting. He has an argumentative mind. . . . Sir Edward was mostly silent; but when he spoke it was to agree with me, and to present an additional argument in behalf of the position I had taken. We went through the international phases of what would constitute the Freedom of the Seas and the elimination of militarism, and what protection Great Britain would secure on the one hand and lose on the other. Balfour raised many supposititious cases, none of them having any real bearing upon the matter proposed. He is unalterably distrustful of Germany, and was forever coming back to whether Germany could be counted upon to keep any bargain or play any game fairly. That, I told him, was beside the mark. What should be done was to get all nations in league together, and at least a majority of them would play fairly under the lead of Great Britain and the United States; and Germany would be the loser if she failed to keep to her agreement. Grey reënforced me here strongly. We parted with the understanding that they should think the matter over and discuss it with the Prime Minister and Lloyd George, and take it up with me when I returned from the Continent.

'Grey and I left together and walked up Pall Mall to St. James Street, where I left him at Brooks's Club. During the

walk we moralized upon how difficult it was to do the things that seemed best, because the people did not understand and would not permit free action. Again I wish to pay tribute to Grey's unselfish statesmanship. I wish the destinies of Great Britain were more nearly in his keeping.

'*January 19, 1916:* I wish Lloyd George was Prime Minister, with Sir Edward Grey as Foreign Minister, for I believe we could then do something. The Cabinet are all too conservative, and boldness is needed at this time. George has this quality, I believe. . . .

'I fear that British conservatism will make improbable any real accomplishment. They will delay decisions as long as they can, even as they delayed the proposal I made in June, 1914, looking toward a better understanding with Germany. I have always felt that the war might possibly have been avoided if they had acted with expedition.'

v

There were especial reasons why delay might interfere with the success of House's plan. The dispute between the Prussian Foreign Office and the Department of State over the wording of the *Lusitania* disavowal was likely to produce, at any moment, a new diplomatic crisis. More imminent, however, inasmuch as the Germans appeared to have assumed a conciliatory attitude, was the demand of the United States Senate for action against the Allies, perhaps an embargo, as retaliation for interference with American commerce. If the Senate compelled Wilson to take decided measures, all chance of a working understanding with the Allies would disappear. Warned of the situation, House urged the President to hold matters as they were as long as possible.

Wilson had cabled him on January 12 that it appeared likely that the difficulties with Germany would soon be arranged and that in this case the demand, especially from the Senate, would be imperative that the United States force

England to make at least equal concessions. Wilson himself felt this to be only just.

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, January 13, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Your cable concerning our shipping troubles has come.

I wish I might be with you to-day to tell you of conditions here. Page had Sir Edward Grey and Lord Robert Cecil¹ to lunch, and we discussed these matters at length. Lord Robert told me, and Sir Edward confirmed it, that if he acceded to your request his resignation would be demanded at once. Personally, he is willing to do anything. He even goes so far as to suggest that it might come to the complete abandonment of the blockade, in which case Germany would perhaps win.

He does not believe there can be halfway measures. It has to be rigid, or not at all. . . .

I have presented our side of the argument to nearly every member of the Cabinet. I have given them the state of public feeling in America and have told them of the danger which the Allies run in doing these things and in creating adverse opinion against them. They know your position now as well as I know it, and they appreciate it.

Among the many editors I have talked with is Robert Donald of the *Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* has now perhaps the largest circulation of any paper in England. Donald promised yesterday to write a leader concerning you. . . .

I believe I have gotten enough sentiment in influential quarters favorable to the position you have taken, to bring public opinion in England entirely around. It is not advisable, however, to use it at this time, but it may be later; and then I think it can be done.

I have had two conferences with Bryce. I talk to him more freely than to any one excepting Grey and Balfour. I

¹ Minister of Blockade.

wish he could be in America, for he would sense the situation there better than any one else. I told him in the strictest confidence something of our difficulties with Sir Cecil, and asked his advice. He thought it would be exceedingly unwise for me to take the matter up here. . . .

I believe we had better leave the matter in abeyance until I return, for, if done now, it may interfere with some of the plans we have in mind.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

LONDON, *January 16, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . It would be a calamity if anything should happen to prevent Sir Edward's continuance in the Government until peace is made. And yet if we push them too hard upon the question of neutral trade, he is likely to go.

The feeling is becoming more and more set, and the country is demanding that the Government stand firm. . . .

Grey, Balfour, and George say if they could tell the country that there was a chance of bringing about a tentative understanding with us, the people would yield to almost any demand we might make. But the opinion is firmly fixed that America will do nothing, and that England must fight the battle alone, with the only weapon that has so far proved effective.

Nearly every American here, and this includes our entire Embassy I think, would be glad to see us come into the war on the side of the Allies. This feeling is shared, of course, by many Englishmen and by nearly all the French, although one is constantly told that this is not desired. . . .

I am sure that our policy should be to have no serious break with the Allies over the blockade, and to keep upon such terms with Germany that our diplomatic relations may be maintained. . . . It does not matter how much you are

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reviled now, if the end justifies your course. The criticism, both in Europe and America, comes from ignorance and from partisan feeling, and can be swept aside by your final action.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. Of course, I do not mean to advise that diplomatic relations should not be immediately broken if the Central Powers sink another passenger ship without warning. If this were not done, it would discredit us everywhere and greatly minimize your influence.

CHAPTER VI

DEADLOCK IN EUROPE

We are the only nation left on earth with sufficient power to lead them out.

House to Wilson, February 9, 1916

I

ON January 20, Colonel House left England for Germany, by way of Paris and Geneva. He had not as yet specified the exact terms of the American offer of assistance. He wished first to see for himself whether the Germans would yield sufficient to raise the hope of an early peace based upon the general conditions he and Grey had agreed upon; or whether they were determined to continue the struggle, even with the United States entering to enforce a 'reasonable' peace.

House had made plain to Grey what he regarded as the basis of a reasonable peace: the cession of Alsace-Lorraine to France, restoration of Belgium and Serbia, Constantinople for Russia, a league of nations to prevent aggressive war. He believed that the acceptance of such terms by Germany would mean the defeat of German militarism and the failure of the militarist plan for the control of Europe. He was willing to give Germany a chance to accept such terms, for he feared that, if the war went on to a complete smash of Germany, the entire world, victors and vanquished, would go down in economic ruin. Furthermore, he was not convinced that it would be easy to secure a just and permanent peace through the 'knock-out blow,' for he appreciated the extent to which the ideals of the Allies were in danger of taint by selfish aspirations.

Mr. Page did not approve Colonel House's mission to Germany. He insisted upon her smashing defeat without nego-

tiation and he was glad to permit the Allies to dictate any terms they chose.¹ House's efforts, however, received the sanction of the more moderate of the British, who, in the midst of belligerent passion and determined though they were not to compromise with militarism, never forgot the cost of war and its aftermath. They were anxious that every loophole should be explored.

'*January 19, 1916:* Both Sir Edward Grey and Lord Bryce [wrote House] thoroughly approve my trip to Berlin. I asked them the question direct, because Page discouraged it and said it was a mistake. . . .

'*January 20, 1916:* We left this morning for Paris, *via* Folkestone-Boulogne. A private car was placed at our disposal. An army officer, a Scotland Yard man, and the commander of the ship all looked out for our comfort and made it an easy passage. There were hundreds of troops on the boat, but no other civilians excepting ourselves. Each soldier donned a life preserver before we left the dock, and made ready for any emergency. A torpedo-boat destroyer accompanied us all the way. Two boats had been sunk within forty-eight hours, and extraordinary precautions were taken. . . .

'Upon arriving at Boulogne, we were met by the French Chief of Police and the British Provost Marshal. Military automobiles were waiting to convey us to the hotel or to Paris, as we desired. The weather was so wild that we preferred stopping the night at Boulogne. The hotel was filled with British officers. There were no civilian guests other than ourselves. The town looks more British than French. I was

¹ If the reader feels inclined to criticize Mr. Page's judgment, in view of the Allied failure to achieve security even after the smashing defeat of Germany, he should remind himself that the American Ambassador's views were those of the vast majority of the country to which he was accredited, opinions which he heard reiterated many times every day.

told that as many as 22,000 British wounded had been brought in here in one day. The entire city has the appearance of a huge military camp and arsenal.'

House stopped for a few days in Paris, evading all decisive conversations, which he reserved for his return, after he had formed his impressions of Germany. He passed hastily through Switzerland, where authorized and unauthorized agents of the belligerents met upon the field of intrigue — a vast whispering gallery — and crossed the German frontier at Basle.

'*January 26, 1916:* We arrived in Berlin in the early morning, on time. I was met at the station by some of the Embassy staff, including Secretary Grew. We drove directly to the Embassy. Soon after arriving, Gerard and I exchanged confidences. . . .

'Newspaper reporters, the Embassy staff, Americans, Germans, and what not, have kept me busy all day.

'Gerard gave a dinner of twenty-four. The Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, was to have been at this dinner, but the Kaiser called him to the front; consequently he will not be here until Friday. The Dutch Minister, Gevers, was among the guests with whom I talked. He has been in Berlin for nine years and I assumed he was pro-German. He started the conversation in a way that would have indicated he was pro-Ally, but this did not disarm me, and I gradually brought him around to a point where he expressed his real views and I obtained the information I was seeking regarding the relations between Holland and Germany, and Dutch sentiment as to the war. . . .

'I have forgotten to mention that Count von Moltke called during the day. I find him more unreasonable and not at all the unprejudiced man he was before the war. Von Moltke believes me to be entirely without prejudice. He

does not know that I feel that the guilt of this stupendous tragedy lies with the Prussian military autocracy.

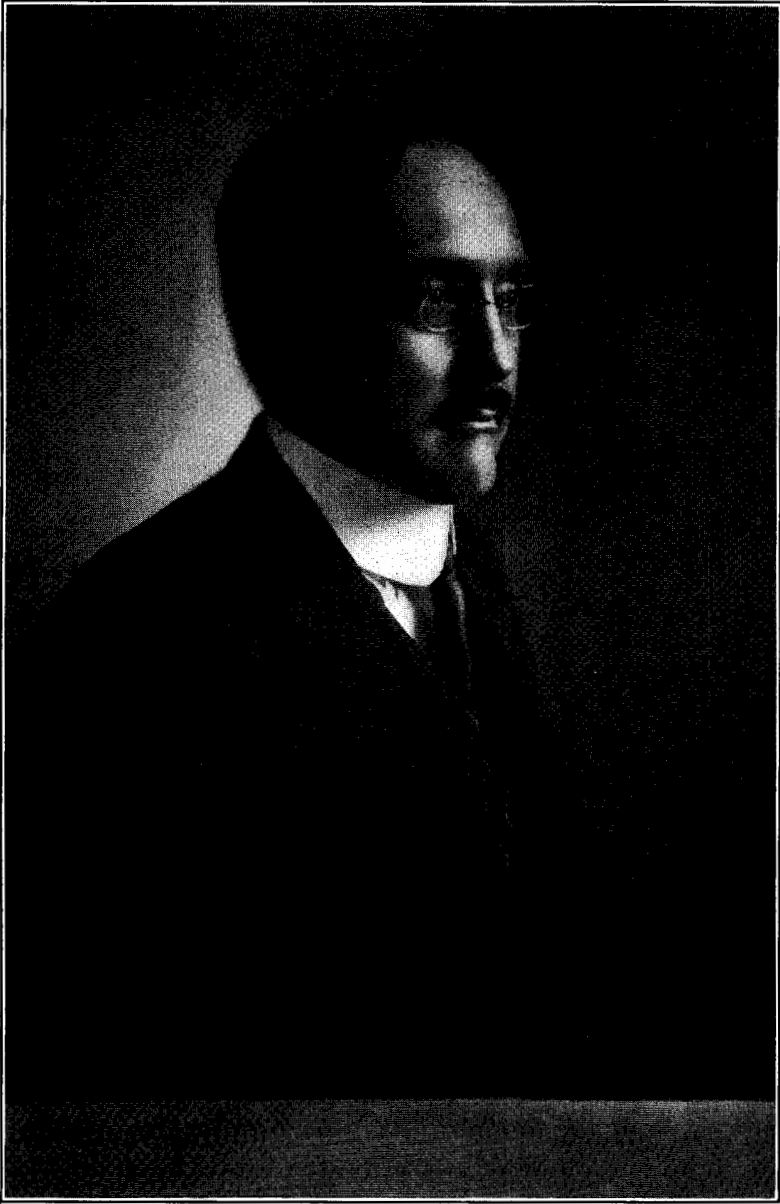
'January 27, 1916: The most important people seen to-day have been von Gwinner, of the Deutsche Bank, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Herr Solf, both of whom came to lunch.

'Solf . . . is the fairest and broadest of all the German officials, and largely, I take it, because he has lived a great part of his life out of Germany. He told me in confidence, "not to be repeated," he said, "to the Ambassador or any one," that there was a controversy in process between the Chancellor on the one hand, and von Tirpitz and von Falkenhayn on the other, regarding undersea warfare. For the moment the Chancellor holds the ascendancy; but von Falkenhayn is leaning more and more toward von Tirpitz, and Solf is uncertain as to the final outcome. He urged me to talk to the Chancellor as frankly as I had to him, and to let him know the danger of a break between the United States and Germany if the von Tirpitz idea should prevail. . . .

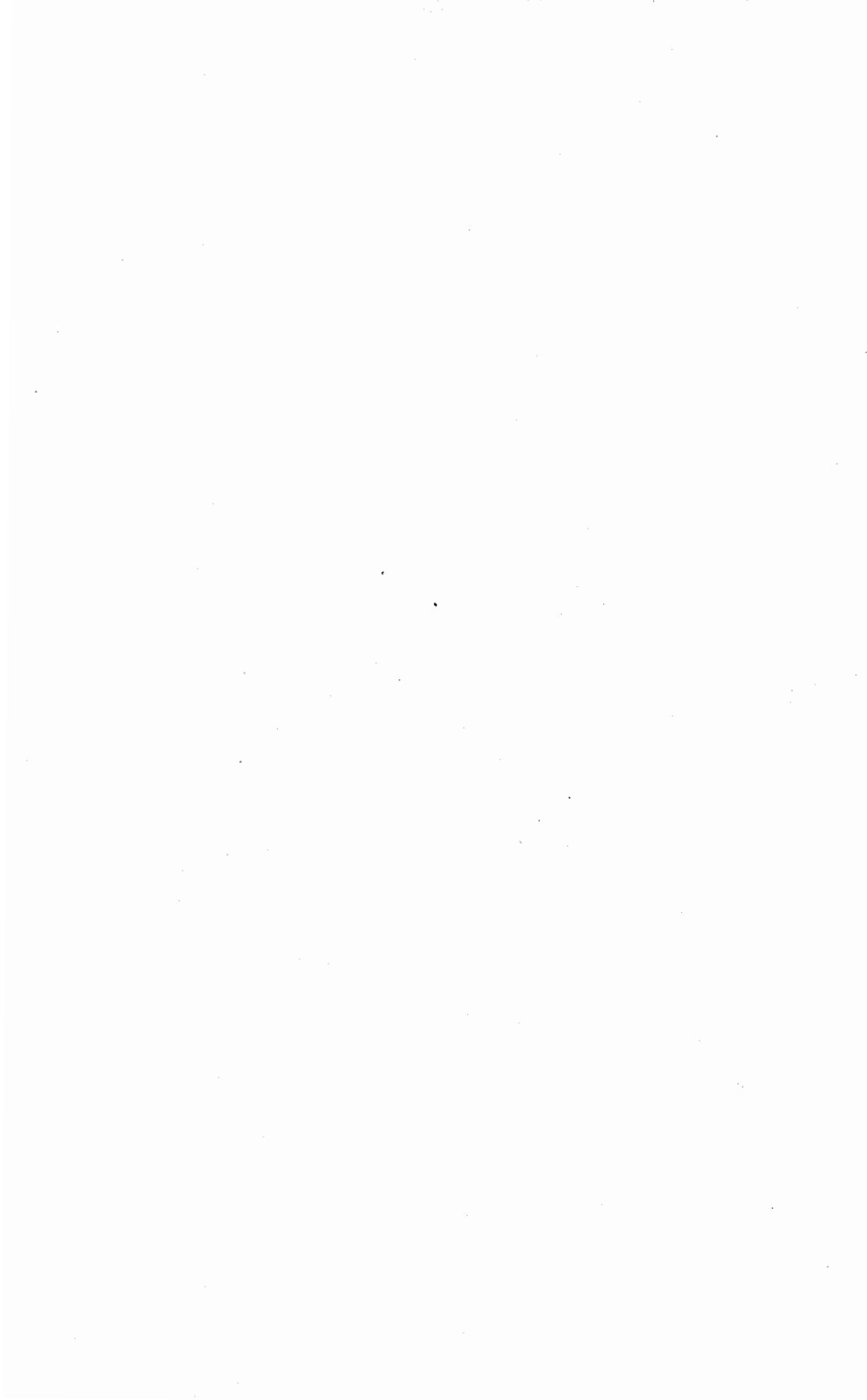
'I talked to von Gwinner next. I found him fairly reasonable, much more so than Gerard had led me to expect. He, too, wants peace and has no illusions as to how it might be brought about. . . .

'Von Jagow (the Foreign Secretary) has asked us to dinner Saturday evening, but we declined, as I think it best to accept no invitations outside the Embassy. I do not wish to meet von Tirpitz by any chance, and this will be beyond my control if I am entertained elsewhere. I feel that von Tirpitz is almost solely responsible for German frightfulness upon the sea. . . .

'Gerard told me to-day of his conversation with the Kaiser. The Kaiser did not approve the sinking of the *Lusitania*, or killing women and children. He thought the commander should not have done it. He takes this position now, but he must have known well in advance that it was con-



JAMES W. GERARD



templated. He was very belligerent at first, in talking to Gerard, but finally became more reasonable as the discussion advanced.

‘The Kaiser talked of peace and how it should be made and by whom, declaring that “I and my cousins, George and Nicholas, will make peace when the time comes.” Gerard says to hear him talk one would think that the German, English, and Russian peoples were so many pawns upon a chessboard. He made it clear that mere democracies like France and the United States could never take part in such a conference. His whole attitude was that war was a royal sport, to be indulged in by hereditary monarchs and concluded at their will. He told Gerard he knew Germany was right, because God was on their side, and God would not be with them if they were wrong, and it was because God was with them they had been enabled to win their victories.

‘I asked Gerard whether he was crazy or whether he was merely posing. . . .

‘I am wondering how long any part of the world will continue to be ruled by such masters. Long ago, in my inexperience I thought governments were controlled by the great, who were actuated solely by patriotic motives. Now that I am playing the game with them, I find that selfishness plays the major part. It is appalling to me to see how heartless some are who are profiting in one way or another by the war. I say this with knowledge, and I wish the world could realize it.’

The following evening, House had long conferences with the Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary. That with Bethmann is of the keenest interest to historians since it furnished an explanation of the origin of the phrase ‘a scrap of paper,’ utilized by the Chancellor in his conversation with the British Ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, during the crisis of 1914, a phrase which brought infinite damage to Germany

in the years that followed. Bethmann's explanation is plausible, the more so in that the conversation with the British Ambassador seems to have been in German and Goschen might have caught the phrase without the context.

'*January 28, 1916: Among the guests at dinner to-night [House wrote] were the Chancellor, von Jagow, the Turkish Ambassador, and many others. There were twenty-two in all. After dinner the Chancellor and I went into the Blue Room alone and talked for an hour and a half. One of the first things he explained was the now historic remark concerning the Belgian Treaty being "a scrap of paper." He said the way it occurred was thus: Sir Edward Goschen called, before hostilities began between Germany and Great Britain, to discuss the critical situation. The Chancellor, according to his story, spoke with much feeling of the enormity of the crime which would be committed against civilization and the "white races," should Germany and Great Britain war upon one another. By the "white races" he meant English, Germans, and Americans, for he believed that the peace, the civilization, and the security of the world were in their keeping. When Sir Edward Goschen protested and argued against the invasion of Belgium, insisting if it were done Great Britain must necessarily declare war against Germany, the Chancellor explained that in comparison to the great harm that would result from war between these two countries, the Treaty with Belgium was "as a mere scrap of paper."*'¹

'The Chancellor insisted that he did not intend to convey the idea which was afterward ascribed to him, and he still contends he was right.

'He told me, too, that Germany had no alternative other

¹ This explanation softens the brutality of the phrase, but it does not alter the essential fact that the Berlin Government, in pursuit of selfish interests, grossly and cynically violated a treaty which Prussia herself had signed. Whatever he called it, the Chancellor made of the Belgian Treaty a 'scrap of paper.'

than to declare war, because of Russian mobilization; that he had repeatedly requested them to cease mobilization, but they declined to do so, and there was no escape for Germany excepting war. I called his attention to the fact that England had suggested a conference, and Russia acquiesced while Germany declined. This he admitted, but insisted that Russia was not playing fair and was continuing mobilization, and would have continued in spite of the proposed agreement for a conference. . . .

‘We talked of Sir Edward Grey — I in the most complimentary terms, and he in terms not unfriendly. I have endeavored to make it clear to the German Government that Grey is the most reasonable of English statesmen and that it would be a calamity if he should be displaced.’

House soon discovered that the rulers of Germany were in no mood to consider peace terms that would satisfy the Allies. Bethmann himself, probably one of the most pacific Germans alive, felt that he approached moderation when he suggested giving up the territory conquered by German arms in return for an indemnity. So long as the Germans persisted in the belief that they could win the war in a military sense, discussions of a settlement would be fruitless.

‘The most interesting part of our conversation [House continued] related to peace. He said he was the only one in authority among the belligerents who had spoken for peace, and he could not understand why there was no receptive echo anywhere. He deplored the war and its ghastly consequences, and declared the guilt did not lie upon his soul. I tried to make him see that his peace talk was interpreted merely as Germany’s desire to “cash in” her victories, and that the Allies did not believe she could hold her own from now on, and that another story would be told before the end. We went over this ground again and again, he maintaining

that he did not understand why the Allies were so stubborn, and I, on the other hand, explaining the real situation.

'I told him the British were a stubborn race and felt no concern as to the ultimate result. I called his attention to the South African War, when every one thought the British would be driven out. I knew at the time, I said, that they would wage war until they had either won or had expended their last guinea and last man. I also went over this same ground later in the evening with von Jagow, and it did not seem to sit easily upon the chest of either.

'They admitted that the British were a stubborn race, but added the word "unreasonable" as being more descriptive of them. The Chancellor intimated that Germany would be willing to evacuate both France and Belgium if indemnity were paid. That, I said, the Allies would not consider for a moment. He stated it had been the dream of his life to bring Great Britain, Germany, and America closer together, and he indicated a hope that even now this might be brought about. He spoke slightly of Russia and France, insisting that the three great nations of the world were those mentioned.

'We talked of undersea warfare, of the blockade, and he said it was futile for Great Britain to try to starve Germany. I told him western civilization had broken down, and there was not a market-place or a mosque in the East where the West of to-day was not derided. He admitted this, but said the fault was not Germany's.

'I was growing weary by now of the conversation, indicating it by silence; and in a few minutes we arose and joined the other guests.

'The Chancellor drank copiously of beer, which was served to us from time to time. I contented myself with mineral water, matching him glass for glass. The beer did not apparently affect him, for his brain was as befuddled at the begin-

ning as it was at the end. Into such hands are the destinies of the people placed.

'Von Jagow and I then went into the Blue Room and went over much of the ground I had covered with the Chancellor. He was somewhat more reasonable than the Chancellor, and argued Germany's position with more subtlety. We talked of the undersea warfare as it relates to the United States. I spoke of the folly of torpedoing the *Lusitania* and the *Arabic*, particularly the latter, which was westward bound without cargo and could by no possibility have carried munitions of war. He admitted this, but said he had talked to the submarine commander who had sunk her and he was convinced the captain believed the *Arabic* was trying to ram him. Had he been in the captain's place, he thought he would have done likewise.

'Von Jagow spoke with much feeling of the criticism made of Germany for her undersea warfare, and tried to explain how difficult it was for commanders to properly discriminate. I insisted that it was as brutal and useless as their Zeppelin raids. The sum total of deaths from Zeppelin attacks was less than two hundred at present — mostly women and children. The net result, I thought, was of enormous value to the Allies. This opinion was concurred in by a British Cabinet official, who regretted that the Zeppelins did not go to the West of England, where recruiting was slack. I said I suggested to Lloyd George that a line of electric lights should be strung across England, showing the way.

'By the time von Jagow and I finished, it was nearly midnight, and when we returned to the other guests they quickly dissolved. I went to bed with a feeling that not much had been accomplished by my discussions with the Chancellor and von Jagow. I hope for better results to-morrow with Zimmermann, who is, in some ways, the ablest, though not the most trustworthy, man in the Government.'

II

The chiefs of the civil Government showed themselves friendly, but obviously impotent to engage in any step that might lead toward peace; and all that House could do was to urge them to restrain their methods of warfare, so as not to make impossible a sincere reconciliation when the struggle came to a close.

‘Zimmermann to-day [he wrote on January 29], and von Jagow yesterday, expressed their keen appreciation of my endeavors to promote peace. I gave Zimmermann perhaps the most earnest talk I have made to any German official, for the reason he seems able to rise to it. I urged him not to allow his Government to do any of the petty things that irritate other belligerents and which have no military value. I said Germany was too great a nation to descend to such practices; that he was one of the statesmen who might lead his country into better paths; that there were statesmen in America, Great Britain, and France who had high ideals, and who were not actuated by selfish motives, and it was to them and those like them in Germany that the world must look for higher and better statesmanship. If it were not done by such men, our civilization would move backward rather than forward.

‘Zimmermann spoke in emphatic terms of what he called the “white races,” meaning Great Britain, Germany, and America, and he hoped, like the Chancellor, the time would come when there might be a more sympathetic accord between them. . . .’

Not until he had crossed the border into Switzerland did Colonel House dare send the President a detailed report on the German situation.

‘I have been under constant surveillance [he recorded

privately in Berlin] since I have been in Germany, as, indeed, I was in both France and Great Britain. The German Intelligence Department picked me up at Basle and will not turn me loose until I am across the German border. I am not sure they will not see me out of Switzerland. In front of our Embassy here, a number of plain-clothes men are always on duty, so I am told, as long as I remain. This was true during the last trip as well. It is done unobtrusively and in an unobjectionable way, and may be as much for my protection as to ascertain whom I see and what I do.'

His first cabled report, sent from Geneva, indicated the uncertainty of affairs in Germany. At any moment the extremists might come into power and declare void all the pledges given as to submarine methods. The Colonel felt more strongly than ever that if his plan for forcible mediation were to be given a chance, the dispute over the wording of the *Lusitania* apology should not be allowed to reach the breaking-point. Should the United States intervene, it would be far better to enter the war on the ground that our assistance would bring a decisive and permanent settlement, or because of a direct affront by Germany, rather than on an issue that was nearly a year old.

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
January 30, 1916

The situation is like this. A great controversy is going on in Germany regarding undersea warfare. The navy, backed more or less by the army, believe that Great Britain can be effectively blockaded, provided Germany can use their new and powerful submarines indiscriminately and not be hampered by any laws whatsoever. They also believe failure has resulted from our interference and Germany's endeavor to

conform to our demands. They think war with us would not be so disastrous as Great Britain's blockade. The civil Government believe that if the blockade continues, they may be forced to yield to the navy; consequently they are unwilling to admit illegality of their undersea warfare. They will yield anything but this. If you insist upon that point, I believe war will follow. Gerard understands the question and I would suggest letting him try to arrange something satisfactory direct. I hope final action may not be taken until I have had an opportunity of talking with you. This, I think, is of great importance, since there are phases of the situation that cannot be conveyed by cable or letter. . . . I reach Paris Tuesday morning.

EDWARD HOUSE

PARIS, *February 3, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

So much has happened since I last wrote that I scarcely know where to begin. I will not try to go into detail, leaving that for a personal conference.

I was well received in Germany — better than before, if anything. . . .

The Chancellor, for the moment, is in control with the Emperor. When I was there before, von Tirpitz and Falkenhayn were in the ascendancy. The Chancellor's advantage has brought von Tirpitz and von Falkenhayn closer together, and the Army is now more favorable to the Navy's contention for an aggressive undersea policy.

I do not believe the Chancellor will be able to hold the first place long, particularly if we do not take measures against the Allies — which, indeed, it would be impossible for us to take in a way that would satisfy Germany.

When they find that this cannot be brought about, and when the pinch of the blockade becomes even greater than now, a revulsion of feeling will probably take place and

a sentiment will develop for any measure that promises relief.

The Navy crowd are telling the people that an unrestricted undersea warfare will isolate England. I look, therefore, in any event for troublous times with Germany during the next few months, and I am afraid that my suggestion that we remain aloof until the times become more propitious for you to intervene and lead them out, is not promising.

The reason I am so anxious that you do not break with Germany over the *Lusitania* is that any delay may make it possible to carry out the original plan in regard to intervention. And if this cannot be done because of Germany's undersea warfare, then we will be forced in, in a way that will give us the advantage.

I discussed peace with the Chancellor, with Zimmermann, and with Solf. The Chancellor was the most unreasonable, coming back always to the point that he was the only one in power amongst the belligerents that had spoken for peace. He said he felt that the guilt of continuing the conflict was upon their shoulders and not upon his. Time and again, I brought him back to the point that his expression of a desire for peace meant a victorious peace and one which included indemnity from his antagonists. . . .

He is an amiable, well-meaning man, with limited ability. Zimmermann is much abler and my talk with him was more satisfactory.

There are reasons why the officers controlling the army are not pressing for peace. They are directing affairs and it is to their advantage to continue to do so. For instance, Hindenburg received something like two thousand dollars before the war began. He now receives, I am told, something like twenty-five thousand dollars, with a palace to live in.

The Prussian junkers formerly paid seventy-five or eighty cents a day for laborers on their farms. They now get Rus-

sian prisoners at six cents a day and their products bring four times as much as they did before the war. They, too, do not desire peace.

I doubt whether internal trouble will come during the war. They have all the discordant elements at the front harnessed to the war machine, impotent for harm. If the war goes against Germany, when the army is disbanded trouble will surely come for the masters. If victory is theirs, the war lords will reign supreme and democratic governments will be imperilled throughout the world.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

III

On his way back from Berlin to Paris, House conferred with the American Ambassador to Austria-Hungary, who came to Geneva to meet him. He was urged by Thomas Nelson Page to come to Rome, which Page felt he could not leave at a moment which he regarded as critical. House, however, was in a hurry to get back to England to push his plan of American mediation or assistance.

The news from Vienna and Rome confirmed his opinion that the war was approaching the condition of stalemate and the opportunity seemed ripe for his proposition. The French and British were firmly entrenched on the Western Front and hoped confidently to wear down the Germans. But in the other theatres of the war the advantage was with their enemies. The failure of the Allied attack on Gallipoli and the evacuation of their expeditionary force encouraged Turkey morally and strengthened her materially. The road from Berlin to the East was open and, through German domination of Austria, the dream of a Teutonic Central Europe seemed close to fulfilment. The Germans profited daily by the extraordinary lack of coördination between the Allies and Italy. As a result of the elimination of Serbian armies, which

had not received effective assistance from the Allies, Montenegro had surrendered. Criminations and recriminations between Italy and the Allies were lively.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, February 3, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR

Penfield¹ came to Geneva to see me. I thought it best not to go to Vienna and he thought it best not to come to Berlin, both having very much the same reason.

He confirmed our belief that Austria-Hungary and Turkey are now but little more than provinces of Germany. The Central Empire runs from the Baltic to the Dardanelles and beyond. The Germans took charge during the troublous days of last spring, when Russia was slowly overrunning Austria, and by their efficiency and organization threw the Russians back. The Austrians are consequently grateful.

The Empire, as you know, is made up of many divergent elements, none of which work in harmony and all of which are more distrustful of each other than of Germany.

Food is more plentiful there than in Germany, but the distribution and the levelling of prices is not nearly so well done. The desire for peace is also prevalent, but there again the people are mere cogs in the great German war machine and as helpless to express their desires as the German soldier in the trenches.

Penfield tells me that the feeling against America is stronger than against Russia, France, England, or even Italy. He ascribes this to three causes: one is the furnishing of munitions to the Allies, another the sending of Dumba home, and the third the *Ancona* notes.

The Austrian Empire is the proudest in Europe and they cannot view with complacency such a rebuff from 'a crude republic.'

¹ United States Ambassador to Austria-Hungary.

Penfield is giving freely to charity and stands well because of this and his relations with the Pope. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Ambassador T. N. Page to Colonel House

ROME, February 1, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . We are much disappointed that you could not get to Rome; but we hope you will come next time. . . .

Here, matters are not quite what might be called 'imminent'; but so many rumors are rife that I think it better not to leave Italy for the moment, and must content myself with putting you in possession of them in another way.

For some time, there have been stories going the rounds of clashes in the Cabinet here, and a short time ago it was said among those who assumed to know of such things that not only General Cadorna had resigned; but that both the Premier Salandra and Foreign Minister, Baron Sonnino, had tendered their resignations and that the King's return from the front to Rome about three weeks ago was for the purpose of settling this grave difficulty and preventing a Cabinet crisis. The grounds of the dissension are said to have been their opposing views touching Italy's sending a strong expedition to the other side of the Adriatic. . . .

The best orator in the Cabinet hurried off to speak in important places in defence of Italy's attitude — his defence being that the only way to save Montenegro would have been to save Servia, and that after Servia fell, Montenegro's fall followed necessarily.

This was accepted as a charge that Montenegro was not overthrown through lack of effort on the part of Italy, but of Italy's allies.

It happened that just at this time the English and French press were very caustic in their criticism of Italy for her fail-

ure to protect the Adriatic and rescue Montenegro, and this seems to have incensed the Italians, for the newspapers suddenly opened up against England especially in a way which has distracted attention from the eastern Adriatic problem so far as the public is concerned.

At the same time, the great rise in sea freight from England to Italy, especially of coal and other necessities of life, drew public attention to them and a number of sharp editorials have been written in the press against England's attitude in this matter as well as in the matter of her partial military system.

What has impressed me in this affair is the lack of anything like complete harmony between the belligerent peoples. They seem to me extraordinarily critical of each other. They are critical of us and the press in all the countries have many nasty slings at us; but they do not appear to me any more critical of us than of each other, when it comes to cases where representatives of the different peoples can express their minds privately. They fight on the same side and, to some extent, for each other; but not because of any other reason than that they must do so in sheer self-defence.

Unfortunately for them, this is apparent not only to those like myself who view the matter from an independent standpoint, but to their opponents, who are able to use the result of their observations to good effect.

I gather from what I hear that even in situations like the eastern Mediterranean, where absolute and complete harmony alone could render effective movements against the thoroughly organized movements of their common enemy; they act side by side with each other but not really together, and there seems a tendency by each one that it has to bear a disproportionate part of the brunt of the fight, which augurs badly for any near settlement.

This, taken in connection with the manifest want of efficient organization in many directions, is, I hear, taken by

the people along the eastern Mediterranean as an evidence that the Central Powers are winning, if they have not already won the war. . . .

Italy stands in a position somewhat off to herself. . . .

She is very proud, very suspicious, impressionable, even excitable, and, if I might use the term without offence, very egotistical. Doubtless they would say we ourselves are not wholly lacking in this trait.

At any rate, they do not care anything about anybody outside of Italy. To charge that Italy went to war for what she could make out of it, is not true when baldly stated as has been stated. She went to war partly to fulfil a dream which she has been fulfilling, bit by bit, for generations, and partly to preserve herself from a very real and vast danger. She went to war to become a great power; but also to save herself from becoming, again, a congeries of Austrian provinces.

Strong efforts have been made to induce her to declare war on Germany.¹ Her statesmen seem to me to have been wise in not taking more on their hands than they were absolutely forced to take; and I hear rumors of considerable bitterness being felt because some imagined that new pressure is being exerted to force her to make a declaration of war which she does not wish to make.

Her contention is that her people had no hostility against the Germans, such as they have had against the Austrians, and that first by denouncing the Triple Alliance — or, rather, first by declaring her neutrality and then by denouncing the alliance — and going to war with Austria and afterwards with Turkey, which last had given her cause to declare war, she had performed her full duty.

A considerable section of her people have no hostility whatever to Germany, while nearly all had hostility towards Austria and a large part of her people towards Turkey; and

¹ Italy did not declare war upon Germany until August, 1916.

the Government does not wish to go any faster than the people go.

Another reason for abstaining from declaring war against Germany is undoubtedly an apprehension that with Austria holding the southern slope of the Alps, should Germany unite with her in a determined push against Italy, their combined efforts might avail to sweep down from the Alps and force the fighting on the soil of Italy proper, which has been the battle-ground for centuries of Europe and which, if possible, Italy desires to save now from this disaster. . . .

Germany obtained her ascendancy in the commercial affairs of Italy by work applied with good common sense. She sent her people here, observant, clear-headed, pushing, and resourceful; studied the situation, familiarized herself with it, and financed them on terms mutually advantageous both to her own people and to the Italians. She established banks; financed great enterprises, and built up a great business for herself which only such a war as this could have shaken, and even this has not destroyed. . . .

It seems to me that the King has strengthened himself greatly during this war by going and living at the front among his soldiers. He keeps himself effaced, but talk is beginning to be heard that the King is the real commander of the armies; and, although there is a class which is always critical according to report, the King and the Queen seem to me to be very close to the people and, if possible, to have grown closer to them during this war. Both have filled their places, so far as I can tell, in the most admirable way; and whatever cavillers of the class referred to may say, I feel that the King and Queen have the people with them. One thing I am certain of: They have but one thought, and that is Italy. . . .

Faithfully yours

THOS. NELSON PAGE

Colonel House arrived in Paris with an intensified conviction that the German Government would not agree to peace terms that even the most moderate of Allied statesmen would offer. Even had the civil rulers of Germany been so inclined, they would not have dared confess it to the public and they would not have been permitted to take any action by the military. His four days' stay in Berlin, however, had not been fruitless, for in his conversations with the Chancellor, von Jagow, and Zimmermann he had for the moment eliminated the danger of a break over the *Lusitania* disavowal.

'Colonel House's air of satisfaction and his genial smile [thus ran a cable from Berlin] indicated that the Berlin end of his mission at least had been a success. . . . Official Germany is no less pleased by his visit. He is leaving the best of impressions. . . . The moral effect of the Colonel's brief visit is highly valued here. In well-informed quarters it is believed that he was able to dispel certain ideas which have been unfortunately persistent here, particularly that America was not acting in good faith.'¹

'Your visit did a great deal of good,' wrote Gerard on February 15. 'You have the satisfaction of knowing you probably kept us out of war.' And a week later: 'The Germans all feel that if matters are arranged it will be due to you, and seem most grateful.'

House realized that if the Chancellor wavered, the advocates of ruthless submarine warfare would force their policy upon the Kaiser and reckless torpedoing would recommence. He was more than ever convinced that the future of the United States was bound up in Allied victory, and he wanted to find a way to help the Allies. The difficulty lay in the fact that they wanted our help merely for the purpose of smashing Germany, whereas House felt that the only justi-

¹ New York *Times*, January 30, 1916.

fication of American participation would be the hope of ending the war. Both belligerent groups, to tell the truth, feared American intervention, and yet without it neither was able to achieve victory. The Colonel realized that a desperate effort would be made by each side during the coming months, and he foresaw the impotence of each armed group to end the war by military victory in 1916. Europe showed signs of becoming helpless.

As in London and Berlin, so in Paris speculation as to the meaning of House's mission was unrestrained and entirely fruitless. The Colonel faced a battery of experienced reporters, who retired baffled before his suave but monosyllabic responses to pertinent questions. The press was mystified. 'A Sphinx in a soft hat.' 'In seven minutes,' said the *Temps*, 'Colonel House replied by more or less complete muteness to more than a hundred questions.' But the charm of his personality evidently magnetized them. Confessing that they did not understand what he was about, they proceeded to approve it: 'It would have been difficult [said the *Libre Parole*] to exaggerate the real importance of this mission which passes in our midst — discreet, reserved, and full of the future.' House's interviews with the reporters were not facilitated by the evident pride which Berlin took in his visit to Germany.

'February 1, 1916: A copy of the Berlin *Tageblatt* [he noted] containing what purported to be an interview with me, reached Paris before we did. In this interview I am supposed to have said, among other things, that "every time I visit Germany, I love it more." The French reporters asked whether I was correctly quoted. As is my rule, I would neither confirm nor deny the statement. I could feel the bad impression this made, but I stuck to it. When the conference was ended, I told the reporters of two leading Paris papers that I had given no interview, therefore could not have

said what was quoted. This was passed about, and all was serene once more.'

However mute he might be in the company of reporters, to the political leaders of France, House talked with the utmost frankness. The Premier, Briand, who had been accurately described to the Colonel as 'very able but very lazy,' had taken over the functions of Foreign Minister. House found him 'reasonable,' less touched by belligerent emotions than many of his countrymen, but insistent upon the necessity of military victory. With Jules Cambon, formerly Ambassador at Berlin, then actively directing the Foreign Office, a ro-tund but distinguished diplomat, House had come into touch the previous year. They made haste to receive him immediately upon his arrival in Paris.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, February 3, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have seen the Prime Minister and Jules Cambon, and have had most interesting and satisfactory talks with them both.

The French press has again treated my coming with cordiality, and I am told on all sides that it has greatly added to the good feeling between the two countries.

I talked to Cambon quite freely, outlining the entire situation as it seems to me, and I am hopeful that the result of what I have said will show itself in the immediate future. I took up our shipping troubles with him, and he seemed more readily to understand our difficulties than they do in England. I have told them all that what we wanted most was for them to do those things which would help us to help them best.

I am to see Poincaré Saturday with Sharp. I saw the other two alone, for there was too much of a confidential nature to risk a third person.

I cannot begin to tell you by letter how critical the situation is everywhere, not only as between themselves, but with us as well. In my opinion, hell will break loose in Europe this spring and summer as never before; and I see no way to stop it for the moment. . . .

My suspicions regarding Russia have had some confirmation which I had best not write. Thomas Nelson Page sends Richardson, his Second Secretary, with confidential letters to-day. Richardson tells me that Italy is tired of war and that a change of Ministry might occur at any time. The feeling there is strong against England, because of her failure to do things that Italy desires. It is stronger, Richardson thinks, against England than it is against Germany.

I am trying to impress upon both England and France the precariousness of the situation and the gamble that a continuance of the war involves. I know I am making an impression in some quarters where reason has not altogether fled.

I am pleased beyond measure to see your efforts to arouse our people to the necessity for defence. You cannot put it too strongly, for the dangers are greater than even you can realize.

I want to tell you, and Mr. Lansing through you, the importance of not letting notes to and from Governments leak. There is complaint of it everywhere, and it is a useless cause of friction. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'I did not hesitate to tell Cambon [commented House in his private notes on February 2] that I was doing all I could to avert a break with Germany over the *Lusitania* affair. My belief was that a break could only be deferred and not averted, but it would place the United States at a disadvantage to go to war over an incident ten months old. In

my opinion, Germany would give us another opportunity if we desired one, as the pinch of the blockade would cause her to revert to her original undersea warfare.

'I informed Cambon of my discussions with the German Chancellor, von Jagow, and Zimmermann, regarding peace terms. He was pleased with the answers I had made, and seemed to accept them as interpreting the position of the Allies. I told him, in my opinion, unless something unforeseen occurred, it was not probable the Allies would be able to have a decisive victory on any of the fronts during the coming spring and summer; and in the autumn the same situation would face them as now, with the exception that the position of the Allies would be somewhat improved.'

Two days later, House developed his intimacy with Briand, without touching on the real object of his mission. As he wrote the President, he was interested first in creating a 'good atmosphere.'

'The main incident of importance to-day was the dinner given us by Ambassador and Mrs. Sharp. The Prime Minister was the most notable guest. After dinner Briand and I got together, using my old friend, Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, as interpreter, and talked the entire evening. The British Ambassador, who was also a guest, arose to leave before the Prime Minister, which is the British of it. I suppose he was irritated by our continued talk, in which neither he nor the American Ambassador was invited to take part. . . .

'I started it by telling of my visit to Berlin, Paris, and London in May and June of 1914, prior to the war. Briand was more interested than ordinarily he might have been, because the Kaiser invited him to come to Kiel at that time, and he has often wondered since if his acceptance might have had favorable results. He believes not, but there is always a

doubt. I analyzed the different governmental systems of Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States, and enlarged upon the advantage an autocracy had over a democracy in time of war. For many years I had been hoping the United States would become as democratic as Great Britain and France, but I now wondered whether at present we were not better off than they. I startled them when I made the statement that no sovereign in Europe was so powerful as our President for the limited term of his office, and I explained why this was true.

'I spoke of my present difficulties in both England and France in trying to obtain action and reach definite conclusions. I could get from each Cabinet official his individual view, but it was almost impossible to get the collective view of the Government upon any question. In France, we had no feeling of security because the Government shifted so frequently that continuity of policy could not be relied upon. In Germany and the United States, more definite results could be reached in a day than in a month in either England or France. . . .

'We discussed different phases of the situation as it is now, as it might be at the end of the war, and the effect the war may have upon the future of civilization. Briand thought if Germany had not made war when she did, she would have made a peaceful conquest of the world. This follows my own conclusions. His idea is that France would have become lazy and indifferent, and would have furnished the necessary wealth. Germany would have furnished the initiative, and finally would have dominated both countries. De Constant disagreed with this. He thought France would have taken some of Germany's efficiency through contact with her, and that Germany would have become more refined in thought and purpose by contact with France. In this way both would have benefited and neither would have dominated.'

IV

In the meantime, House followed his habit of making and developing all the personal contacts possible. It was important, for public opinion in France regarded Wilson with suspicion and even disfavor. People could not understand why the United States should sympathize with the Allied cause and yet remain aloof from the war. House spent many hours in explaining.

Colonel House to Mr. Gordon Auchincloss

PARIS, February 4, 1916

DEAR GORDON:

The pressure upon me here is beyond anything. Newspapermen, photographers, Americans, Frenchmen, and what not, take up every moment of my waking hours. . . .

I have an invitation from the Swedish Government to come there. I had one from the Swiss Government to come to Berne, and Thomas Nelson Page pressed me to come to Rome. I could not go, and in lieu of that he sends one of the Secretaries with confidential messages and letters to me here. Penfield came to Geneva for a conference and Morgenthau wanted to come from Constantinople, but I could not wait for him. Willard I am to see in a day or two, so I will have covered the ground that was necessary. . . .

Paternally yours

E. M. HOUSE

'February 5, 1916: At five o'clock, Sharp and I called at the Élysée Palace to see the President. He was exceedingly cordial, but the conversation was unimportant. I thought it best to do nothing more than pass the compliments of the day, which we did for some ten minutes and then took our leave. . . .

'We dined with the Princess Lusinge. There were some

eight or ten other guests, including the Ambassador. I did no talking, but listened. . . .

'After lunch I had a conference with Ambassador Willard, putting him *en rapport* with the situation to as great an extent as I considered prudent. He agreed with my conclusions regarding the *Lusitania* controversy, and so does Sharp and Hugh Wallace.¹ They are the only three [Americans] with whom I have conferred here.

'One of my most interesting conversations was with Joseph Reinach. I told him of President Wilson, of his Pan-American policy and its bearings upon Mexico. Reinach saw the light for the first time, and was good enough to say he would write an article in the *Figaro* calling attention to its importance. I intimated that he had a European policy even more important, and that in the end Europe would be compelled to admit it had misjudged him.

'February 7, 1916: I met the newspaper correspondents at the Embassy at twelve o'clock. They quizzed me for fifteen or twenty minutes, but were unsuccessful in getting anything. They asked if the statement in the *Herald* concerning Loulie purchasing clothes in Paris was true. One of them said that this seemed likely to be the only information of a positive character they were to receive during my visit to Europe. They were very good-natured, and understood how impossible it was for me to talk. . . .

'M. Stephen Pichon, one-time Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, now editor of the *Petit Journal*, called in the afternoon. Sharp thought it important for me to see him because of his influence with Briand, and other members of the Ministry, as well as his general influence throughout France.'

The effects of Colonel House's visit were to appear shortly

¹ Mr. Wallace succeeded Mr. Sharp as Ambassador in the spring of 1919.

in the friendly attitude taken by the Briand Government toward Wilson, which it displayed in characteristic fashion.

*Mr. A. H. Frazier*¹ to Colonel House

PARIS, February 15, 1916

DEAR MR. HOUSE:

. . . The day before yesterday, *L'Homme Enchainé*, Clemenceau's newspaper, appeared with half of its leading article blocked out by the censor. From a reliable source I learn that the part objected to by the censor was an attack upon President Wilson and that it was eliminated at the instigation of M. Berthelot; you may remember he is the man whom I wanted you to meet on account of his growing influence with M. Briand. Yesterday the same paper published a sarcastic allusion to Berthelot and his activity at the Foreign Office. The whole matter is of little importance, but it shows plainly, I think, that your words have borne fruit and that the French Government is disposed to suppress any unfriendly comments on President Wilson.

In this connection I can tell you that Reinach was enormously impressed by your remarks to him; he told a friend of mine that you had opened his eyes as to President Wilson's real views as regards the Allies and the Central Powers. All sorts of opinions are attributed to you by persons one meets, but I was interested to hear the Spanish Ambassador quote you very correctly as regards Germany's powers of resistance. He, by the way, is looking for the psychological moment to unite the neutral nations in some proposal of mediation; he is satisfied that the present is not the moment. . . .

Respectfully yours

ARTHUR HUGH FRAZIER

¹ Secretary of Embassy at Paris, diplomat of distinction and discretion, a close friend of Colonel House.

At the same time Ambassador Sharp wrote to the Colonel: 'If the all-around good feeling which has followed your visit to this place reflects that which exists at the other Embassies you have visited, you may be well satisfied.'

v

Before leaving Paris, House decided that he would open his mind completely to the chiefs of the French Government, in order that they might understand definitely Wilson's willingness to aid the Allies in bringing the war to an end upon a reasonable basis. If they felt they could secure victory themselves, unaided, the President would remain aloof and they might dictate their own terms. If they felt they were losing ground, he would intervene to save them and guarantee a settlement based upon justice. On February 7, House canvassed the whole matter with Briand and Cambon. 'It was an important — perhaps the most important — conference,' he wrote, 'I have had during this visit to Europe. We had a complete understanding as to the immediate future. . . . I again told them that the lower the fortunes of the Allies ebbed, the closer the United States would stand by them.'

Colonel House to the President

BOULOGNE, FRANCE
February 9, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I shall not go into much detail in regard to my [last] conversation with the Prime Minister and Cambon, but will give you a brief outline.

In the first interviews I tried to create a good atmosphere, and I was undetermined whether to leave it at that or go further. Up to the present I have been confidential with the British Government alone, and have left to them the bringing into line of their Allies.

However, I was never more impressed by their slowness and lack of initiative as upon this trip, and I concluded that we had better take the risk and talk plainly to the French. The result was surprisingly satisfactory.

I outlined the situation to them as I see it, bringing in all the doubtful elements which might throw the balance against them — their lack of victories, their mistakes, the efficient German organization under an autocracy as against an inefficient organization under democracies, and the danger of separate peace with Russia and Italy. All this I outlined with care. I pictured what was at stake, not only for them, but for the whole world, and, while declaring that we felt able to look out for our own interests in our own way, yet I let them see how deeply concerned we were for the future of democratic government.

It was finally understood that in the event the Allies had some notable victories during the spring and summer, you would not intervene; and in the event that the tide of war went against them or remained stationary, you would intervene. This conversation is to go no further than between Briand, Cambon, and myself, and I promised that no one in America should know of it excepting yourself and Lansing.

I told them I had had a similar conversation in England and that there it would go no further than a group composed of the Prime Minister, Sir Edward Grey, Balfour, and Lloyd George. This seemed agreeable to them.

They are to keep in touch with me by letters and messages, and I, in turn, am to do likewise. This was done to give more freedom, because of its unofficial character.

Briand and Cambon know and seemed to agree to the advice I gave you concerning the settlement of the *Lusitania* matter. It is impossible for any unprejudiced person to believe that it would be wise for America to take part in this war unless it comes about by intervention based upon the highest human motives. We are the only nation left on

earth with sufficient power to lead them out, and with us once in,¹ the war would have to go to a finish with all its appalling consequences. It is better for the Central Powers and it is better for the Allies, as indeed it is better for us, to act in this way; and I have not hesitated to say this to the British and French Governments, and have intimated it to Germany.

A great opportunity is yours, my friend — the greatest, perhaps, that has ever come to any man. The way out seems clear to me and, when I can lay the facts before you, I believe it will be clear to you also.

In each government I have visited I have found stubbornness, determination, selfishness, and cant. One continually hears self-glorification and the highest motives attributed to themselves because of their part in the war. But I may tell you that my observation is that incompetent statesmanship and selfishness is at the bottom of it all. It is not so much a breaking down of civilization as a lack of wisdom in those that govern; and history, I believe, will bring an awful indictment against those who were short-sighted and selfish enough to let such a tragedy happen.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

House might have added his conviction that history would bring an equally severe indictment against those statesmen who failed to bring the tragedy to an end at the first possible moment. The sole means at this time, he believed, was the agreement he planned between the United States and the Allies for American armed intervention. He hastened back to England, therefore, to impress upon Sir Edward Grey the need of an immediate decision.

¹ That is, on the basis of a separate quarrel with Germany.

CHAPTER VII

AMERICA OFFERS TO HELP

If the Allies put off calling for our assistance to a time when our intention cannot serve them, then we will not make the attempt.

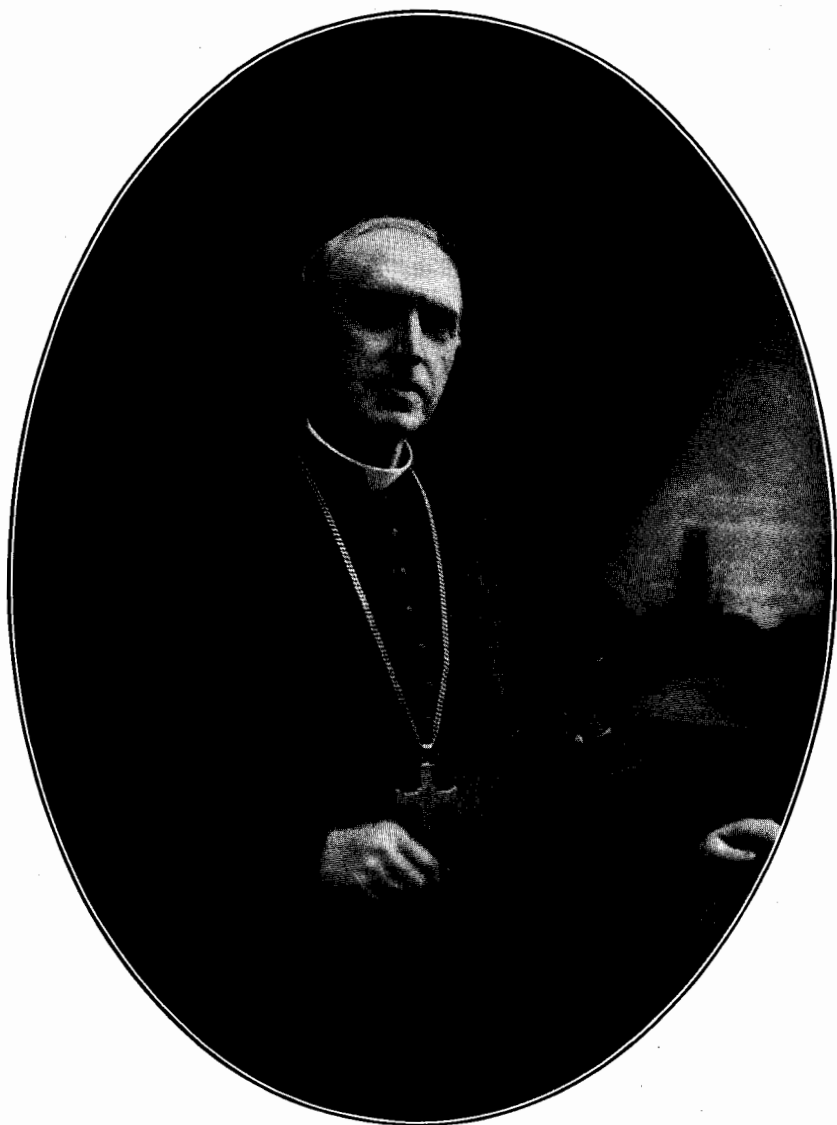
Extract from Diary of Colonel House, February 17, 1916

I

ON his way from Paris to London, House stopped for a brief interview with the King of the Belgians, to which he had been invited before leaving New York. The blond, blue-eyed giant, Vikingsque in appearance, solid in character, restrained in his judgments, was one of the two outstanding figures of the early phases of the war — the other, his compatriot, Cardinal Mercier. Strange revolution of the historical wheel which in the twentieth century brought once more to the top, and for a moment, a King and a Cardinal! King Albert was interesting through the completeness with which he had merged his personality with that of his people. He was the justification of monarchy under modern conditions, for he gave to Belgium a personification which was of infinite political value.

'February 8, 1916: We left Paris to-day at 8.45. A beautiful salon car was placed at our disposal. The Chief Engineer of the Railway, some of the Directors of the Chemin du Nord, and the Chief of Police were at the station to pay their respects, and to do what they could to make our journey comfortable.

'Many times while I was in Paris I heard it remarked that there would be no Zeppelin raids while I was there. While, indeed, there were no Zeppelin raids, my being there doubtless had no more to do with it than the rise and fall of the tides. Another curious thing is the number of people desiring



A Monsieur le Colonel House, en souvenir de son aimable
visite à Malines et en gage de bienveillances de bon Dieu.

+ O. S. Card. Mercier, Evêq. de Malines.

19 Juin 1919.

CARDINAL MERCIER

to cross the ocean on the same ship with me, believing that safety is thereby ensured. . . .

'We arrived at Boulogne about two o'clock. The Commissioner of Police, the British Provost Marshal, and King Albert's Aide-de-Camp met us. I turned the rest of the party over to the Provost Marshal and Commissionnaire, and went directly to the King's motor, which was waiting to take me and my aide, Clifford Carver, to La Panne.

'For the first twenty-five miles we drove at a terrific pace, estimated by Carver at seventy-five to eighty miles an hour. We reached Calais in twenty-five minutes, having lost five minutes on the road by having to slow up for traffic. After that we went at a more reasonable pace. Both Carver and I thought perhaps they were trying us out, to see whether we would ask them to travel more slowly, for the Aide-de-Camp asked me several times if we were driving too rapidly, a fact which I declined to admit. We made the trip of sixty miles to La Panne in about an hour and a half, including many stops. The worst of it was that the roads were slippery from recent rains and, in places, clogged with army traffic.

'We arrived at La Panne in the rain. We were saluted by many officers, and I was received upon getting out of the motor by several Generals. I walked with them as quietly and slowly through the pouring rain, without an umbrella, as if it were all to my liking. As soon as I reached the house and my overcoat and hat were taken, the King entered and we talked for an hour and a half. . . . The King has but little power to carry out any policies he may have in mind. There is no monarch in Europe more completely led by the people. He admitted this and was cautious about expressing what Belgium would or would not do. . . .

'He spoke in complimentary terms of the President, and of America, asking me to express his thanks to President Wilson for all that the United States had done for his people. I, in turn, told him that the valor of Belgium had lifted his coun-

try upon a high plane, and that history had no record of a more heroic defence.

'We discussed peace terms. . . . He eagerly accepted my suggestion that an indemnity be paid Belgium by all the belligerents. He thought his people would be unhappy with any peace terms that did not contain something which would help repair their shattered fortunes. I thought the entire world desired good terms for Belgium, and that he would find strong influence exerted in behalf of justice for her.

'He asked if I saw any indications of peace. I did not. I told him matters were just as they were when I was here last year, with the exception that in Germany the hate was not so strong, but in England and France it was stronger. . . . He thought it was a mistake to believe the belligerents (he did not mention Germany by name, but it was clear he included her) were in an exhausted condition, either as to men or economic resources. . . .

'He spoke time and again of having to be a good citizen, and do what the people thought a good citizen ought to do. . . . He should not give vent to his own feelings or his own thoughts, but should think as the Belgian people think and feel as they feel. . . .

'He asked me to have tea, which I declined, telling him I desired to hurry back to Boulogne. He bade me a cordial farewell and, before parting, sent further messages to the President.

'Our ride back was as wild as the one going, for it was very dark and wet and we made the sixty miles in two hours, including the many stops. It was a weird and exciting experience. Infantry, cavalry, and artillery would loom up out of the mist like ghosts, for the space of a few seconds, and then disappear. We reached Boulogne in time for a late dinner, to which I invited the King's Aide, who returned with us.

'*February 9, 1916* [London]: We crossed on a troopship leaving Boulogne at 12.15. There were a thousand or more

troops returning home, some wounded and some on leave. There were no civilians excepting Lord Curzon. The weather was clear and the water smooth and we were amply convoyed. When we were within five or six miles of Dover, there was a sudden stop. A secret service man, the presence of whom I had not known, asked Carver to tell us to come on deck and stand by one of the lifeboats. It seems that a tramp steamer had just been torpedoed and sunk quite near us and, in addition to that, there were two German seaplanes dropping bombs on the Kentish coast. In order to avoid the submarine, we made for Dover instead of Folkestone, and, under Admiralty orders, remained stationary for a half-hour. It was thought at one time we would have to return to Boulogne.

‘Two British airships circled over us looking for submarines, and also to protect us from the German seaplanes. No one on the boat knew, excepting ourselves, what had happened or what was imminent, although every one had his belts on. When we steamed up, it was decided to run along the coast to Folkestone, which we did at top speed.’

‘There was a tremendous crowd at Victoria to greet the arrival of our train, in order to welcome the homecoming veterans. . . .’

‘Telegrams, cables, notes, letters, and newspaper clippings were awaiting me. Newspapermen began to call, but I refused to see any one, stating I would meet them at four o’clock to-morrow afternoon.’

‘February 10, 1916: Among the many callers was the Lord Chief Justice,¹ who came immediately after breakfast. I had an engagement and could only see him for a few minutes. He called to say that Lloyd George wished to see me alone within the next day or two, to continue the conversation we had when I was here before. I asked Reading to arrange it. We agreed if possible he should arrange a dinner for Monday

¹ Lord Reading.

evening and invite the Prime Minister, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Lloyd George, and Ambassador Page.

'I urged him to be expeditious and to tell those mentioned that, if the work we had in mind to do was to be accomplished, there must not be the usual British delay.' . . .

Colonel House was pleased with Reading's call, since it indicated that Lloyd George at least took his proposition seriously. Of Grey's approval the Colonel felt assured, and his confidence was justified by his first interview with the Foreign Secretary on February 10. House gave him the net result of his Continental observations. It was that the German Government was being pushed by the navalists and public opinion toward the resumption of unrestrained submarine warfare. They would consider nothing but a 'victor's peace.' House recognized two possible alternatives: The United States might wait until the Germans withdrew their submarine promise, and enter the war upon the submarine issue. Or the President might demand a peace conference and, if Germany refused the 'reasonable' terms which would be offered, the United States would enter the war to enforce them.¹

Of the two alternatives House preferred the latter. It would at least give Germany the opportunity to yield. If she did not embrace it, and House did not believe she would, the entrance of the United States into the war would be based upon the clearest and the highest of motives. And America could say to the Allies in definite accents: 'We have come to

¹ 'Reasonable terms' seem to have been agreed upon as follows: Complete restoration of Belgium and Serbia, return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, Constantinople for Russia, an independent Poland, cession of Italian-speaking regions by Austria to Italy, compensation for Germany outside of Europe, abolition of competitive armaments and guaranties against military aggression. The chief weakness of such a programme lay in the fact that it would leave the Austrian question unsolved.

help in a war to end war. But when the victory is won, we shall insist that you join with us to make a peace of justice and security and not of revenge or selfish profit.'

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, February 10, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I had written Sir Edward from Paris and he reserved the entire morning for our conference. I was very frank with him, as I always am, telling him everything that had happened in both Berlin and Paris. I also told him of my advice to you in regard to the settlement of the *Lusitania* and why I thought it essential for us to keep out of the war, at least for the present. He disagreed with this, as Page intimated he would, but in ten minutes I had brought him round.¹

After going over the situation with great care and taking up every detail of foreign affairs, we finally agreed that it would be best for you to demand that the belligerents permit you to call a conference for the discussion of peace terms. We concluded this would be better than intervention [on the submarine issue], and it was understood, though not definitely agreed upon, that you might do this within a very short time — perhaps soon after I returned.

The Allies will agree to the conference, and, if Germany does not, I have promised for you that we will throw in all our weight in order to bring her to terms.

You will see that we have progressed pretty far since I left Paris — further than I had any idea that it was possible to do. I am to meet the Prime Minister, Balfour, and Grey

¹ Did House actually convince Grey? For the moment, perhaps, yes. But one of the Colonel's defects was that he was so irresistible in his quiet manner that he persuaded many persons out of their real beliefs. There is ample testimony to the fact that at the end of a discussion it was very difficult to disagree with him; but after the immediate personal influence had passed, there was a tendency to lapse back into the original conviction.

to-morrow at lunch to acquaint them of our discussion and to endeavor to get their approval. If this is done, there will be a dinner on Monday at which I have requested that Page be present. At this dinner there will be the Prime Minister, Grey, Balfour, Lloyd George, and the Lord Chief Justice. There will be no others taken in at any later conferences, but what is determined there will be a finality and I can bring you home definite news.

I cannot say with certitude what attitude Asquith and Balfour will take to-morrow, but I doubt whether Grey would have been as positive if he had not been reasonably certain of their coöperation.

I am very happy to be able to write you this, and I hope to-morrow I may be able to confirm it by cable. If you can hold the situation at Washington clear of all complications, sending no notes, protests, etc., etc., to any of the belligerents, it looks as if something momentous may soon happen.

The discussion of the *Lusitania* settlement in the public prints has been most unfortunate. Practically the whole controversy has been cabled over from Washington and the papers are commenting upon it, which makes the situation exceedingly dangerous. I have asked Grey to undertake to restrain all adverse criticism for the moment, and he has promised to do this. I shall also ask the Prime Minister to do the same thing.

If I were you, I would ask Frank Polk to put the Secret Service on the question of leakage and endeavor to find its source. This seems to me imperative, for it may endanger the great work you are trying to do. If decoy messages are given to those that are suspected, it ought not to be difficult to find the guilty party. I cannot impress upon you too strongly how important this is, and I hope you will immediately take it in hand.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

In his private notes, Colonel House added details of his conversation of February 10 with Sir Edward Grey.

'Before Grey consented to having the President intervene, I laid bare the plight of the Allies and the possibilities of defeat, particularly the possibility of Great Britain finding herself alone in the contest. He was interested in what I told him of my interview with Briand and Cambon, and expressed pleasure that I had taken the matter up with them direct, so as to relieve his Government of the suspicion of being the one desiring peace. That, he felt, was the point to be guarded. If the Allies thought Great Britain was preparing to discuss peace, something like a panic might ensue.

'I outlined the general feeling among the Allies regarding Great Britain. Russia, I told him, was dissatisfied; Italy I knew to be; and France would probably grow to be. . . . I said it was my habit to think of myself as the other man and determine what I would do if I were in his place. This had led me to the conclusion that Germany would first try to secure peace with Russia, then with Italy, and later with France, and finally defy Great Britain. I gave him my views upon the social and economic condition of Germany, maintaining that Germany could still place as many men on the western front as were needed to hold the line, and that she was in no great economic distress and that no revolution would disturb her equilibrium until after the war.'

II

On the following day, House had lunch and dinner with different members of the Cabinet, lunch at Sir Edward Grey's with Asquith and Balfour, dinner with Lloyd George and Reading. Both groups were cautious. They evidently wished the United States to enter the war on the submarine issue, for it would leave the Allies free as regarded peace terms. Also, in view of the anxiety which Wilson had dis-

played to avoid war with Germany and the American Ambassador's conviction of his unalterable pacifism, it is possible that they distrusted the President's willingness to bring the United States into the war if Germany refused terms.

'*February 11, 1916:* When I went to 33 Eccleston Square [wrote House], Sir Edward had already arrived. This gave me time to have a little private talk with him. It seems he mentioned the subject of our conversation to both the Prime Minister and Balfour, but no discussion had taken place. He has also talked with M. Paul Cambon, French Ambassador, who told him of my first interview in Paris with Briand and Jules Cambon. He had an abstract of it, which he did not show Grey, but of which he told him.

'He did not have a memorandum of my second and more important interview of February 7. Grey asked him to get this. His purpose is to find what the French think of it, so that he and I can better understand the situation. Grey desired that I should know this, so there would be nothing left in the background.

'As soon as the Prime Minister and Balfour came, we began lunch. The conversation was general during the first part of it, but when the meal had been served Grey stated what he and I had talked of yesterday. I took but little part in the conversation at first, but let each of the others outline his position. Balfour was less argumentative than I have seen him, and we got down to the real question quicker than I anticipated.

'The Prime Minister thought I was pessimistic as to Russia. I explained that it was not a question of pessimism, but a question of playing for safety; I thought Russia would stick; but was it well to take chances?

'Sir Edward thought Great Britain could do nothing until some one of her allies was ready to discuss peace. He took the view that Great Britain had not as yet been seriously

hurt by the war, since but few of her men had been killed and her territory had not been invaded. This seemed to meet both Asquith's and Balfour's views. I raised the point that, if Russia should announce she had come to the end of her resources and was ready for peace, it might mean that she had already concluded a secret agreement with Germany. Sir Edward's idea was that, when one of the Allies proposed peace discussions, Great Britain should say we were ready to intervene. This, I thought, would not suit Russia, and her reply would be that she preferred to conclude an agreement herself without the intervention of the United States. They all admitted this would happen in the event she had made a separate peace with Germany. The point I made was that it would be dangerous to wait until Russia was ready to say that the time had come for us to intervene. If they wait for that, they run the danger of making our intervention impossible because of the reasons stated.¹

'The next point that came up was how the British Government could let us know they considered the time propitious for us to intervene, without first submitting the question to the Allies, and, if they did not submit it to the Allies, how to avoid the charge of double-dealing.

'The solution I suggested for this was that at regular intervals I would cable Sir Edward Grey, in our private code, offering intervention. He could ignore the messages until the time was propitious, and then he could bring it to the attention of the Allies as coming from us and not as coming from Great Britain.

'Balfour asked what I desired the Prime Minister, Grey, and himself to say, and what assurance did I wish to take back to the President. My reply was that I wished a definite understanding that it would be agreeable to the British Government, in the circumstances outlined, to have the United

¹ House had already insisted that if they wanted American help they must not wait until serious danger of defeat by Germany arose.

States propose cessation of war and a conference to discuss peace terms. If I could take a favorable reply to the President, we would then know what to work to.

'I cautioned them again about allowing the matter to run too far. I declared if they made the mistake of waiting until Germany had a decisive victory, or nearly so, they need not expect action from us, for it would be foolhardy for the United States to enter at so late a day in the hope of changing the result in their favor. In these circumstances we would probably create a large army and navy, and retire entirely from European affairs and depend upon ourselves.

'If my plan was adopted, I believed it would inevitably lead to an alliance between the United States and Great Britain, France, and Italy, the democracies of the world.

'It was agreed that we should leave Grey's house separately. The Prime Minister went first, then Balfour, and Sir Edward and I left together. We are to meet at the Lord Chief Justice's at dinner Monday evening, with him and Lloyd George as additional members of the conference. Grey and I are to meet again at half-past ten Monday morning. . . .'

In the meantime House talked the matter over with Lloyd George and Reading. It was generally recognized that, if the Colonel's plan were to be accepted, the enthusiastic approval of Lloyd George would be necessary. For the erstwhile pacifist of the Boer War period had now become the vigorous champion of complete victory. He liked the proposal of House, for he saw that it would ensure Allied victory, but he was doubtful of that part of it which provided for a preliminary demand for a peace conference by Wilson; since acceptance of the offer would shake even his popularity. Grey was more encouraging and seemed ready for immediate action.

'Sir Edward [House noted] believes the time has come for

the President to demand a peace conference; but this feeling is not shared by the other members of the Cabinet or, if it is, they do not want to express it. Public opinion here would condemn any Minister who would dare endorse such a proposal. . . . However, Grey lacks nothing in courage and has less regard for his personal fortunes than any statesman I have met in Europe. If Grey continues in the Government until the end of the war, he will probably become a great figure because of his unselfish outlook, broad vision, and high character. I have never known him to suggest a mean or unworthy thought. . . .'

From these conferences Ambassador Page remained apart, in principle because they must necessarily be of a purely unofficial character until House's offer was formally confirmed by President Wilson. Mr. Page was doubtless not sorry that there should be so good a reason for his absence, since he evidently did not wish to participate in anything that might be called peace negotiations. House found him impervious to the argument that, if the Germans accepted the terms suggested, militarism would be doomed, and that if they refused them America would help the Allies, which was what Page desired. He was unwilling to believe that the President and the State Department could carry through so energetic a policy, and he did not wish to assist in the attempt. On February 10, Colonel House recorded:

'We dined at the Embassy in order that Page and I might have a quiet talk. My entire evening was spent in listening to his denunciation of the President and Lansing, and of the Administration in general. He thought the State Department should be "cleaned out from top to bottom." He humorously suggested that the Department should not remain in the same quarters, but should take a large tent and place it on the green near the Washington Monument, in

order to raze the present building to its foundations and start afresh with new surroundings and a new force.

'I did not argue with him. . . . "The President has no policy. He has lost the respect of Great Britain and the world. Lansing insults every one with his notes, etc., etc."'

It was unfortunate, certainly, that Mr. Page had become so critical of his own Government that he was unwilling to participate in this plan to rescue Europe from the war of exhaustion. One wonders whether the lack of confidence felt in Wilson by the Allies, which Page emphasized so strongly, was not partly inspired by his own attitude. And it is interesting to observe the definiteness of his refusal to coöperate in the positive policy which Wilson had undertaken. The following memorandum made by Mr. Page is significant:

'House told me that we'd have a meeting on Monday — Asquith, Grey, Reading, Lloyd George, he and I. No, we won't. No member of the Government can afford to discuss any such subject; not one of them has any confidence in the strength of the President for action.

'Therefore, on Friday, 11th of February, I told House that I couldn't go with him to any such conference, and I wouldn't.'¹

Mr. Page's opinion that the leading members of the British Government would not discuss House's scheme proved to be without foundation, for on February 14 the conference was held as planned. House was hampered by Page's refusal to coöperate, for his attitude necessarily weakened their faith in Wilson. Even so, they approved the principle of the American offer, although they refused to set a date for Wilson's intervention. They still wished to try the fortunes of war against Germany unhampered by any conditions as to

¹ *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* (Doubleday, Page & Company), III, 282.

the terms they might lay down in case of victory. On the other hand, they agreed that if in the future it might become apparent they could not make a serious impression on the German lines, President Wilson should demand a peace conference; and House promised that if the Germans refused to accept the terms he had outlined, the United States would enter the war. This tentative understanding, of course, was to be dependent upon the approval of the allies of Great Britain.

February 14, 1916: The dinner at the home of the Lord Chief Justice [recorded House] was for 8.30 o'clock. I arrived first, then Lloyd George, Grey, Balfour, and Asquith in order. Reading had the Prime Minister to his right, me to his left, Sir Edward next to me, and Balfour next to the Prime Minister, and Lloyd George at the other end of the table.

'The conversation was general while dinner was being served, and was largely about English domestic affairs. When the butler withdrew, there was general discussion of the war, the mistakes that had been made, and possible remedies. They talked quite freely before me, discussing the question of ammunition on hand, the wasteful way in which the Russians were expending what Great Britain was sending them, the general morale of the troops, etc., etc. I gave it as my theory that the Germans would probably attack the Allies on the west and perhaps at Verdun, and would attack quickly, not waiting for the spring weather to open. My reasons for believing this were that they could not get into the Russian field until the end of April, and the fact that they were not pushing matters in the Balkans convinced me that they would almost immediately open a violent offensive on the western front. My theory is that the Germans are still at their highest point of efficiency, and if they could strike a decisive blow, break through and capture either Paris or Calais, it might conceivably end the war.'

German lines of sufficient importance to discourage Germany, that would be the psychological moment. Asquith agreed with me heartily, and it seemed to be tentatively agreed by all that this course should be followed. I asked them, however, to consider this feature: if the Allies made a deep dent in the German lines, the opinion in Allied countries would be enheartened and they would feel they must go further. Therefore there would be considerable public feeling against peace proposals. Asquith thought this would not be true unless the success of the Allies was greater than he now considered possible.

'Lloyd George and Balfour were inclined to take the risk which I held up before them, and postpone action until some time later.

'It was now twelve o'clock and the Prime Minister made a move to go. While the conference was not conclusive, there was at least a common agreement reached in regard to the essential feature; that is, the President should at some time, to be later agreed upon, call a halt and demand a conference. I did not expect to go beyond that, and I was quite content.

'Asquith asked what we would do in the event Russia and France made separate peace with Germany before Great Britain could bring them into an agreement for the President to act. I replied that we would probably immediately set about building a large navy and army, and withdraw entirely from any interference with European affairs.'

III

'*February* 15, 1916: Sir Edward was visibly pleased with the result of our meeting last night. He congratulated me upon committing Lloyd George so thoroughly to the proposition of intervention by the President. He said he did not wish to do this himself, and he was wondering how it was possible to bring it about. It was his opinion that the British

Government had not faced so momentous a decision as the one I had asked for, since July, 1914, when the question of war or peace was before them. He showed considerable emotion, walking up and down the room as he talked, making it clear, as far as he was concerned, that he thought immediate action should be asked for, so that the lives of millions of men might be saved and the havoc which would follow another spring and summer campaign might be avoided.

'He said he knew it would be unpopular in England — so unpopular, indeed, that he would expect to have the windows of his house broken by angry mobs; nevertheless, he is ready to face it because he feels he is right. He thought it would be necessary to place the proposal before the entire Cabinet, a decision in which I readily concurred. He is to write a memorandum of our understanding, which is not to be signed, but which I am to take with me. He thought it would not be necessary to have another meeting for general discussion, but that he and I could button up the details better alone. This also met with my approval.

'*February 16, 1916:* After lunch I drove with X to the House of Commons, in order that we might have a few minutes' private conversation. He, too, appeared satisfied with our meeting of the other night, but expressed regret that the Prime Minister was willing to sit, as he termed it, "as a passenger and not take a directing hand in the discussion." He said this was the Prime Minister's weakness, though he did not believe he realized it. X declared he would not care to be Prime Minister under present conditions. I thought Asquith did not hold the reins of government firmly enough. . . .

'I confessed to a feeling of disappointment that it was necessary for me to go from one Cabinet Minister to another to discuss matters which I thought should be discussed solely with the Prime Minister. I thought I should receive authoritative answers from him, and that he should be the

one to see his colleagues and bring them into line so as to give me the united opinion of the Government.

'*February 17, 1916:* The Lord Chief Justice called this morning. He came to say that in his opinion the conference at his home the other evening was a great success. Like Sir Edward Grey, he thought it remarkable that Lloyd George, Balfour, and Asquith should talk so freely before one another. He considered a great work had been accomplished by getting them all committed to the general proposition in the presence of each other. There was no way now by which one could attack the other to his disadvantage. This is because Reading knows, as I know and they know, that peace discussion at this time would be about as popular in England as the coronation of the Kaiser in Westminster Abbey.

'I told Reading that both Grey and Balfour had complimented Lloyd George upon the breadth of vision and courage displayed. . . . Reading thought the Prime Minister had committed himself more strongly than he had any idea he would.

'*February 22, 1916:* The Lord Chief Justice called. He wished to tell me of a private talk he had with the Prime Minister concerning our conference at the Reading dinner. He said Asquith talked to him much more strongly in favor of the agreement than he had at the conference. It is the intention to make a push in the West at the earliest possible date, so that the President's proposal may come as soon as possible. I feel the responsibility I have taken in this matter, for it is upon my assurance that the agreement will be carried out that they are preparing for this quick and powerful offensive.¹

'Howard Whitehouse, Liberal Member of Parliament,

¹ The offensive was not undertaken as planned, since it was forestalled by the German attack on Verdun, which engaged the main forces of the French and prevented their coöperation until the Allied drive on the Somme.

called to ask me to urge the President to again offer his services in mediation. I obtained considerable information from him by questioning him closely and without telling him anything. He said the entire Irish Party, of about eighty members, would be willing to accept mediation now, and that more than one hundred of the Liberal Party would join them. I asked what effect it would have if the Liberal members of the Government, and such Conservative members as Lansdowne, Balfour, and Bonar Law would accept the President's proposal for a peace conference. In that event he thought that there would be at least a majority of one hundred in the House of Commons who would favor it, and that the country would sustain them by an overwhelming majority. I asked Whitehouse to give me his estimate of the views of the different members of the Cabinet regarding mediation. I was surprised to find how accurately he stated it. The only mistake of importance was concerning Lloyd George. He thought Lloyd George would oppose it as vigorously as Lord Curzon. . . .'

IV

These important negotiations were crowded into the crevices of a constant succession of less important engagements and conversations, which House none the less felt compelled to maintain because of the opportunity they gave him for securing information and influencing opinion.

'*February 10, 1916:* I went to lunch at Lady Paget's to meet Dr. E. J. Dillon, an authority on southeastern Europe. Lady Minto, Colonel Repington, and several others were present.

'Dillon is a conceited, well-informed, and interesting personage, and I enjoyed my talk with him.

'In the afternoon I received some fifteen or more English and American newspaper correspondents. I gave them no

information, but it was amusing to have them quiz me, and I enjoyed parrying their questions.'

The reaction of the newspaper correspondents to this interview was similar to that of the Parisians. Even in their disappointment at failing to elicit information, they could not escape the humorous aspects of the conference.

'To talk and yet say nothing has been made a delicate art by Colonel House, the Envoy of President Wilson to Europe. [Thus ran the report of the interview.]

'Colonel House — a little active man, with iron-grey hair and moustache — is the perfection of courtesy, but the dumbest of diplomats.

'On his arrival in London he amusingly defeated the efforts of journalists, English and American, who yesterday tried to extract information about his visit to Paris, Geneva, and Berlin. He has adopted the Presidential plan of meeting the journalists *en masse* and allowing them to question him to their hearts' content.

'Few persons know so much as he does about the war and the general situation. Here was a chance of learning a thousand interesting secrets. But all that his audience obtained from him was a series of sad and quiet negatives, punctuated by long and eloquent periods of silence.

'Entering his room at the Ritz Hotel, where the Pressmen awaited him, he thrust his hands into his trouser pockets and remarked jovially, "If there is any question you gentlemen wish to put to me that I shall not answer, fire away."

"I suppose," one of the American journalists began, "you had a very lively time in Berlin?"

"In what way?" Colonel House asked.

"Why, in every way."

"They would be glad to tell you that over there," he replied quietly.

“Where did you stay in Berlin?” — “I stayed with the Ambassador, and all the entertaining that was done was done at the Embassy.”

“Did you see Prince von Bülow?” — “No, I did not. I returned to Basle, back to Paris, then to London. I shall stay here until the 19th, and then home by the *Rotterdam*.”

“Did you hear any discussion on the possibilities of peace?” — “I have not heard peace discussions anywhere because I purposely avoided them.”

“Did you see any signs of a shortage of bread?” — “I did not see any signs of anything in particular.”

“Will you make any official visits in London?” — “Naturally I shall see members of the Government. Most of them are friends, and I often see my friends here both in times of peace and in war.” . . .

“You will report to the Senate on your return?” — “I do not know what I shall do. I may have nothing to report.”

‘There was a painful pause. At length:

“Are they having nice fine weather in Berlin?” — “Yes, I found the weather very mild everywhere.”

“Did you find the Berlin people very cheerful?” — “I made no inquiries of any kind. I did not make any observation of any kind.”

“Have you seen the Kaiser or Crown Prince?” — “Yes (after a pause), but not this time. . . . I was in Berlin but four days.”

“Did you form any impression as to how long the war will last?” — “Not the slightest.”

“But there was a good deal that interested you?” — “Europe is always interesting.”

“Perhaps you could say what has interested you most of all on your visit?” — “I am afraid I shall have to think about that.” . . .’

‘Wild expectations were raised when, toward the end of the interview, he observed, quite voluntarily, “What I would

like to say is —” But the pronouncement was nothing more thrilling than an expression of appreciation of the courtesy of journalists everywhere. . . .’¹

‘February 11, 1916: At luncheon [wrote House] both Asquith and Balfour spoke of my interview with the newspaper correspondents. I told them that the first time I had seen the President do it, I almost shivered with anxiety; but after doing it myself, it was so simple that I wondered why I had so greatly overestimated the ordeal. Lloyd George said the interview had created much amusement, and London wondered how I could meet all the correspondents in town, tell them nothing, and get away with it. He felt certain he could not do it. As a matter of fact, there is no man who could do it better than George.

‘We talked about the war and its conduct and its mistakes. I thought the Allies had lacked genius and initiative. I asked if they had anything new for the spring and summer campaign, or whether they were merely trying to make themselves as efficient this year as the Germans were last. He admitted this was about all that was expected.

‘I told them a story of a certain political campaign I directed in Texas. The opposition candidate had nearly all the chances in his favor. When the campaign was well started, I noticed the opposition were copying our methods, but always a little late. I told our people we would win and, when asked the reason for my optimism, I replied it was because they had no initiative of their own and were merely following our trail. We were, I told George, always one or two laps ahead; and in this war on land, the Germans were always one or two laps ahead.’²

‘I asked George why the French did not give the English

¹ London *Globe*, February 11, 1916.

² British initiative in the matter of inventions was soon to justify itself by the introduction of tanks in the battle of the Somme.

the coast to hold, and why they injected themselves between. He did not know unless it was that the French were suspicious and thought that the British, once there, might want to remain. He thought it a mistake. He said the English were like a walrus or a sea-fowl, they liked one wing in the water. They did not know what to do in the interior, but if they could flap one wing in the dear old ocean occasionally, no power on earth could dispossess them. . . .

'February 14, 1916: To-day was enough to drive one mad. Callers, telephone calls, newspaper people, photographers, and everything else that could cause confusion.

'I have a telegram from Hugh Wallace suggesting that I have Laszlo paint my portrait. I called on Laszlo and found him pleased with the idea. He was very busy, but he seems to be a statesman in embryo, for he kept me more than a half-hour telling how the European situation should be settled. Since he is to paint my portrait, I thought it wise to be patient with his views.

'February 15, 1916: Last night I told the Prime Minister and the others who were at Reading's dinner, that one of the most beneficial things they could do would be to get the metropolitan press to change their tone in regard to Germany. These papers have considerable circulation in Germany, and when I undertook to tell the German Government and people that Great Britain did not desire to crush Germany as a nation, they immediately gave me editorial clippings from the London press, stating directly the contrary. These statements were freely circulated among the German people, who were led to believe that England not only desired to annihilate them as a nation, but wished their entire trade. Such articles worked directly into the hands of the military party, and helped them hold the German people as a unit against the Allies.

'Grey drove me to the Palace and left me at the Privy Entrance. After a few minutes' conversation with the Lord

Stamfordham, I was shown up to the King's study, where we had nearly an hour's talk. . . . We discussed submarine warfare, disarming of merchantmen, my trip to Germany, the Kaiser, German feeling against the United States, etc., etc. He was pleased when I showed him a fifty-mark piece upon which was stamped, "Gott strafe England und Amerika."

'I asked if he had seen the "John Bull Number" of *Life*. He surprised me by saying that he had taken *Life* for twenty-five years and read it with much pleasure. He was delighted to hear something of its editor, Edward S. Martin. He sent most cordial messages to the President and deplored the criticism of him in English papers. . . . He was exceedingly friendly and insisted that whenever I returned I should let him know immediately.

'*February 17, 1916*: I went to a dinner given me by General Ellison. He placed Admiral Lord Fisher to my left and General Ian Hamilton to my right. The other guests were General Sir David Henderson of the Flying Corps, and two officials of India House. It was one of the most interesting dinners I have attended. Lord Fisher was at his best; he criticized the Government, Winston Churchill, the Allies, and everything and everybody in such a humorous way that it kept the table in an uproar.

'He told of the fateful days preceding the war, when Great Britain's decision hung in the balance. According to him, it was he who suggested immediate mobilization of the fleet, and he was the one who first brought eighty per cent of the fleet into home waters.

'Out of his humorous stories I gathered much of value. He is a great believer in fast battle cruisers and in large guns; that is, he does not believe in having a variety of guns on any one ship. It is the fast battleship and the big guns, according to him, that win. He said trying to win a battle with numerous ships of slow speed and small guns, is like

trying to catch a hare with an army of tortoises. "God made the hare to be caught by the greyhound, and not by the tortoise." He said the whole thing revolved itself into the cook-book formula for cooking a hare, which starts by saying: "First catch the hare."

'He it was that took two of the fastest battleships from Jellicoe's fleet and sent them after von Spee's cruisers in South American waters. The ships reached there in the nick of time and did the work without harm to themselves, and simply because they were out of reach of von Spee's guns.

'Fisher claims to have told the Japanese how to destroy the first Russian fleet in the Russo-Japanese War. The Russian Admiral, he thought, would do the stupid thing. His ships were three knots slower than the Japanese to start with; they were loaded with coal, which reduced their speed another knot or two. Fisher advised the Japanese to coal as lightly as possible; just enough, in fact, to reach the Russian fleet and then manœuvre. The result was that the Japanese were able to steam in front of the advancing Russians and pick them off one by one.

'He spoke enthusiastically of the United States and said: "It was a great old bird that hatched the American Eagle."

'General Hamilton told of the Gallipoli campaign, of its trials and heartaches. He believes it was a mistake to abandon it, and that with a little further effort it could have been put over. He claims not to have been supported at critical times. . . .

'Fisher told me of his advice to the British land forces. . . . He wanted the French to give the British the entire coast to defend. He then wished to bring up the fleet and shell the German trenches from the sea. He thought in this way they could have shoved the Germans back all along the coast for a distance as far as the British naval guns could reach. He said General French approved, but Joffre would

not permit the British to occupy the seacoast exclusively — threatening, if the British insisted, to make a separate peace. Fisher said he would have told Joffre to make a separate peace and go to hell; that Great Britain had control of the seas; had all the German colonies; was putting up all the money; and had to do the fighting on land as well. If they wanted to make a separate peace, Great Britain was ready, and was the only nation that would come out of the war successful. . . .

'February 19, 1916: Lord Bryce called at noon and remained for an hour and a half. We discussed disarming of merchantmen, undersea warfare, Germany, peace conditions, Anglo-American contentions, etc., etc. . . . I asked him to write me a letter, giving his argument against disarming merchantmen, so I might present it to the President with other arguments I have gathered. He said if I had no good way to reach the British Government, I could always do so through him.

'February 21, 1916: Lord Loreburn was alone, waiting for me. He asked what I thought of his making a speech in the House of Lords, denouncing the blockade. I cautioned him against doing this, urging him to say instead that the Allied Governments ought not to do anything to needlessly irritate either the neutrals or the Germans, but to do only those things which had real military value. Great Britain, I said, in a way was doing in the blockade what Germany was doing with her Zeppelins. While one was not as atrocious as the other, at the same time they had an irritating effect and caused . . . hardening of public opinion.

'Loreburn made notes of what I said and promised to bring it out in his speeches. I urged him to say that England should cease stating through her press and public men that this was a war of annihilation, both of the German nation and German trade. On the contrary, it was a war, as far as Great Britain was concerned, to prevent a few selfish individ-

uals from plunging the world into war for their own purposes. I thought if he would strike this high note, it would hurt militarism in Germany and would make clear the purposes of the Allies. A high note had not as yet been struck and, while the Prime Minister and Sir Edward Grey meant to voice it, if they failed to do so, he should.

'Loreburn criticized Sir Edward Grey for being drawn into the war. He thought there was no need for even a tentative alliance with either Russia or France and said Grey had misled him . . . by not informing him during the trying days prior to the war that there was an alliance between France and Great Britain. He said later Grey declared in a public speech it was impossible for England to ignore her obligations to France. He does not think well of Grey's ability, though he admires his character. I begged him to support Grey, saying he was the one man of whom I had hope, and I thought that he, Loreburn, ought not to allow anything which had been done previously to interfere with what good might be done now by working together. Loreburn promised he would do this, though he admitted it was a bitter dose.

'I went to Mrs. Asquith's for tea. I was nearly an hour late. She was alone and waiting for me. We had rather an intimate talk, she telling about the official family in general and Mr. Asquith in particular. She was distressed at being considered pro-German, and was annoyed because of the suit she instituted against the *Globe*, in which she will probably be a witness. She started to criticize the President, for she has a free tongue and says what comes first to mind; but I silenced her by saying she did not know conditions or anything of the situation, nor did she know what the President had in mind, and had gotten the usual prejudiced view of him which was untrue and unfair.

'When I returned to the Ritz, Lady Paget was there and remained until eight o'clock. She is serving our cause well,

and is one of the few Americans living in London who is loyal to her country and maintains it on every occasion. In this she has the respect of the English people.'

v

Before returning to Washington in order to secure the final sanction of President Wilson, House proceeded to 'button-up,' as he expressed it, the tentative understanding with Grey. This was accomplished in a long conference on February 17.

'Grey showed me a memorandum he had received from the French Ambassador, giving in detail my second conversation with Briand and Jules Cambon. The account was correct with a few exceptions. They reported me as saying that no matter how low the fortunes of France got, when they said the word we would intervene. I asked Grey to be certain to correct this impression in their minds, because it is important for several reasons — the main one being that if the Allies put off calling for our assistance to a time when our intervention cannot serve them, then we will not make the attempt.

'I am trying to force early action by making both England and France feel that they run the risk of losing our support entirely unless they act quickly.

'Grey and I drew up a memorandum covering what I actually said, not only in Paris, but at the meeting the other night at Lord Reading's. He is to show this to the French Ambassador and is to give me a copy before I leave, so there may be no mistake as to how far I committed the President and upon what lines.

'I called attention to the fact that, if the Allies were completely victorious, Russia, Italy, and France would undoubtedly make demands and do things Great Britain would not approve, and which would not be in the interest of

permanent peace.¹ I drove in as hard as I could the gamble they were all taking by postponing action. One of the gambles Sir Edward had not thought of was the possible death of the President, either from natural causes or by assassination. . . . I called attention to the fact that the President had only another year of office, and of the uncertainty of his reelection. If the Republicans won, it might be very much the same as if Lord Curzon became Prime Minister here with a reactionary Cabinet. . . .

'Grey said with much feeling, "History will lay a grave charge against those of us who refuse to accept your proffered services at this time."

'Sir Edward and I did not differ as to the importance of acting quickly. We both think there is more to gain for Great Britain by the President's intervention now, than there would be if the Allies won a complete victory a year from now. He believes, as I do, that the good which would come by having an active working arrangement between Great Britain and the United States in the settlement of the world's affairs, and the number of lives which would be saved by immediate action rather than deferred action, would more than offset a complete victory. . . .

'February 21, 1916: Grey has shown the French *communiqué* to Asquith, Balfour, and George, and has also shown them the memorandum which he and I agreed upon last week. He has seen the French Ambassador, who asked Grey how serious he thought my proposal was; whether the President and I were in earnest, or whether we had in mind merely the influencing of the British and French favorably to the President, in order that it might have a bearing upon the presidential campaign. Grey assured Cambon my proposal was genuine. I asked Sir Edward to tell him that he had been thinking about what he, the French Ambassador, had said, and he thought he should remind him that the President

¹ Compare the history of the Paris Peace Conference.

and I could not have any political advantage in mind — for it was a well-known fact that adverse foreign comment was a political asset to any candidate running for President in the United States. Grey smiled at this, but recognized its truth and said he would be certain to convey it to Cambon.

‘We walked together from 33 Eccleston Square toward the home of Lord Loreburn. Grey had given me his photograph, and smilingly said I had better not let Loreburn see it if I wanted to keep him in a good humor.

‘*February 23, 1916:* Sir Edward Grey and I conferred for an hour or more this morning. He had prepared and gave me a copy of the understanding to which he, Asquith, Balfour, Lloyd George, and I have come. He intended giving each member of the Cabinet a copy, but upon my strong protest he agreed he would read it to them instead. I asked Grey to send Lord Reading to the United States in the event I cabled for him, in order that he might go with me to the President and take back direct word of any modification or amplification of our agreement.¹ I would have suggested Lord Bryce, but his age forbids.

‘I am considering this as a precautionary measure and for my own protection. The President might agree, and I would cable as much to Grey; then something might arise to cause the President to change his mind and I would be censured here in unmeasured terms. Meanwhile the Allied Governments might have gone ahead with this understanding in mind, and followed a course which they would not have done had they not had the agreement with us.

‘I have had a continuous stream of callers of low and high degree. The Government are doing all they can to facilitate our getting away comfortably. They offered a special train, which I declined, but I accepted a private car. Since we

¹ In 1917, after the United States entered the war, Lord Reading came to Washington on a special mission and succeeded Sir Cecil Spring-Rice as Ambassador.

are returning on a Dutch steamer, they are sending with me a Secret Service man from Scotland Yard to guard my papers. . . . The British Intelligence man will appear on the ship list as my valet.'

On February 25, Colonel House sailed from Falmouth. Even without guessing the real significance of his mission, the press on both sides of the Atlantic applauded the skill with which he was supposed to have explained the position of the United States and the President's policy, and the political value of the impressions he had formed.

'Colonel House's visit to us, which has just come to an end [said the London *Nation*], stands, I think, for a landmark in the war. No one has had anything like his chances of valuing the general factors which will decide the fate of Europe, now dreadfully in the balance. This is not a small function. Save for the conferences of the Allies, diplomacy has come to an end over the great field of Europe. Neither side knows what the other side thinks; and the more men strain the ear, the more loudly sounds the roar of the cannon. It is well, therefore, for the world to have at least one carrier of ideas and intelligence. Colonel House has impressed everybody with his sense, prudence, reserve, sincerity, power of estimating forces and giving them their due weight in the balance of affairs.'¹

'No Englishman knows of Germany as Colonel House knows [said an American paper]. No German has had Colonel House's opportunity for weighing public opinion and the possibilities of the future in England and France. He has gone his way, heard all the stories of all sides, and has kept his own counsel. He has absorbed, but has given out

¹ February 26, 1916.

'I returned to the White House, and the President and I went into session again until nearly seven o'clock. I showed him the memorandum which Sir Edward Grey and I had agreed was the substance of my understanding with France and Great Britain. The President accepted it *in toto*, only suggesting that the word "probably" be inserted in the ninth line after the word "would" and before the word "leave." He also suggested that to-morrow we write out the full text of the reply which I shall send Grey. . . .'

Critics of the President have insisted that his manner was cold and that he was not given to expressions of gratitude. On this occasion, at least, he belied such criticism, for as House rose to leave he placed his hand on the Colonel's shoulder and said, 'It would be impossible to imagine a more difficult task than the one placed in your hands, but you have accomplished it in a way beyond my expectations.' When House intimated the pride he would feel if Wilson were only given the opportunity to realize the plan, the President responded, 'You should be proud of yourself and not of me, since you have done it all.'

The formal sanction of House's promise to the Allies was given by the President on March 7 and in the most emphatic manner, for, although the cable to Grey approving his memorandum was signed by House, it was written by Mr. Wilson himself.

'The most important happening of to-day [noted the Colonel] was the writing of the cable to Sir Edward Grey. After some discussion the President took down in shorthand what he thought was the sense of our opinion, and then went to his typewriter and typed it off. . . . The fact that he has approved in writing all I have done, gives me great satisfaction.'

Grey's memorandum and the cable approving it, drafted



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THE PRESIDENT, MRS. WILSON, AND COLONEL HOUSE



GREY'S MEMORANDUM OF THE PROPOSAL 201

by Wilson and House, may be regarded as documentary evidence of the willingness of the President to throw all our strength on the side of a just settlement of the war. These documents follow:

Memorandum of Sir Edward Grey

(Confidential)

Colonel House told me that President Wilson was ready, on hearing from France and England that the moment was opportune, to propose that a Conference should be summoned to put an end to the war. Should the Allies accept this proposal, and should Germany refuse it, the United States would probably enter the war against Germany.

Colonel House expressed the opinion that, if such a Conference met, it would secure peace on terms not unfavourable to the Allies; and, if it failed to secure peace, the United States would [probably]¹ leave the Conference as a belligerent on the side of the Allies, if Germany was unreasonable. Colonel House expressed an opinion decidedly favourable to the restoration of Belgium, the transfer of Alsace and Lorraine to France, and the acquisition by Russia of an outlet to the sea, though he thought that the loss of territory incurred by Germany in one place would have to be compensated to her by concessions to her in other places outside Europe. If the Allies delayed accepting the offer of President Wilson, and if, later on, the course of the war was so unfavourable to them that the intervention of the United

¹ Inserted by President Wilson, to correspond with the 'probably' three lines above and eight lines below. The value of the offer was in no way lessened by the use of the word 'probably,' which was a conventional covering expression common in diplomatic documents. Since the power to declare war resides in Congress and since the President shares with the Senate the control of foreign policy, it would have been impossible for Wilson to give a categorical guaranty of the future action of the United States. As a matter of practice, however, the President can determine the question of peace and war, and the expression of his intention appears here in the strongest permissible form.

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States would not be effective, the United States would probably disinterest themselves in Europe and look to their own protection in their own way.

I said that I felt the statement, coming from the President of the United States, to be a matter of such importance that I must inform the Prime Minister and my colleagues; but that I could say nothing until it had received their consideration. The British Government could, under no circumstances, accept or make any proposal except in consultation and agreement with the Allies. I thought that the Cabinet would probably feel that the present situation would not justify them in approaching their Allies on this subject at the present moment; but, as Colonel House had had an intimate conversation with M. Briand and M. Jules Cambon in Paris, I should think it right to tell M. Briand privately, through the French Ambassador in London, what Colonel House had said to us; and I should, of course, whenever there was an opportunity, be ready to talk the matter over with M. Briand, if he desired it.

(Intd.) E. G.

FOREIGN OFFICE
22 February 1916

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

[Telegram]

NEW YORK, March 8, 1916

I reported to the President the general conclusions of our conference of the 14th of February, and in the light of those conclusions he authorizes me to say that, so far as he can speak for the future action of the United States, he agrees to the memorandum with which you furnished me, with only this correction: that the word 'probably' be added after the word 'would' and before the word 'leave' in line number nine.

Please acknowledge receipt of this cable.

E. M. HOUSE

Thus did Opportunity knock loudly upon the door of the Allied Cabinets. They had their invitation and their warning. If they accepted the invitation and Germany agreed to the terms House had outlined, the Allies would have achieved everything which moderate opinion regarded as essential; if Germany refused, as seemed likely, Wilson offered the aid of the United States in forcing those terms upon her. House had shown them how, by merely raising a beckoning hand, they might have the assurance either of a peace of justice or a victory won with American assistance. But if the Allies failed to give the signal, then they were warned that the United States must protect themselves in their own way.

This offer was made at a moment when the United States Government was being anathematized for its supreme indifference to the cause of justice and humanity. Roosevelt thundered his imprecations upon the weasel words of a President who permitted the Allies to save civilization from the menace of the barbarous Huns while the United States remained apart, cowardly and selfish. Public opinion in France and Great Britain was openly contemptuous. Ambassador Page, in one of his most carefully written communications to the Secretary of State some months later, epitomized the gist of British opinion and used as his text not the cruel gibes that were poked at the President on the music-hall stage nor the humor of the trenches which named the unexploded dud a 'Wilson.' He spoke of the moderate opinion of the average well-intentioned Britisher, and with an eloquence which indicated his own sympathy with that opinion.

'The British have concluded [he wrote] that our Government does not understand the moral meaning of their struggle against a destructive military autocracy. . . . They doubt our appreciation of the necessity of English-speaking sympathy, our national unity, our national aims, our national virility. They doubt whether we keep our old vision of the

necessary supremacy of democracy as the only safeguard against predatory absolutism. They have not expected us to abandon neutrality. But, since they are fighting for the preservation of free government, they are disappointed that our Government seems to them to make no moral distinction between them and the enemies of free government. They feel that the moral judgment of practically the whole civilized world is on their side except only the Government of the United States. They wonder whether our Government will show in the future a trustworthy character in world affairs.'

To all this President Wilson had made no public response, had essayed no self-justification. But, in private, the offer which he made through House was the most complete of responses. If France and Great Britain failed to take advantage of the opportunity, they raised the suspicion that they were fighting rather for selfish profit than for a peace of justice. At least they could no longer maintain that they were carrying the burdens of humanity while America stood aloof.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUSSEX AND AFTER

It is easy enough for one without responsibility to sit down over a cigar and a glass of wine and decide what is best to be done.

Extract from Diary of Colonel House, April 9, 1916

I

PRESIDENT WILSON was willing to bring the United States into the war on certain conditions. So much was indicated by the offer he made to the Allies through Colonel House. But he was not willing to enter the war merely to achieve the nationalistic aspirations of the Allied Powers and without any guaranty that American assistance would serve the cause of permanent peace.

'We are holding off [he said publicly some months later], not because we do not feel concerned, but because when we exert the force of this nation we want to know what we are exerting it for . . . Define the elements, let us know that we are not fighting for the prevalence of this nation over that, for the ambitions of this group of nations as compared with the ambitions of that group of nations; let us once be convinced that we are called in to a great combination to fight for the rights of mankind and America will unite her force and spill her blood for the great things which she has always believed in and followed.'

In these words he warned the Allies that, if they wanted American help, they must hold sincerely to their public protestations that they were fighting for the peace of the world and the security of small nations, and not for the destruction of Germany. The supreme justification for American intervention lay in the hope of ending this war and

preventing future wars. Germany should at least be given the chance to agree to a reasonable settlement; if she refused, then the duty of America would be clear. 'Valor,' said Wilson on February 26, 'withholds itself from all small implications and entanglements and waits for the great opportunity when the sword will flash as if it carried the light of Heaven upon its blade.' Thus did he publicly issue his call to the Allies to provide the opportunity for American intervention.

While he waited for their response, he had a difficult course to follow. Relations with Germany were tense and, in view of House's negotiations, the President wished above everything to avoid a rupture before the Allies had given their answer. Germany had yielded on the *Arabic* issue and promised to sink no passenger liners without warning. The unrestrained submarine campaign which the German navalists demanded was suspended by the Chancellor's command. But the disavowal upon which Wilson insisted in the *Lusitania* case, Berlin still steadfastly refused. The Germans agreed to pay an indemnity for the lives of American citizens, 'out of regard for the friendship of the two countries,' and to express regret. Zimmermann, however, insisted that the sinking of the *Lusitania* was justified by the British food blockade, as an act of retaliation, and he declined to admit that it was illegal. Lansing, on the other hand, arguing that retaliatory measures, if affecting neutrals, are in contravention of the rules of warfare and that, by issuing new orders to submarine commanders after the sinking of the *Arabic*, Germany tacitly admitted the illegality of the attack on the *Lusitania*, demanded a frank confession from the German Government of such illegality.

The difference was more than one of verbiage. Until this time Germany, while agreeing to Wilson's insistence that submarines give warning of attack and provide for the safety of passengers and crew, had not admitted the illegality of unrestricted submarine warfare. Nor would she, for this

admission would make it impossible for her to alter the orders issued to submarine commanders and begin an intensified attack on British trade. For the moment she might hold her hand, but she would not shackle her freedom of action for the future by committing herself on the legality of the attack on the *Lusitania*. The following letters illuminate the German point of view:

Herr Zimmermann to Colonel House

BERLIN, January 29, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... I am sorry to say that the latest proposal which has just been transmitted to us by Count Bernstorff is not acceptable for the Imperial Government. While we are perfectly willing to settle the incident in a way which seems acceptable to the United States Government the latest proposal contains the following two sentences to the underlined passages of which we could not possibly agree:

'Thereby the German retaliation affected neutrals which was not the intention, *as retaliation becomes an illegal act if applied to other than enemy subjects,*' and 'The Imperial Government having subsequent to the event issued to its naval officers the new instructions which are now prevailing, expressing profound regret that citizens of the United States suffered by the sinking of the *Lusitania*, *and recognizing the illegality of causing thereby danger and admitting liability therefor,* offers to make reparation for the life [sic] of the citizens of the United States who were lost by the payment of a suitable indemnity.'

I am afraid that if the United States Government insists on this wording, a break will be unavoidable which, I am sure, you would regret just as much as I would for the reasons we both recognized as most important for the future policy and the welfare of the white races.

After all the trouble which has been taken on both sides to

smooth matters over, I am not yet willing to believe that things are quite as bad as they seem, and I think there ought to be a way out of it. But the proposed wording which practically amounts to declaring submarine warfare as illegal could never be approved by the German Government and would besides not be tolerated by public opinion in Germany which cannot be brushed aside entirely.

I should be much obliged to you, my dear Colonel, if you could see your way to bring the above to the knowledge of the President in the way you so kindly suggested.

Thanking you in advance for your kind offices . . . I am, my dear Colonel,

Yours very sincerely

ZIMMERMANN

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, February 1, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I dined last night at von Jagow's. He said I would get a note to-day which would accept all Bernstorff's propositions except, as he put it, one word, viz: Germany will acknowledge liability for the loss of American lives by the sinking of the *Lusitania*, but will not acknowledge that the act of sinking was illegal. He said that international law had to be changed, that the submarine was a new weapon, and that, anyway, if a break came with America, they had a lot of new submarines here and would make an effective submarine blockade of England. . . .

Yours ever

JAMES W. GERARD

BERLIN, February 8, 1916

DEAR COLONEL:

Morgenthau was here for a day. I took him to see von Jagow, where we talked about an hour. Later through

some Germans he met Zimmermann, who asked him if he did not think the German-Americans in America would rise in rebellion if trouble came between Germany and America.

Von Jagow was very explicit in saying that Germany had made *no agreement* with us about submarine warfare, but had only *stated* that certain orders had been given to submarine commanders. He said distinctly that Germany reserved the right to change these orders at any time. On the general question, he again said that the submarine was a new weapon and that the rules of International Law must be changed — apparently claiming the right for Germany to change these rules at will and without the consent of any other Power involved. . . .

Ever yours

JAMES W. GERARD

The controversy was confused by a new issue which in its sequel threatened to produce not merely a quarrel with the Allies, but a domestic crisis involving the leadership of President Wilson. Since the preceding autumn, Mr. Lansing had been considering a method of meeting the German complaint that it was impossible for the submarine to conform with the laws of visit and search, in view of the fact that an armed merchant vessel could sink the submarine while it was giving warning. The Germans contended that such merchant vessels were in effect armed for offensive purposes and should be regarded, therefore, as auxiliary cruisers.

Mr. Lansing agreed that the shortest solution was to abandon the rule which permitted the arming of merchant vessels for defensive purposes.

'Prior to 1915 [he maintained] the right of arming merchant ships seemed to have been based upon the inferior defensive strength of such armament as compared with

cruisers carrying heavy armaments, and upon the inferior armament of piratical ships and privateers against which armed merchantmen could defend themselves. The use of the submarine, however, has changed these conditions, because, relying for protection on its power to submerge, the submarine is almost defenceless in point of construction, so that even a merchant ship with a small gun could use it effectively for offence against a submarine. Moreover, pirates and sea rovers have been swept from the main trade channels of the seas and privateers have been abolished; consequently the placing of guns on merchantmen at the present day of submarine warfare can be explained only on the ground of a purpose to render merchantmen superior in force to submarines and to prevent warning and visit and search by them. Any armament, therefore, on a merchant vessel would seem to have the character of an offensive armament.' ¹

Many Americans, including the Ambassador to Germany, felt the logic of Lansing's arguments. 'I always rather sympathized with the submarine on this,' Gerard wrote to House on February 15. And a week later:

'A submarine is a recognized weapon of war as far as the English go, because they use it themselves, and it seems to me to be an absurd proposition that a submarine must come to the surface, give warning, offer to put passengers and crew in safety, and constitute itself a target for merchant ships, that not only make a practice of firing at submarines at sight, but have undoubtedly received orders to do so.'

The British did not attempt to dispute the logic of Lansing's position. They placed their case on the broad ground

¹ Circular despatch from the Secretary of State to European Embassies, January 26, 1916.

that Germany could not be trusted, and that if merchant vessels disarmed they would be sunk without mercy. 'The one fatal objection,' wrote Lord Bryce to House on February 19, 1916, 'to our accepting any promise by the German Government as to its action by submarines if we were to undertake that our merchant vessels should be unarmed, is that we could not trust any German promise. . . . And while we should lose something positive and tangible, we should gain nothing but a promise altogether illusory. . . . We have to deal with an evasive and faithless Government.'

At the very inception of the controversy, early in the previous autumn, Mr. Balfour had written to House, avoiding all technical argument and merely maintaining that, if the United States approved the German contention, it would thereby facilitate and abet inhuman maritime warfare.

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

September 12, 1915

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

You were good enough to say that I might write to you privately on any matter of interest, and I would have done so long before this had I not been aware that others had kept you fully informed upon all that is going on here. A matter, however, has just come to my knowledge which may have a very important bearing, not only upon the interests of this country, but as I think upon the interests of the civilized world, whether neutral or belligerent. It will without doubt be the subject of official communication between the Foreign Office and the State Department; but what I am now writing to you is not between Department and Department, but between man and man.

It was only an hour ago that I heard from the Foreign Office that the State Department were considering whether they ought not to modify the rules laid down at Washington for the treatment of belligerent merchant ships armed for

purely defensive purposes and carrying out purely commercial operations. The ground for this alteration is the alleged fact that such vessels, though armed only for defence, have in fact taken the offensive against German submarines. The position taken up by the State Department is (as I understand it) that the U.S. rules, which were properly applicable to the old condition of things, require modification in the face of new developments; and into the necessity and character of these modifications they are now examining.

I am, as you know, the last person to suggest that in the presence of ever-varying conditions of war, old rules can remain unmodified, and it is on much broader grounds than those which are based on precedent alone that I now base my appeal.

The German practice is to sink without notice any ship which they suppose to be trading with Britain. All neutrals admit that this is contrary both to the Law of Nations and the principles of humanity. But so far they have been powerless to stop it; and no one supposes that Germany is likely to listen to any appeal on the subject except an appeal to her self-interest. But neutrals who have got no effective weapon short of war which they can use against the Germans, possess a very powerful weapon in the shape of their Municipal Law which they can use against the Allies. If they can do little to paralyze the attack, they can do much to embarrass the defence; and I greatly fear that this unfortunate result would be achieved if the leading neutral of the world were to throw in its weight against the defensive armament of merchant ships.

The German arguments on this subject are, it seems to me, as cynical as the German practice is unhuman. They complain that merchant ships in submarine-infested seas adopt a zigzag course, which no doubt may occasionally make either their bow or their stern point in the direction of the submarine. This, they plead, is a proof of aggressive intention

on the part of the merchant ship: if the bow is pointing towards the submarine the obvious intention is to run her down; if the stern is pointing in the direction of the submarine, the object is clearly to bring the merchantman's guns to bear upon it. In either case the submarine in self-defence is justified in torpedoing at sight. In other words, the Germans argue that the mere attempt of the victim to escape involves a threat of hostile action which justifies the extremest degree of brutality.

It may no doubt be urged that it is not always in this fashion that matters proceed. If the captain of a merchantman, armed or unarmed, saw a hostile submarine across his bows, I think it extremely likely that he would endeavor to ram her. I frankly admit that if I were the captain that is how I should proceed, although well aware that if my attempt failed the submarine would attempt to sink me. But this is what the submarine would do in any case; and I do not see how the merchant captain can be blamed. When maritime warfare was carried on under civilized rules, it would have been in the highest degree blameworthy for any merchant ship to initiate hostile action. By so doing she would convert herself without notice into an armed cruiser and would have no claim to be treated as a peaceful trader when she called at neutral ports. But when we are dealing with an enemy who knows no law, and who not once nor twice and accidentally, but repeatedly and of set purpose, has sunk peaceful traders without notice, how is it possible for these to wait until they are summoned to surrender? No summons of surrender is ever uttered. A torpedo is discharged or guns are fired, and all is over. Cold-blooded butchery takes the place of the old procedure sanctioned and approved by International Law.

I cannot help thinking that if this question is looked at in a broad spirit, it will be seen that whatever are to be the laws of maritime warfare, and however they are to be enforced, it

cannot be in the interests of international morals that the Municipal Law of any great neutral should be modified in the direction favourable to the perpetrator of outrages and hostile to his victims. Doubtless the problems which this war will leave behind it for peaceful solution are of extreme difficulty; but those difficulties would I venture to say be increased and not diminished if, while the weight of the best neutral opinion is hostile to the German misuse of submarines, neutral action was, however unintentionally, employed in its favour.

Pray believe me

Yours very sincerely

A. J. BALFOUR

Mr. Lansing, however, despite his personal feelings in favor of the Allies, insisted upon the logic of the German position and argued that, unless it was fairly met, he could not hold the Germans strictly to the law of visit and search. On January 18, 1916, he presented to the Allied Ambassadors an informal note, suggesting that all merchantmen be disarmed, in return for which they were not to be attacked without warning, nor to be fired upon except in case of resistance or flight. The Allies were not pleased. And Lansing's position was weakened by the suspicion that he had made the suggestion in order to render Germany more yielding in the dispute over the *Lusitania*. What was worse, the proposal was published, on January 28, 1916, so that the entire question was thrown into the arena of open discussion. Regardless of the fact that Lansing's suggestion was tentative and informal, the British press fulminated against the 'surrender' of Wilson to Germany.

Secretary Lansing to Colonel House

[Telegram]

WASHINGTON, February 3, 1916

... Page cables that Grey is seriously disturbed over proposal, as he claims it is wholly in favor of the Central Powers and against Allies.

Page fears that this proposal will be considered a German victory and that all our influence with the Allies will be lost.

I feel strongly that the proposal is fair and the only humane solution of submarine warfare. If merchant vessels are armed and guns are used to sink attacking submarines, as has been done and as merchant vessels are now instructed to do, then it is unreasonable to insist that submarines should risk coming to the surface to give warning.

I feel that the alleged refusal to consider the proposal calmly will strengthen Germany's position. This proposal has no relation to the *Lusitania* settlement, and has not been mentioned to Germany, but is made necessary by conditions in Mediterranean and as merchant vessels are arriving here carrying guns. I feel we are asking too much of Germany in the case. . . .

LANSING

II

Some color was given to the British suspicion that Lansing's proposal was made in the hope of pleasing Germany and securing a favorable settlement of the *Lusitania* controversy, when on February 10 the German Government announced that, after February 29, armed merchant vessels would be regarded as warships and would be dealt with accordingly. Whether the Germans thought thus to force Wilson's hand and lead him to inform the Allies that armed merchant vessels in American ports would be interned as warships, is doubtful. If so, they made a mistake. Wilson would not permit his hand to be forced, least of all by Ger-

many. He immediately let it be known that the Lansing proposals were tentative, that according to custom merchant vessels had the right to arm defensively, and that, if a German submarine attacked an unresisting merchantman without warning, Berlin must face the diplomatic consequences. He demanded that Germany give assurances that the submarine warfare against merchant vessels would be conducted in such a way as not to imperil Americans travelling on the high seas.

There were other Americans whose reaction to the German threat was less decisive. For a long time many citizens, chiefly those who lived inland and seldom travelled, had insisted that it was the business of Americans to avoid belligerent vessels, where their presence might lead to international complications. If Americans kept out of the danger zone, they would not be drowned and the submarine dispute with Germany would lapse. Congress, which was clearly afraid of trouble with Germany, took up the demand.

The President dared to risk his national leadership on the issue, for he faced what seemed for the moment an open revolt of Congress led by his own party. Members of the House of Representatives virtually served notice upon him that, unless he would warn American citizens that they must not take passage on armed ships, the House itself would issue such a warning in the form of a resolution. Such a resolution was actually presented by Jeff: McLemore of Texas; Champ Clark, Speaker of the House, led a delegation to interview the President and told him that it would be carried two to one. Senator Stone, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, insisted that unless Wilson yielded he would be repudiated by his own party; and Gore of Oklahoma presented in the Senate a resolution similar to McLemore's.

But the President was quite as fully disinclined to surrender to the threatened revolt of his own party as to the threat of the Germans. He at once wrote a letter to Stone,

insisting that he would protect American right to travel on the high seas in safety.

'No group of nations [he wrote], has the right, while war is in progress, to alter or disregard the principles which all nations have agreed upon in mitigation of the horrors and sufferings of war, and if the clear rights of American citizens should very unhappily be abridged or denied by any such action, we should, it seems to me, have in honor no choice as to what our own course should be.

'For my own part, I cannot consent to any abridgment of the rights of American citizens in any respect. The honor and self-respect of the nation is involved. We covet peace, and shall preserve it at any cost but the loss of honor. . . . Once accept a single abatement of right, and many other humiliations would certainly follow, and the whole fine fabric of international law might crumble under our hands piece by piece.¹ What we are contending for in this matter is of the very essence of the things that have made America a sovereign nation. She cannot yield them without conceding her own impotency as a nation and making virtual surrender of her independent position among the nations of the world. . . .'

Wilson's determination was supported by public opinion and vindicated by a vote in the House of Representatives, which on March 7 tabled the McLemore resolution 275 to 135. The President dominated his party in even more marked fashion than two years before in the Panama tolls controversy. Democratic leaders voted against him, but the rank and file stood by him; most of the votes favoring this resolution that yielded American rights were cast by Republicans.²

¹ Compare House's letter to Wilson, July 10, 1915, quoted above, pp. 15, 16.

	² For tabling	Against tabling
Republicans	93	102
Democrats	182	33
	<u>275</u>	<u>135</u>

The result served to strengthen his position in the country, for the public realized that, while seeking to avoid a break with Germany, he was determined to maintain American rights on a clear-cut issue; it weakened the Republicans who had maintained that they were the protectors of American liberties, but whose representatives, when it came to the test, formed the nucleus of the group that advocated surrender.

House had been seriously disturbed by the armed merchantmen controversy, for he saw in it danger of an upset to his plan for American mediation with a threat of force. It had been pushed during his absence in Europe, and he feared lest the Allies should regard the Lansing proposals as an indication of unfriendliness and refuse to put confidence in Wilson's offer of help to secure a reasonable peace. On February 5, he cabled Lansing that his proposal 'seems fair taken by itself, but there are many collateral questions to be considered with it.' And a week later: 'There are so many other issues involved in the controversy concerning armed merchantmen, that I sincerely hope you will hold it in abeyance until I return.'

While on the Atlantic, House kept in touch with the situation at Washington and was not reassured.

'March 4, 1916: The Captain has delivered to me each day his Marconi messages. In them I find that the President and Lansing have gotten themselves into deep waters, brought about by their ill-timed proposal as to the disarming of merchantmen. I have received two wireless messages from the President, one asking me to come at once to Washington, and the other warning me that Bernstorff was waiting in New York to see me and advising that I avoid him. . . .

'In precipitating this controversy with Congress and by making the situation so acute with Germany, I feel that the President and Lansing have largely interfered with my efforts abroad. If they had held the situation quiescent, as I

urged them to do, I am sure the plan for intervention by the United States to end the war would have gone through without trouble. I am deeply disappointed, but I hope matters can be ironed out in a way to yet make the plan possible.'

Germany's reckless haste, in declaring that on March 1 submarines would regard armed merchantmen as ships of war, furnished an opportunity for the United States Government to drop the Lansing proposals. 'In view of Germany's new Orders in Council in regard to armed merchant ships,' telegraphed Lansing to House, 'and the interviews given out by various German officers misstating the position of this Government, it is our intention to move slowly in the matter.' When House explained to Wilson the attitude taken by the Allies, the President was disturbed. He 'took occasion to blame himself and Lansing,' recorded House on March 7, 'for allowing this controversy to crop out. . . . The President showed an admirable spirit in refusing to shirk responsibility. The proposals of Lansing were declined by the Allies and were forgotten; the United States Government contented itself by taking affidavits from captains of merchant vessels that their armament was for defensive purposes.

III

The controversy over the arming of merchantmen had indeed threatened to nullify House's plans, for the Allies were convinced that the Lansing proposals were made to aid Germany and secure a settlement of the *Lusitania* dispute. House felt, however, that the firm attitude assumed ultimately by Wilson toward both Germany and the more cautious Congressional leaders, was an earnest of the President's willingness to act with decision, if they would put confidence in him and accept his offer of mediation.

But they were not ready to accept. The defensive strength displayed by the French at Verdun encouraged them to be-

lieve that an Allied counter-offensive might lead to the conquest of Germany on the Western front and they could then impose terms on Germany more rigorous and crushing than those suggested in the House-Grey memorandum and approved by Wilson. Accordingly there was nothing for the United States to do but wait until each belligerent group realized the deadlock. The Colonel did not fail, however, to remind the Allies of the opportunity which was open to them if they did not delay overlong.

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

NEW YORK, *March 10, 1916*

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

After explaining to the President all that occurred at our conference, he wrote the cable I sent you on March eighth. I added nothing, for it was a complete approval of what had been done.

If the situation continues as now, and if Congress does not restrict him, everything will go through as planned. His recent victory in Congress was complete and indicates that the matter is entirely in his hands.

All the Democratic leaders in Congress opposed the President, just as they did in the Panama tolls controversy, and yet they were not able to muster more than thirty-three Democratic votes. The adverse votes given were largely those of Republicans who, contrary to expectation, reversed all their protestations at the critical moment.

It is now squarely up to you to make the next move, and a cable from you at any time will be sufficient. If you think best, I will send a cable every fortnight repeating the offer, so it may be used in the way we planned. Please let me know whether I shall do this or whether I shall do nothing until you indicate.

Be assured, my dear friend, that I am thinking of you al-

ways and I wish I could in some way lighten the load which bears so heavily upon you.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

While the Allies hesitated to ask for American aid on the conditions which House outlined, American relations with Germany seemed to improve. The dispute over the claim of Germany to attack armed merchantmen without warning lapsed after the President's victory in Congress, and the fateful date of March 1 passed without the inauguration of the campaign of wholesale submarine activity which had been promised. As always, the policy of the moment in Berlin depended upon the ups and downs of the never-ending contest between the civil Government, restrained by the fear of a break with America, and the supporters of von Tirpitz, who insisted that England could be isolated and the war won if they had a free hand. The officials of the civil Government were 'pained' by Wilson's refusal to accept German interpretation of what constituted offensive armament; but they still held out against von Tirpitz, who finally resigned, evidently hoping through an appeal to popular opinion to come back as master of the situation.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, February 29, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I had the grippe, went to Partenkirchen for a few days; but the first night in country air since July, 1914, was too much for me and filled me with such energy that I tried skiing, fell and broke my collar-bone. Came to Berlin and can sit at my desk, but am very uncomfortable.

I think Germany was about to offer to sink no merchant ships without notice and putting crews, etc., in safety, if England would disarm merchant ships; but now, since the

President's letter to Stone, both the Chancellor and von Jagow say they are convinced America has a secret understanding with England and that nothing can be arranged. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

MY DEAR COLONEL:

BERLIN, *March 7, 1916*

. . . I think the food question here is getting very serious; but before they are starved out they will starve six million Belgians, eleven million Russians and Poles, and two million prisoners, so that, after all, this starvation business is not practical.

There was a Grand Council of War last week at Charleville to determine whether von Tirpitz's propositions to start an unlimited submarine blockade of England should be started or not — i.e., sink all ships, enemy or neutral, at sight. Falkenhayn was for this, the Chancellor against; and von Tirpitz lost. The decision, of course, was made by the Emperor. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

MY DEAR COLONEL:

BERLIN, *March 14, 1916*

. . . Von Tirpitz is said to be 'ill.' I feel that it means his resignation, and have so cabled Washington. Very probably his resignation will never be made public.

The K. and the Military did not favor the idea of any one officer or official appealing to second-rate newspapers and the crowd in general, in a conflict with superior authority.

I heard that both the Chancellor and von Jagow threatened to resign if von Tirpitz's unlimited submarine policy against England was adopted. This incident is said to have taken place during the Charleville conference. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

BERLIN, *March 20, 1916*

MY DEAR COLONEL:

Events are beginning to march. At first von Tirpitz's 'illness' was announced, then came his resignation.

Yesterday was his birthday and a demonstration was expected; there were many police out, but I could see no demonstrators. The row may come in the Reichstag.

There are two sources of danger. First — a failure at Verdun and the new food regulations may make people ready to accept Tirpitz's GUARANTY that if he is allowed his way the war can be won and ended. He has a large following already who favor this plan. Second — there are some Reichstag members and others who think the Tirpitz people can never be reconciled unless there is a new Chancellor. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

In Washington and New York, Colonel House kept in touch with Ambassador Bernstorff, who insisted that the Berlin Government would strictly respect the promises made in the *Arabic* case.

'*March 10, 1916*: I have a letter from the German Ambassador [wrote House], stating that he will be here Saturday and Sunday. I have written giving him an appointment at ten on Sunday. To show how closely his movements are known, Flynn¹ knew of this appointment I had made with him. Flynn considers it advisable to have my telephone wire tested, and this will be done each week. . . .

'*March 12, 1916*: I repeated [to Bernstorff] what I had told his Government in Berlin concerning their senseless Zepelin raids upon England and France, and proved to his satisfaction that it was of military advantage to England and harmful to Germany.

¹ Chief of the Secret Service.

not to be avoided. He had hoped that the United States could intervene to stop the war; once in, he realized that it would continue until Germany was utterly crushed, and he feared the economic and the moral consequences of such prolongation. But unless Wilson acted decisively in the crisis, he knew that American influence in the world would disappear.

‘It looks as if we should have to act this time without further parley [he noted on March 27]. I am hardly well enough to make the trip to Washington, but I feel I ought to be there to advise the President during these critical hours. I am afraid he will delay and write further notes, when action is what we need.’

The following day he left for the capital, and upon arrival went immediately to the White House for discussion with the President.

‘We had only a few minutes before dinner [he recorded], and agreed to postpone more detailed discussion of affairs until to-morrow. We talked enough, however, for me to fathom what was in his mind; and from the way he looked at me, I am inclined to believe that he intends making excuses for not acting promptly in this new submarine crisis forced upon him by the sinking of the *Sussex*. . . . He does not seem to realize that one of the main points of criticism against him is that he talks boldly, but acts weakly. . . .

‘*March 29, 1916*: Neither the President, Lansing, Polk, nor I can understand the new submarine activity by the Germans. Bernstorff has not come near the State Department and, from all we can learn, he is not worried in the slightest.’

Mr. Lansing was bellicose and believed that the United

States had no recourse but an immediate rupture with Germany.

'... He read a letter [wrote House] he had written the President concerning the controversy, in which he strongly advised sending Bernstorff home and breaking relations with Germany. His letter was calm and met with my approval provided the subsequent facts justified his desires.¹

'We both believe the President will be exceedingly reluctant to back up his own threats. . . .

'There is another thing I cannot bring the President to realize, and that is the importance of making ready to meet the crisis which may fall upon him any day. He was compelled to go into Mexico ² at a moment's notice. The same will happen in the European situation. . . . For the first time, the depletion of the army is beginning to be filled, and this only because of the chase after Villa and the consequent realization that we have no army worth speaking of. I tried to get him to do this last summer, and I tried to get him, almost a year before the war began, to pay attention to the army.'

Mr. Wilson hesitated. His great desire was to end the war, and he believed that the United States could bring it to a close more easily by mediation as a neutral than by intervention as a belligerent. If intervention were necessary, he wished to base it upon the hope of ending the war rather than upon a German attack on our rights. On March 30, the President and Colonel House had a long conference.

'After lunch the President and I went into executive session again. I put the matter of our controversy with Ger-

¹ That is, provided it were shown that the *Sussex* was struck by a torpedo from a German submarine.

² Following Villa's raid on Columbus, Pershing was sent at the head of a small force ordered to catch the Mexican patrio-bandit.

many quite strongly to him. He was afraid if we broke off relations, the war would go on indefinitely and there would be no one to lead the way out. He was repeating the argument I have been giving him for the last six months, and somewhat to my embarrassment. I told him, however, I had thought of another way by which we could lead them out even though we were in.

'I suggested that, when he sent von Bernstorff home, he should make a dispassionate statement of the cause of the war and what the Allies were fighting for. I suggested that he should say nothing unkind of the German people, but should strike at the system which had caused this world tragedy, and contend when that was righted the quarrel with Germany, as far as we were concerned, would be ended. Then I thought at the right time — which would perhaps be by midsummer — I could go to Holland and, after a conference with the Allies and with their consent, I could open negotiations directly with Berlin, telling them upon what terms we were ready to end the war.¹

'I thought the same arrangement could then be carried out I had planned; that is, he should preside over the conference and we should take part. This would make our participation more effective than as a neutral, and we could do greater and better work in this way than we could in the way we planned.

'He was pleased at my suggestion, and I believe will now be more inclined to act. What I tried to impress upon him was that if he failed to act he would soon lose the confidence of the American people and also of the Allies, and would fail

¹ On re-reading his diary nine years later, Colonel House remarked: 'My suggestion seems now like nonsense and not even good nonsense.' The comment is not quite fair. His purpose in making the suggestion was obviously to convince Wilson that the entrance of the United States into the war could and should become the factor making the war one to ensure peace. He appealed to the President's pacific instincts in order to arouse his belligerent will. As it turned out finally, President Wilson accepted the idea in 1917 and preached war as a crusade for peace.

to have any influence at the peace conference. I tried to make him see that we would lose the respect of the world unless he lived up to the demands he has made of Germany regarding her undersea warfare. . . .

'The President desired me to see Bernstorff and say to him that we were at the breaking point and that we would surely go into the war unless some decisive change was made in their submarine policy.

'April 2, 1916: The President's penchant for inaction makes him hesitate to take the plunge; but, if he once takes it, I have every confidence he will go through with it in a creditable manner. Anyway, his immediate *entourage*, from the Secretary of State down, are having an unhappy time just now. He is consulting none of them and they are as ignorant of his intentions as the man in the street. I believe he will follow the advice I gave him, . . . but even to me he has not expressed his intentions. This, however, is not unusual, as he seldom or never says what he will do. I merely know from past experience. . . .'

Returning to New York, Colonel House reiterated his conviction that the President must adopt a strong tone. He suggested, however, that a chance should be given the Allies to say whether they would prefer to have the United States demand that the war should stop, rather than enter as a belligerent.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 3, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . Unless the Germans discontinue their present policy, a break seems inevitable. Before it comes, do you not think it would be well to cable Grey, telling him the status of affairs and asking him whether or not it would be wise to intervene now rather than to permit the break to come?

Our becoming a belligerent would not be without its advantages, inasmuch as it would strengthen your position at home and with the Allies. It would eliminate the necessity for calling into the conference any neutral, because the only purpose in calling them in was to include ourselves.

Your influence at the peace conference would be enormously enhanced instead of lessened, for we would be the only nation at the conference desiring nothing except the ultimate good of mankind.

We could still be the force to stop the war when the proper time came, and in the way I outlined to you when I was in Washington.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House followed his own letter to Washington, and frequent conferences with the President and the Secretary of State took place. A note that severed diplomatic relations with Germany was already drafted.

'*April 5, 1916*: Lansing came at six o'clock and we talked for nearly an hour. After the President received my letter of April 3, he evidently made up his mind to follow my advice and take more vigorous action, for he told Lansing to prepare a memorandum for Gerard to present to the German Government. Lansing showed me what he had drawn up. It is an exceedingly vigorous paper and one which I think the President will modify greatly before he sends it. It was well written and very much to the point. It recalls Gerard and notifies the Imperial German Government that Count von Bernstorff will be given his passports. . . .

'*April 6, 1916*: Before the President started his dictation, we held a conference where we met in the hall just outside my room; and it lasted so long that he gave up all thought of his mail and dismissed his stenographer so we might finish.

'I told him it seemed to me a break with Germany was inevitable; they were torpedoing boats without warning, contrary to their solemn pledge not to do so; and that the *Sussex* case was in a way as bad or worse than the *Lusitania*. I thought he ought definitely to make up his mind what he intended to do; and if he agreed with me that a break was inevitable, then he should prepare for it from to-day in order to give us the advantage of two or three weeks' time to get ready before the Germans knew of our purpose.

'We discussed whether it would be advisable to give the Allies a last chance to accept our offer of intervention. There were many arguments for and against it. The suggestion was originally mine, made in my letter of April 3, but I was uncertain as to the advisability of doing so. He thought, too, it might cause them to think we wished them to act in order to save us. The President did not wish to indicate any weakness in this direction. And yet he thought they should know that in our opinion the war would last longer with us as a belligerent than as a neutral.

'The President asked me to frame the despatch to Sir Edward Grey, but I yielded to him and insisted that he do it. . . . The despatch as finally drafted by him in "his own handwriting," as we call his little typewriter, is as follows:

"Since it seems probable that this country must break with Germany on the submarine question unless the unexpected happens, and since, if this country should once become a belligerent, the war would undoubtedly be prolonged, I beg to suggest that if you had any thought of acting at an early date on the plan we agreed upon, you might wish now to consult with your allies with a view to acting immediately."¹

¹ On March 14, 1925, looking back at these negotiations, Colonel House writes: 'I think the cable that Wilson and I jointly prepared for him to send Grey a mistake. We should have known that it would not bring the response we desired. I am not sure that we did not make a greater mistake in not going ahead and calling for a peace conference rather than leaving it to the Allies to be the judges. That is why I

He said he had communicated this to his Government, but that he had cried wolf so many times, perhaps it did not have as much effect as it should.

I let him know that the most distressing feature of the break was our inability to lead the belligerents out. He said he had hoped you were ready to do this now and wished to know when I thought the time would be opportune. I explained that it seemed necessary to let them try out their offensive plans on both sides during the spring and early summer; that Germany had begun with Verdun and had seemingly failed; that when she had finished, the Allies would probably make their attempt, and, if they were no more successful, it would be evident then to everybody that the deadlock was unbreakable; and you could then intervene with success. . . .

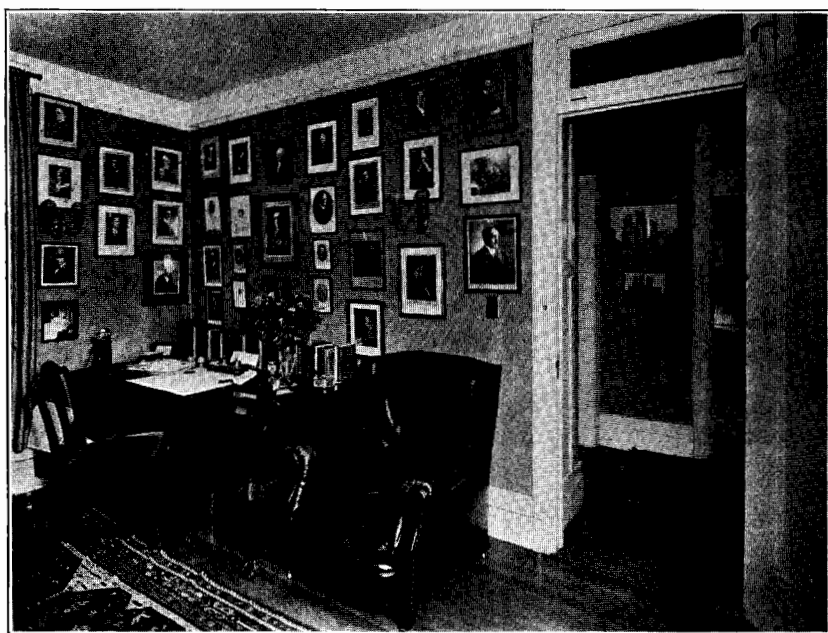
Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'Bernstorff keeps his temper and his courage,' added House in his journal, 'and it is impossible not to admire these qualities in him.' He showed always, however, like many Germans, a complete inability to understand Wilson's attitude toward the war.

'Bernstorff asked me [noted the Colonel] whether the President desired to break with Germany. It had been suggested that political exigencies made it desirable for the President to do this, and he wondered if that would have any influence. I replied that I had been the adviser of many public men and I always insisted, as I was insisting now, that politics should have no part in decisions about public affairs. If one's personal fortune becomes entangled with one's duty, disaster is certain to result. The best politics is to serve the public best. . . .

'April 9, 1916: Sidney Brooks called and remained an hour



COLONEL HOUSE'S STUDY AT NO. 115 EAST 53D STREET



‘I told him it seemed to me a break with Germany was inevitable; they were torpedoing boats without warning, contrary to their solemn pledge not to do so; and that the *Sussex* case was in a way as bad or worse than the *Lusitania*. I thought he ought definitely to make up his mind what he intended to do; and if he agreed with me that a break was inevitable, then he should prepare for it from to-day in order to give us the advantage of two or three weeks’ time to get ready before the Germans knew of our purpose.

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‘The President asked me to frame the despatch to Sir Edward Grey, but I yielded to him and insisted that he do it. . . . The despatch as finally drafted by him in “his own handwriting,” as we call his little typewriter, is as follows:

““Since it seems probable that this country must break with Germany on the submarine question unless the unexpected happens, and since, if this country should once become a belligerent, the war would undoubtedly be prolonged, I beg to suggest that if you had any thought of acting at an early date on the plan we agreed upon, you might wish now to consult with your allies with a view to acting immediately.”¹

¹ On March 14, 1925, looking back at these negotiations, Colonel House writes: ‘I think the cable that Wilson and I jointly prepared for him to send Grey a mistake. We should have known that it would not bring the response we desired. I am not sure that we did not make a greater mistake in not going ahead and calling for a peace conference rather than leaving it to the Allies to be the judges. That is why I

'Mrs. Wilson said the President felt somewhat less disturbed over the foreign situation, now that he had practically made up his mind. This is as I thought; it was the indecision which was giving him the worry. . . .

'When the President left, Lansing and I had a few minutes' conversation alone. After he left, I drove for an hour with the Secretary of War. . . . I wished . . . to tell him just how critical our relations with Germany are, and to suggest that he find out at once what troops would be available for the protection of New York, Chicago, and the larger centres, and whether we had sufficient without withdrawing troops from Mexico. If there were not sufficient, I thought the pursuit of Villa should be abandoned and our forces be properly distributed.

'I asked him to please treat my information as confidential, and to use it merely in the way indicated. After some discussion, he decided he would go to New York to-morrow and confer with General Wood, and later have the Commanding General in Chicago meet him at Cleveland so as to get the situation in the West. I urged Baker to use a firm hand in the event trouble should manifest itself in any way. I thought it was mistaken mercy to temporize with troubles of this sort; that such a policy would merely cause it to grow and in the end much suffering would ensue. . . .

'I thought in this crisis Wood should be used conspicuously, for he was known to be unfriendly to the Administration and close to Roosevelt and Republican leaders; and if the President passed him by and trouble followed, it would invite criticism of the Administration. Baker said it was his purpose to put pronounced Roosevelt men to the front.¹

wanted a large army and navy. If we had had them, or if they had been well in the making in 1916, it would have been the part of wisdom to have gone ahead regardless of the wishes of the Germans or Allies and demanded the cessation of the war along the lines we had in mind.'

¹ A laudable intention, but one which later could not be carried into effect because of the objections of the General Staff. In this matter Wilson and Baker followed the advice of their military experts.

We went over every phase of the situation from a military viewpoint, including the militia, the police forces of different cities, etc., etc.'

v

As might have been expected, nothing came of the cable to Sir Edward Grey. The Allies evidently reasoned in this fashion: If Wilson did not take a strong tone with Germany, they were not interested in his proffered intervention, for there would be proof conclusive of his unbreakable pacifism; if he took a strong tone and a break resulted, the entrance of the United States as a belligerent, with a quarrel of its own with Germany, would be worth more to them than any sort of mediation.

In the meantime, Colonel House impressed upon von Bernstorff the full character of the situation.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 8, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Bernstorff was with me for an hour this morning. I outlined the situation to him just as we had planned. He expressed his inability to understand matters any better than we do.

He said a break must not occur and that he would immediately get busy. Asked for suggestions, I thought he should cable his Government that you felt completely discouraged; that it had been only by the grace of God that American lives had not been lost upon ships torpedoed without warning; that it might happen to-day, to-morrow, or next week, but it would surely come unless they renounced their submarine policy. . . .

Bernstorff admitted that if passenger-ships were torpedoed without warning and American lives lost, you had no alternative excepting the severance of relations with Germany.

He said he had communicated this to his Government, but that he had cried wolf so many times, perhaps it did not have as much effect as it should.

I let him know that the most distressing feature of the break was our inability to lead the belligerents out. He said he had hoped you were ready to do this now and wished to know when I thought the time would be opportune. I explained that it seemed necessary to let them try out their offensive plans on both sides during the spring and early summer; that Germany had begun with Verdun and had seemingly failed; that when she had finished, the Allies would probably make their attempt, and, if they were no more successful, it would be evident then to everybody that the deadlock was unbreakable; and you could then intervene with success. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'Bernstorff keeps his temper and his courage,' added House in his journal, 'and it is impossible not to admire these qualities in him.' He showed always, however, like many Germans, a complete inability to understand Wilson's attitude toward the war.

'Bernstorff asked me [noted the Colonel] whether the President desired to break with Germany. It had been suggested that political exigencies made it desirable for the President to do this, and he wondered if that would have any influence. I replied that I had been the adviser of many public men and I always insisted, as I was insisting now, that politics should have no part in decisions about public affairs. If one's personal fortune becomes entangled with one's duty, disaster is certain to result. The best politics is to serve the public best. . . .

'April 9, 1916: Sidney Brooks called and remained an hour



COLONEL HOUSE'S STUDY AT NO. 115 EAST 53D STREET

and a half. He got some material from me for a cable, and we discussed the foreign situation pretty thoroughly. . . . He urged me to try to steer the President in what he said, believing he might do the right thing in the wrong way. Brooks seems anxious to serve the President and to be his friend, although he is impatient with his slowness of decision. He forgets, as do others, that the President has the responsibility and the welfare and happiness of a hundred million people are largely in his hands. It is easy enough for one without responsibility to sit down over a cigar and a glass of wine and decide what is best to be done. . . .'

At the end of the week, House was again called to Washington to discuss with Mr. Wilson the note which the President had drafted.

'April 11, 1916: He had discarded Lansing's note entirely [recorded the Colonel], and had written a much abler one, covering all the facts from the beginning and arguing against the use of submarines on merchantmen. I could see that the data I brought back from England, which included a very able presentation of the case by A. H. Pollen and also one from Sir Horace Plunkett, had had their effect.

'I objected to the last page of the note, as being inconclusive and as opening up the entire question for more argument. . . . He patiently argued the matter . . . but refused to admit any sort of weakness in it.

'His contention was that, if he did as we advised, it would mean a declaration of war, and he could not declare war without the consent of Congress. I thought if he left it as it was, it would place him in a bad position for the reason that it would give Germany a chance to come back with another note asserting she was willing to make the concessions he demanded, provided Great Britain obeyed the letter of the law as well. The President did not agree with me, but, at my

suggestion, cut out the last paragraph, which strengthened the note somewhat. He also inserted the word "immediately," which strengthened it further.

'I urged him to say if Germany declined to agree immediately to cease her submarine warfare that Ambassador Gerard was instructed to ask for his passports. This, I told the President, would come nearer preserving the peace than his plan, because the alternative of peace or war would be placed directly up to Germany in this single note, whereas the other wording would still leave room for argument and in the end war would probably follow anyway. . . .

'What I should like is for him to go before Congress after the break is made, and deliver a philippic against Germany — not, indeed, against the German people, but against the cult that has made this calamity possible. No one as yet has brought the indictment of civilization against them as strongly as it might be done, and I would like the President to do this in a masterly way.

'We were in conference for two hours or, indeed, until the President had to leave for an eleven o'clock Cabinet meeting. He was undecided whether to read the note to the Cabinet. . . . He finally decided to read them the note almost in its entirety, but as an argument he had in his own mind against submarine warfare and not as a note which he had prepared to present to Germany.'

Soon after his return to New York, Colonel House received from the German Ambassador a letter insisting that the break must not be allowed to come, since he was certain that Germany was absolutely sincere in her determination to make good the pledges she had given. The Colonel, who knew of the dispute then raging in German official circles, evidently put less faith in Bernstorff's information than in his good intentions.

Ambassador von Bernstorff to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, April 14, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . My Government is willing to conduct the submarine warfare with due regard to neutral rights. It stands by our assurance given to the United States and has issued such precise instructions regarding this matter that, according to human foresight, errors are excluded.

If contrary to expectation any mistakes should happen, my Government is willing to remedy them in every way. Germany, in face of daily increasing violations of International Law by England, cannot give up our submarine war altogether and regrets that England apparently succeeds in hiring a few American citizens for freight ships in the war zone and thus tries to cause a break between Germany and the United States.

There can be no doubt in the *bona fides* of my Government, since the Chancellor for the second time announced before the whole world that Germany is ready to conclude peace and pointed out that we have only defensive aims. Our enemies, however, sneeringly refused our outstretched hand and are still preaching Germany's everlasting military and economic annihilation. My Government entirely shares your wish to bring about peace and hopes that the relations between the United States and Germany will remain so friendly that both Governments can work together for the purpose of achieving this object so desirable in the interest of humanity and of all nations.

The foregoing statements as I said before are entirely based upon instructions from my Government. For my own part, I venture to suggest that it might be advisable to refrain from a further exchange of official notes, the publication of which always causes irritation. . . .

We always obtain better results if I take up matters confidentially with my Government. Otherwise they do not,

in Berlin, get the right impression of the state of affairs in this country.

I remain, my dear Colonel House,

Yours very sincerely

J. BERNSTORFF

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 15, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I herewith enclose for your information a copy of a letter which has just come from Bernstorff.

I do not believe we can get anywhere through him, for he does not seem to know much more about what is in the mind of his Government than we do.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

VI

On April 18, Wilson sent his note to Germany. Its tone was sober, but its conclusions definite, for the President had finally accepted House's advice and eliminated the paragraph which had seemed to leave room for argument. 'Unless the Imperial Government,' said Wilson, 'should now immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of submarine warfare against passenger and freight-carrying vessels, the Government of the United States can have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the German Empire altogether.'

Thus the choice of alternatives was put squarely up to Germany: either a break with America or rigid restriction of submarine activities. In Berlin the navy and army chiefs were not inclined to yield. Von Bernstorff stretched every nerve to impress upon the Germans that Wilson was serious.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 25, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Bernstorff has just left me. He has a cable from his Government saying in substance:

'We wish to avoid war. Please suggest how this may be done. What is meant in the Note by "illegal submarine warfare"? If we accede to their demands, will they bring pressure upon Great Britain in regard to the blockade?' . . .

I advised his sending another despatch warning them not to suggest any compromise; that if they really desired to avoid a break, it was essential for them to discontinue their submarine warfare entirely and immediately. . . .

He asked if he could say to his Government that I thought acquiescence in your demands would bring peace nearer. I told him he could. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

For a fortnight the struggle in German official circles continued, the military and naval chiefs refusing to yield, the civil officials demanding that the break with America must be avoided. President Wilson, having made his decision, had no mind for further negotiation, and this fact House constantly impressed upon Bernstorff.

'I find the President [recorded Colonel House on May 3] set in his determination to make Germany recede from her position regarding submarines. He spoke with much feeling concerning Germany's responsibility for this world-wide calamity, and thought those guilty should have personal punishment. . . .

'The last time I was here [in Washington] he was so disinclined to be firm with Germany that I feared he might destroy his influence. I therefore did all I could to make him

stand firm. I evidently overdid it, for I now find him unyielding and belligerent, and not caring as much as he ought to avert war. . . .

'I wish again to pay a tribute to Bernstorff. . . . He has represented his Government well, better indeed than they have been able to represent themselves at Berlin; and if his advice had been listened to from the beginning, our relations with Germany would never have come to such a pass.'

Divided counsels in Germany were reflected in the reply to Wilson's note which was sent on May 4. The tone and content were so inconsistent that it might almost be assumed that an original draft had been made, refusing Wilson's demand, which was hastily corrected in certain details so as to accept it. The note took issue with assertions in the American note and made ironic complaint of our failure to compel Great Britain to modify her food blockade:

'The German Government cannot but reiterate its regret that the sentiments of humanity which the Government of the United States extends with such fervor to the unhappy victims of submarine warfare are not extended with the same warmth of feeling to the many millions of men and children who, according to the avowed intentions of the British Government, shall be starved. . . . The German Government, in agreement with the German people, fails to understand this discrimination. . . .'

No argument was so dear to the German Government as that which attempted to justify the submarine campaign as fair retaliation for the Allied food blockade; Berlin utilized it consistently through the war and afterwards. Never was argument less warranted by the facts. For in the spring of 1915, Germany had herself refused to consider the suggestion

that the food blockade be relaxed provided the submarine warfare were abandoned.¹

But, although the Germans thus displayed bad temper and worse logic in their reply to the demands laid down by President Wilson, they accepted the essence of those demands, announced that the Government had issued new orders for its submarine commanders and 'is prepared to do its utmost to confine the operations of war for the rest of its duration to the fighting forces of the belligerents.' No more merchant ships would be sunk 'without warning and without saving human lives, unless these ships attempt to escape or offer resistance.'

It was all that the United States asked.

Germany, however, tried to make her promise conditional upon the cessation by Great Britain of the trade restrictions which the Germans contended were illegal, and inserted a clause that implied that the pledge might be withdrawn if the United States failed to secure from the British what Germany asked.

'Should the steps taken by the Government of the United States not attain the object it desires to have the laws of humanity followed by all the belligerent nations, the German Government would then be facing a new situation in which it must reserve itself complete liberty of decision.'

The first summary of the German reply, sent by Ambassador Gerard, emphasized its unfriendly tone and seemed to indicate that it would not be acceptable to the President.

'Frank Polk telephoned from Washington [Colonel House recorded on May 4] to say that he would be here at nine o'clock and would get in touch with me. At that time he had nothing of importance from Berlin to communicate. He

¹ See preceding volume, pp. 450-53.

rang me up again upon reaching New York and said the State Department had received a message from Gerard giving a summary of the German note, which is to be sent tomorrow. It will not be satisfactory, if Gerard's interpretation is correct, and a break seems inevitable. . . .

'May 5, 1916: The German note is coming in over the wires and the United Press is sending it up to me in instalments. Gerard told us it would be sent this way first and communicated by him through cypher in the regular way. It is being sent by wireless. . . .

'I have had so many telephone calls and requests for interviews this morning that everything has been in confusion. They all wish to know about the German note, and what I think our Government should do in the circumstances.

'The German Ambassador telephoned me first, and I asked him to come at half-past four o'clock. . . .'

Late in the afternoon came a telegram from the President, asking House what he thought of the German reply and what attitude and action Wilson ought to take. Colonel House believed that, since Germany had accepted the conditions laid down by the President, there was no adequate excuse for a break. The American contention had triumphed, always provided Germany kept her promises, which in this case were more far-reaching than in the *Arabic* case, where she had agreed merely not to attack passenger liners. He insisted that no attention should be paid to the later paragraphs of the note, which raised the question of the British blockade. The important point was to cut short all discussion.

*Colonel House to the President*NEW YORK, *May 6, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... There is one thing I feel quite certain about, and that is, no formal reply should be made to the German note. I believe, too, it would be better for you to let Lansing make any statement to the public that is considered proper.

None of the papers have brought out the real concessions that the Germans have made. This, I think, should be done, and then I believe a rather curt statement should be made to the effect that we will deal with the other belligerents who violate international law as we see fit.

I do not see how we can break with Germany on this note. However, I would make it very clear to the German Government, through both Gerard and Bernstorff, that the least infraction would entail an immediate severance of diplomatic relations; and I would let the public know unofficially that this had been done. We will then have to wait and hope for the best.

At my conference with Bernstorff yesterday, I suggested that he caution his Government against any further transgression. He said he would, but he did not believe any would occur. The disagreeable parts of the note, he told me, were necessary because of German public opinion; but he confessed that he knew it would be impossible for us to make Great Britain conform to international law in regard to the blockade. He thought you could make peace easier than you could do this. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Ambassador von Bernstorff regarded the note as a triumph of his own, and to him in truth should go much of the credit for bringing the Berlin Government to surrender. Characteristically, the Germans had refused to follow his advice as to

manner; he had urged the Chancellor that, if Germany yielded, it should do so gracefully and 'handsomely.' House discussed the matter with him at length on May 5, and also with the British Naval Attaché, Captain Guy Gaunt, with whom he was on terms of close intimacy.

'Bernstorff [he wrote] was visibly pleased over the note, although he regretted its nasty tone and was sorry they had not adopted his suggestion, which would have placed them in a much better position.

'*May 6, 1916:* Captain Gaunt called and I frankly told him what I advised the President. He said he was sorry that he was compelled to agree with me. . . . I told Gaunt that he reminded me of Bernstorff, inasmuch as he had courage and good temper and viewed matters like a sportsman. I wish Gaunt was British Ambassador and that Bernstorff was Minister for Foreign Affairs in Berlin. It is my intention to suggest to the British Government that they handsomely recognize Gaunt's services during the war. . . .'

Secretary Lansing, who following his proposals for disarming merchantmen had received much unjustified criticism for his supposed anti-British attitude, did not regard the German reply as satisfactory.

'Polk telephoned [wrote the Colonel on May 6] to say that Lansing disagreed with my opinion. His first reading of the note was that it would not do; his second reading was that it would; and his third brought him back to his first opinion and he believes we should send Bernstorff home. The President will therefore have Lansing advising him in one direction and me in the other.'

Mr. Wilson accepted the Colonel's opinion in this matter, but he decided to reply himself, and formally, to the German note, which House regretted.

'*May 8, 1916*: The President wrote a note [recorded House] and Lansing wrote one, with the result that the President took all of Lansing's except the last paragraph, which he wrote himself and which has most of the 'punch' in it. The composite note is admirable in every way, and my only objection is that it is sent in that form. In my opinion, it would have been better if Lansing had made the statement unofficially and given it to the public in that way. It would have answered the same purpose and Germany could not have replied. As it is, we still run the danger of a break, and the further danger of continued argument, all of which seems to me unnecessary. If we can get away with it, it will be a success. If it reopens the matter and causes a break, it will be a failure.'

The final paragraph, with the 'punch' which House admired especially, contained the definite notification that the United States 'cannot for a moment entertain, much less discuss, a suggestion that respect by German naval authorities for the rights of citizens of the United States upon the high seas should in any way or in the slightest degree be made contingent upon the conduct of any other Government affecting the rights of neutrals and non-combatants. Responsibility in such matters is single, not joint; absolute, not relative.'

The pacific outcome of the crisis was regarded by those most closely concerned as miraculous. Only a few days before the German surrender, House had written to Grey that Bernstorff's passports were being prepared, and to Gerard that he expected soon to see him. He had spent as much time with the Secretary of War and Police Commissioners and Secret Service agents, discussing steps to be taken in case of war, as he had with Bernstorff discussing means to preserve peace.

The impossible had been accomplished, for Wilson had

avoided war and yet maintained American prestige. Even the Allied newspapers had applauded the stand he took. How long the German pledge would be maintained, no one could guess. German public opinion was bitter against America, but yet feared to engage it in war. 'Every night,' wrote Ambassador Gerard, on April 5, 'fifty million Germans cry themselves to sleep because all Mexico has not risen against us.' A week later: 'I think Germany is now determined to keep peace with America, as the plain people are convinced that otherwise the war will be lengthened.' The Ambassador had made every effort to prevent war, but he insisted that sooner or later Germany must be reckoned with.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, May 10, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

First of all, great congratulations to the President on the strength of his backbone.

In spite of your prediction in your last letter we are still here.

I do not know whether it was wanted, but I worked hard for peace — but I hope for preparedness at home, for unless these people are made pretty sick of war, they will attack us later, probably by way of an infringement of the Monroe Doctrine in Brazil or Mexico.

I wish the State Department would keep me better informed. . . .

When I am getting *Sussex* admissions and changes in submarine war and keeping the peace, and cannot get even a pat on the head, while ——'s press agents advertise that all other Ambassadors are lobsters, I might at least be kept up to date on information vitally affecting my work. This is a very small kick. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

The firmness which Wilson finally displayed in the *Sussex* crisis was sufficient to impress Germany for a period of some eight months. The surrender to his ultimatum indicated that at least the civil officials in Berlin were anxious to avoid war with America. This was the moment, House insisted, for the Allies to take up the offer he had made in February. It was better for them to accept the peace terms which House had outlined, and for which the United States would fight if Germany refused them, rather than to pay the price which the complete victory they talked about must cost them and the world, a victory which in the end could scarcely have been achieved without American assistance.

For as the spring and summer of 1916 passed, Colonel House guessed what the historian now realizes: that the war had reached a state of deadlock which could be broken only by the injection of some force from outside.

CHAPTER IX

THE ALLIES REFUSE HELP

Victory was to be bought so dear as to be almost indistinguishable from defeat. It was not to give security even to the victors.

Winston Churchill, in 'The World Crisis'

I

As the historian reviews the military events of 1915 and 1916, he is oppressed by an acute sense of nightmare. The war of movement had given way on the Western Front to the deadlock of the trenches, an intense and never-ending strain with no appreciable result. Each side launched gigantic and fruitless offensives. The Germans made their great effort at Verdun — in vain. The *riposte* of the Allies on the Somme proved equally indecisive.

And if, by the mere fact of holding their own in France, the Allies threatened to exhaust German resources, outside of France the advantage continued with their adversaries during the course of 1916. In the early summer the Russians made a temporarily successful drive under Brusilov, as the result of which and of the promise of broad annexations Rumania entered the war. But the Russians were thrown back, Rumanian armies overwhelmed, and Rumania itself invaded. The Italians were able to repel with some difficulty the Austrian drive from the Trentino, but their advance toward Trieste was imperceptible except upon the largest scale map. The Allied armed camp at Saloniki compelled the violation of Greek neutrality without bringing military results. The German fleet lay safely protected in its fortified harbors. Upon the single occasion when it emerged, the clash with the British fleet was sufficiently indecisive to permit naval experts ten years later to discuss whether the battle was won by British or Germans.

The hope of the Allies lay in the blockade of Germany, which as the months passed might gradually restrict the materials available for making war; it lay also in the whittling away of German man-power on the western battle front, where the process of mutual slaughter without essential change of position continued without cessation. In materials and men the Allies believed that they would become increasingly superior. Accordingly, the sole method of achieving victory that Allied military ingenuity could suggest was the *guerre d'usure*, the war of exhaustion.

'No war is so sanguinary as the war of exhaustion [writes Winston Churchill]. . . . It will appear not only horrible but incredible to future generations that such doctrines should have been imposed by the military profession upon the ardent and heroic populations who yielded themselves to their orders. It is a tale of the torture, mutilation or extinction of millions of men, and of the sacrifice of all that was best and noblest in an entire generation. The crippled, broken world in which we dwell to-day is the inheritor of these awful events.'¹

From such a deadlock and such a future, Colonel House felt that Europe could be rescued only by American aid. Europe was too evenly divided against itself, and in its impotence to end the struggle was committing suicide. The weight of America thrown into the balance would prove decisive. He did not plan intervention in order to save the German military system from the consequences of defeat. He detested all that the German Imperial Government stood for politically, and he was appalled by German war methods. If Germany refused terms that proved to the people the practical futility of militarism and guaranteed protection against a future attack by Germany, he would utilize the strength of America to enforce those terms.

¹ *The World Crisis* (Charles Scribner's Sons), II, 4-5.

On the other hand, he agreed with Wilson that there was no justification for offering American assistance to the Allies merely to enable them to satisfy their national aspirations — to destroy Germany politically and economically, so that France and Russia might divide the dictatorship of the Continent and Great Britain be rid of German naval and commercial competition. He wanted the United States to serve the cause of civilization, but he was not interested in assigning to her the rôle of pulling chestnuts from the fire.

President Wilson seems to have been willing to make of House's plan the basis of his policy and to have been in accord with his reasoning, except for this difference: Wilson was more suspicious of selfish elements among the Allies, not so fully convinced as House of the necessity of standing by the Allies if Germany refused reasonable terms. Nevertheless he had given his assurance, and the Colonel, at least, was certain that a refusal by Germany would bring American help to the Allies, if only they would accept it under the conditions laid down.

Neither side wanted American intervention if it meant interference with their national aspirations. The Germans had submitted to Wilson's ultimatum in the *Sussex* case and they hated him the more. In the United States, German-Americans looked upon him as the satellite of the British Foreign Office, because he permitted the export of munitions to the Allies and merely protested, without taking action, against the paper blockade of Germany.

'Paul F. Mueller, of the *Abendpost*, Chicago, was another caller [recorded Colonel House on May 2]. He travelled all the way from Chicago to see me for the scant thirty minutes I was able to give him, in order to tell how unneutral German-Americans considered the President. I was interested in Mueller's story. His father left Germany in '48 to escape arrest and death; went to England; arose to distinction

there. . . . Still Mueller sees little good in England, or the British Government, and is so pro-German that he cannot well be called an American, although he has lived here all his life. I did not argue any of the questions he brought up, because I saw it was worse than useless to waste time doing so.'

From Austria, Ambassador Penfield wrote of cartoons depicting Wilson as taking orders from Sir Edward Grey, superintending the manufacture of American dum-dum bullets, and permitting the women and children of Germany to starve.

Official Germans, as von Jagow on June 7, complained of the rôle Wilson had assumed, 'to wit, that of a Lord Protector designated to uphold everything which, in his opinion, constituted right and justice.'¹ They were perfectly willing that Wilson should talk of peace in vague phrases, in order to buoy up the courage of the German people and keep the Chancellor in office; there might come a time when they would like his help in starting negotiations, so that they might capitalize their military victories, but they did not want him laying down terms. Furthermore, the Austrians and Germans were by no means convinced that they were not going to win the war and dictate terms.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, May 17, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . We are rather in a calm after the last crisis. The Chancellor sent for me and said he hoped we would do something to England or propose a general peace; otherwise his position will become, he thinks, rather hard. Delbrück, Vice-Chancellor, a Prussian woodenhead, very hostile to

¹ Von Jagow to Bernstorff, *Official German Documents Relating to the World War*, 978.

America, is out — failure as Minister of the Interior to organize food supply is the real reason. Chancellor asked my advice about answering our last note, and I advised that it was best to let matters settle down without further notes.

I should advise not stirring the animals here for the present, such as with questions as to how Commander of the submarine which sank the *Sussex* was punished, etc. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

BERLIN, May 24, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . Mrs. Gerard has just returned from a week in Budapest with her sister. The Hungarians are once more gay and confident. The Italians, their hereditary foes, are being driven back, and on the Russian front there seems to be a sort of tacit truce of God — no fighting and visiting in the trenches, etc. — on terms of great friendliness. Food is plentiful.

At the races here last Sunday there was an absolutely record crowd and more money bet than on any previous day in German racing history. The cheaper field and stands were so full of soldiers that the crowd seemed gray, which goes to show that the last man is not at the front. . . .

On the *Sussex* question — I got my Spanish colleague, who has orders to ask about the punishment of the Commander, to say at the Foreign Office, after he had once been refused any information, that I had heard that the people at large in America believed the Commander has received 'Pour le Mérite.' Von Jagow said that he was sure this was not so, but that he did not know the name of the Commander and that it was not 'usual' to tell what punishment had been given. So that I suppose the matter will rest, unless I get orders to formally ask about the punishment. . . .

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Hope to hear you are starting soon for Europe with a mouth full of olive branches.

Yours ever

J. W. G.

BERLIN, *June 7, 1916*

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I do not think that either Austria or Germany wishes President Wilson to lay down any peace conditions — there may possibly be a Congress after the Peace Congress, but meanwhile all parties here feel that America has nothing to do with peace conditions. America can bring the parties together, but that is all. The speech about the rights of small peoples¹ has, I hear, made the Austrians furious, as Austria is made up of many nationalities; and the Germans say that if the rights of small peoples and peoples choosing their own sovereignty is to be discussed, the Irish question, the Indian question, and the Boer question, the Egyptian question, and many others involving the Allies must be discussed. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

Ambassador Penfield to Colonel House

VIENNA, *June 5, 1916*

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . Day by day I have seen the [peace] idea contract, until the Austrian official now is far from certain that he wants the war to end before some of the issues of the struggle have been settled in a way making a recurrence of strife next to impossible.

There seem four reasons for this reaction of judgment:

Firstly, the recent War Loan succeeded beyond expectation, giving encouragement for further borrowing.

¹ Delivered by President Wilson on May 27, before the League to Enforce Peace.

Secondly, the forces of the Monarchy are having such success on the Italian front and on Italian soil that many want to go on until the armies are in Verona and hated Italy is humbled.

Thirdly, the triumph of Germany over the British fleet in the North Sea gives belief that the Central Powers in the not distant future may dictate terms of peace without mediation.

Fourthly, there is growing fear that our President may not be the best mediator to bring benefit to a Monarchy peopled by a *congeries* of nationalities as is Austria-Hungary with its nine or ten different races. It is understood that more than once President Wilson has stated his belief that it was the right of every race to govern itself, and Austrians profess to fear that this belief might conflict with the interests of a Monarch ruling Austrians, Hungarians, Bohemians, Slavs, Croats, and other races. Some debaters of the peace proposal pretend that the King of Spain, half Hapsburg and a Roman Catholic, might give the Monarchy a larger measure of advantage than the well-intentioned American President. . . .

It is widely published here that the President told the Peace League that all people should have the right to choose the form of its constitution; and that small States, like Great Powers, should be entitled to have their sovereignty and integrity respected. There is a possibility that this may not be pleasing reading to a people who have conquered Montenegro, Albania, and a portion of Serbia in the present war. . .

Sincerely yours

FREDERIC C. PENFIELD

It is true that a week later Gerard again raised the question of peace and wrote to House: 'Von Jagow told me that the President and you must not think because of debates in the Reichstag, the President is not welcome as mediator.' But at

almost the same moment, the German Government telegraphed instructions to Bernstorff which carried exactly the opposite sense: 'As soon as Mr. Wilson's mediation plans threaten to assume a more concrete form,' said von Jagow, 'and an inclination on the part of England to meet him begins to manifest itself, it will be the duty of Your Excellency to prevent President Wilson from approaching us with a positive proposal to mediate.'

To Colonel House the stupidity of German policy was apparent. If they really wanted peace, it would be much better for them to remain inarticulate until a definite proposal should be made. Their public protestations, belied by their secret instructions, merely encouraged the Allies to believe that the war was entering on its last stage. House spoke very frankly to Count von Bernstorff, who was one of the few Germans who then and always was willing to make real sacrifices for peace.

'*May 15, 1916*: I cannot understand the German mind [wrote the Colonel]. They have convinced the entire world that they are eager for peace, and the Allies have acquired new confidence and a disinclination to do anything in the direction of peace because of this attitude.' If the Germans will keep quiet for a while, we may be able to initiate a peace movement. . . .

'*May 22, 1916*: The German Ambassador called. I again impressed upon him the folly of Germany talking peace. I advised them to do nothing, say nothing, and to be absolutely quiet for a period. I asked why they made such an outcry concerning food shortage. I supposed it was for the purpose of exciting the sympathy of neutrals. It failed, however, to have this effect. It served only to make the Allies believe Germany was in a sinking condition, and hardened them to all suggestions looking to peace. I thought it entirely legitimate for the Allies to starve Germany into

peace if they could do so, and whatever action we took would be for the purpose of enforcing our legal rights. . . .'

II

From the Allies Colonel House had constant word of their determination to fight until the utter collapse of Germany. It might be a long struggle, but they were confident of ultimate victory, and Germany's peace feelers encouraged them.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, May 23, 1916

DEAR HOUSE:

. . . The English do not see how there can be any mediation, nor (I confess) do I see. German militarism must be put down. I don't mean that the German people should be thrashed to a frazzle nor thrashed at all. I find no spirit of revenge in the English. But this German military caste caused all the trouble and there can be no security in Europe as long as it lives in authority. That's the English view. It raped nuns in Belgium, it took food from the people, it even now levies indemnities on all towns, it planned the destruction of the *Lusitania*, and it now coos like a sucking dove in the United States. It'll do anything. Now, since it has become evident that it is going to be beaten, it wants peace — on terms which will give it a continued lease of life. . . . In another year or two the German military caste will be broken as the rulers of that country. And that caste will not be trusted in Europe with any professions of repentance that it will make. That's the long and short of it. . . .

Yours very heartily

W. H. P.

LONDON, *May* 30, 1916

DEAR HOUSE:

All this peace talk from Germany causes amusement here and is construed as a confession that Germans know they have lost the war. All the peace talk that comes from the U.S. causes surprise and is taken to confirm the old opinion that the people in the U.S. do not yet know anything about the war. . . .

There isn't any early peace in sight here, and any discussion of the subject at all puts the British and the French on edge. . . .

Heartily yours

W. H. P.

LONDON, *June* 16, 1916

DEAR HOUSE:

. . . I say *after the war*, we'll have an interesting part to play; for I see no possibility of our having any hand in ending it — except, perhaps, to transmit a preliminary note from one belligerent to the other, as I transmit a dozen every day about lesser subjects. The Allies are going to win a real victory; that becomes more and more certain. The British fleet's victory (so stupidly managed in the press — incredibly stupid!), the death of Kitchener, the battle of Verdun, the drive of the Russians — everything now spurs the Allies on. A complete change has taken place in the English resolution. Your bulldog has taken his grip and he'll hold on. And they won't hear the word 'peace.' They're out not for revenge nor for annihilation nor any other nonsense, but for a real victory, a victory which will, somehow or other, permanently discourage a military dictatorship. If they win that, they'll make peace. Then, that done, the task of organizing the world on a securer basis will follow. Then, but not till then, as I see it, will our inning come. . . .

Heartily yours

W. H. P.

Colonel House did not agree with Mr. Page. He felt that if the world were to be saved from political and economic collapse, the United States must take a hand in ending the war. Even if Russia remained faithful to the Allies — and he always questioned the danger of a separate peace — the long-drawn-out struggle would involve Europe in such an expenditure of men and materials, such complete disruption of industrial organization, that civilization would be threatened.

The war had become a conflagration which neither statesmen nor generals could handle. The statesmen had stupidly permitted it to blaze forth; the generals, as Winston Churchill writing in retrospect four years later insisted, were incapable of confining it 'within limits which though enormous were not uncontrolled. Thereafter the fire roared on till it burnt itself out. Thereafter events passed very largely outside the scope of conscious choice. Governments and individuals conformed to the rhythm of the tragedy, and swayed and staggered forward in helpless violence, slaughtering and squandering on ever-increasing scales, till injuries were wrought to the structure of human society which a century will not efface, and which may conceivably prove fatal to the present civilization. . . . Victory was to be bought so dear as to be almost indistinguishable from defeat. It was not to give even security to the victors. . . . The most complete victory ever gained in arms has failed to solve the European problem or remove the dangers which produced the war.'¹

Such a catastrophe House obviously feared in 1916 when he argued that in their effort to smash Germany the Allies ran the risk of exhausting civilization both of its man-power and its industrial life. There was the further risk incurred by them, which was that no matter how immense their efforts, the Allies might not be able to defeat the Central

¹ *The World Crisis* (Charles Scribner's Sons), II, 1-2.

Powers without assistance from outside. House feared the defection of Russia, which would enable Germany to concentrate superior forces on the decisive battle front in France. It was a fear justified two years later by the appeal which the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France, and Italy telegraphed to President Wilson: 'There is great danger of the war being lost unless the numerical inferiority of the Allies can be remedied as rapidly as possible by the advent of American troops.'

Dominant British opinion in 1916, however, was determined to repeal all suggestions of peace, no matter how attractive, and regardless of what the struggle might cost. There were other currents of opinion afloat, but they were quite powerless to affect policy. Even so sincere a lover of peace and so experienced a statesman as Lord Bryce, believed that the safety of the world demanded pure concentration on the military effort.

On May 31 Bryce wrote to House that the British were convinced that the German Government would not make peace on any terms the Allies could accept; that was perfectly clear from the language of Berlin. The British were therefore resolved to prosecute the war until it was plain that Germany, recognizing her failure, was prepared to accept the terms the Allies thought necessary for their own security. Bryce feared this moment was still 'some way off.' Great as were the sufferings caused by the war, the general feeling was that a peace on the basis which the Germans indicated would leave the British in a position of insecurity, with the dread of another war hanging over them and with the need of continuing to maintain huge armaments. He insisted that there was no wish to break up Germany or injure her, but the British were convinced that no promise she might make would be worth the paper it was written on and that the securities for future peace must therefore be of a tangible nature.

Colonel House believed that the very clear-cut and apparently reasonable attitude, expressed in these letters of Page and Bryce, rested upon a triple misconception, induced by the emotions of war: In the first place, upon a confidence in Allied ability to defeat Germany without outside help, which later events proved to be exaggerated. In the second place, it was futile to argue that there was no use accepting American mediation since 'the German Government would not make peace on any terms the Allies could accept.' Under the conditions of the American offer, one of two things must happen. Either Germany would accept the terms and the Allies would have what they contended they were fighting for, or Germany would refuse those terms, as the British anticipated, and the United States would enter the war to enforce them. The attempt at mediation would have disproved German sincerity and would have brought American help. In the third place, the British attitude was colored by an unjustified suspicion of President Wilson, a belief that he would never take decided action and that American aid would in no circumstances be forthcoming.

This suspicion of Wilson, gradually developing into contempt, had been progressive. In 1914 there had been no serious suggestion that the United States should enter the war to protect Belgian neutrality. In 1915 Sir Edward Grey had expressed entire satisfaction with Wilson's first *Lusitania* note. But in 1916 Wilson was generally abused on these two scores for his 'spineless' policy. So warm an admirer as Sir Horace Plunkett, in March, 1916, wrote of the need of dispelling 'the misunderstandings of his policy in respect of Belgium and the *Lusitania* which has unquestionably lowered the United States in the estimation of Europe.'

Allied public opinion was forgetful of the assistance brought to the cause of the Entente by the United States which, by a slightly stricter interpretation of the rôle of a

neutral, President Wilson could have prevented: the enormous loans, the shipment of munitions. The President had, it is true, displayed a patience which endured long under the affronts of the German submarine attacks. But he had none the less compelled the Berlin Government to submit to his point of view and thereby had incidentally protected Allied shipping. He had dragged from Germany, after the sinking of the *Arabic*, the promise that they would not attack passenger liners without warning; he had disallowed their contention that armed merchant vessels were in effect warships; he had finally, after the attack on the *Sussex*, forced the pledge that no merchant vessel whatever should be attacked without warning. This was at a moment when von Tirpitz promised that if the submarines should be given full freedom, Great Britain would be isolated and the war ended. Wilson's insistence saved the British merchant fleet from the intensive submarine attack, the danger of which became apparent a year later, and for which German naval leaders already clamored.¹

The President's determination in the defence of American rights against Germany received scant appreciation from the Allies, despite the service which it rendered their cause. Nor did they appear to realize the degree of consideration which he displayed in the dispute raised by Allied interference with American trade on the high seas. It is true that our State Department sent many sharp, perhaps uselessly sharp, protests. But the President never yielded to the constant pressure upon him to take action that might give effect to such protests. It would have been easy for him to ask for retaliatory measures, which would have been im-

¹ The student must, however, take into account the argument that it was not Wilson's protests but German unreadiness which led Berlin to postpone an unrestricted submarine campaign. This argument is weakened by the insistence of German naval leaders that they were fully prepared in the spring of 1916, a contention which, according to Ambassador Gerard, rested upon established fact.

mediately approved by a Congress that was in no degree inspired by pro-Entente sentiments. An embargo upon munitions was urged again and again. Wilson, however, did not ask for power to use retaliation until the summer of 1916, and he never permitted an embargo, thus allowing the Allies to draw richly upon our munitions factories.

All this was unnoticed or forgotten by Allied opinion, even in responsible quarters. Because he refused, even in his friendliness to the Allies, to adopt their point of view, but persisted in an American point of view, they regarded him with suspicion. While the British press congratulated their own country upon British magnanimity in entering the war to save Belgium and upon its protection of the rights of small states (at the moment of Allied violation of Greek neutrality), it jeered at Wilson for remaining aloof. A former Governor-General of Canada, Lord Grey (a cousin of Sir Edward Grey), announced for publication in an American newspaper: 'In this supreme crisis in which the best hopes of humanity are involved, it appears to me you have failed. . . . Belgium has lost everything but her soul. What shall be said of America?'¹

In these circumstances, Allied public opinion was not likely to view with approval any suggestion of mediation by President Wilson. The British and French would have been glad of help in the defeating of Germany, but they were less interested in idealistic phrases regarding a future world settlement. Colonel House received many letters to this effect.

¹ *New York Sun*, June 4, 1916.

Mr. George Sale to Colonel House

5 WEST CLIFF
ST. JOHN'S ROAD, EASTBOURNE
February 2, 1916

SIR:

I read to-day's report of President Wilson's speech, assuming for his policy that it represents the view of idealists, who claim to be trustees of the moral judgments of the world that righteousness cannot be a standard in the midst of arms, and that back of the energies of Americans is a readiness to lay down life for thought rather than for dollars.

Will you allow a private person of English birth to comment on this utterance; first, to contest the right of America to take first place as trustee of the moral judgments of the world, a position that demands *action* when the trust funds are endangered. Great Britain has taken that action, America has not. True, Britain's direct interests are at stake, but that does not vitiate her action in the general interests of the world.

And if righteousness cannot be maintained as a standard in the midst of arms, what am I to think of Lincoln, to my mind the world's greatest leader since history began, if purity of motive in the conduct of war be any standard at all.

As to idealism in foreign politics and international life, the President and you, Sir, should remember that American policy is as calculatingly selfish as that of Germany. Your coasting trade is sealed even from routes like New York-San Francisco. Ours open to the world. Your goods and all the world's enter free of duty at Singapore and Hong Kong, and on equal terms in India, at nominal rates of duty. What of the discriminating duties in the Philippines and Cuba? What part plays idealism there?

Yours faithfully

GEORGE SALE

'Elmer Roberts is just from Paris [recorded House on April 30] and has lived there so long that he is thoroughly imbued with the French outlook. In speaking of French feeling for the United States he said: "There is a feeling of sadness that the United States has not risen to the high ideals which the French people thought actuated the American people, etc., etc." It is the old story. As a matter of fact, the French people as a whole do not believe we have any ideals further than that represented by a dollar mark. What the Allies want is to dip their hands into our treasure chest. While the war has become a war of democracy against autocracy, not one of the democracies entered it to fight for democracy, but merely because of the necessity of self-preservation. If we go in, it will be because we believe in democracy and do not desire our institutions and the character of our civilization changed. . . .

'*May 22, 1916*: Captain Gaunt, Miss Elizabeth Robins, the authoress, and Mrs. Devereaux came to dinner. I invited only one man, as I wished to talk alone with Gaunt. He said Australia had always looked upon the United States as her ideal, but she now bitterly resents our not entering the war. He had a letter from a friend stating that in future Australia would purchase from Germany rather than the United States. He told of the deep undercurrent of feeling the French hold against us for the same reason. He believes all the Allies are resolved that we shall have no part in the peace conference. . . .

'*May 24, 1916*: It is evident that unless the United States is willing to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of treasure, we are not to be on good terms with the Allies. . . .'

So distinguished a statesman as Lord Cromer, whose public influence was such that he might be supposed carefully to have weighed his thoughts, did not hesitate to ex-

press publicly the critical attitude of the British toward President Wilson:

‘We may all recognize President Wilson’s good intentions and his lofty aims, we may assume he is impartial, but it is more than doubtful in spite of the very friendly feelings entertained toward America and Americans generally that the people of this country would under any circumstances welcome the idea that President Wilson should assume the rôle of mediator. . . . Confidence in President Wilson’s statesmanship has been rudely shaken.’¹

Even Colonel House, pro-Ally as he was, could not conceal his vexation at the degree to which the emotions of war had blinded the Entente to the aid which, as a lawful neutral, America had given.

‘When Noel Buxton was here [the Colonel wrote, June 29], I told him how impossible it was to satisfy the Allies. It is always something more. I thought if we went into the war, the Allies, after welcoming us warmly and praising us beyond our deserts, would later, when they found we were not furnishing as many men (or any men, for that matter, for we have none), would begin to chide us just as the French did the English, and say we were not spilling our blood, that we were shirkers, etc., etc. Nothing which it would be possible to do within a year after we entered the war could please them.

‘It was tiresome, I told Buxton, to hear the English declare they were fighting for Belgium and that they entered the war for that purpose. I asked if in his opinion Great Britain would have entered the war against France if she had violated Belgium or, indeed, whether Great Britain would not have gone into the war on the side of the Allies

¹ *Current History*, July, 1916.

even if France had violated Belgium. In my opinion, the purpose of Great Britain's entrance into the war was quite different from that. The stress of the situation compelled her to side with France and Russia and against the Central Powers. Primarily it was because Germany insisted upon having a dominant army and a dominant navy, something Great Britain could not tolerate in safety to herself.'

III

Much, if not all, of the anti-Wilson feeling abroad resulted from misunderstanding, and in the circumstances the regular diplomatic representatives of Great Britain and the United States did not seem able to dispel it. The British public and many of their public men had come to look upon Wilson as pacifist beyond remedy and willing to shift in any direction to avoid decisive action. It was the duty of the British Ambassador in Washington to give his Government a more accurate picture of the President, but unfortunately Sir Cecil himself was quite out of sympathy with Mr. Wilson and doubtless affected by his close personal relations with Republican leaders whose estimate of the President was perhaps not entirely without bias.

Colonel House to the President

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
July 12, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... Arthur Bullard is just back from Europe. He tells me that while he was in London Sir Horace Plunkett said he had seen a cable from Spring-Rice to the Foreign Office, saying that in no event would this country go to war with Germany. This was at the most acute stage of our last crisis with Germany.

What a lot of unfortunate circumstances and people we have to contend with! Spring-Rice goes only with your

enemies like X and Y and gets their point of view and conveys it to his Government. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

House was further disturbed by the inadequate reports of Wilson's speeches abroad and the failure of our own Ambassadors to emphasize the value to the Entente of the restriction of German submarine warfare, as well as the true character of Wilson's policy as shown in his speeches.

Colonel House to the President

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
June 14, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . Our representatives abroad should bring these speeches not only to the attention of the Government to which they are accredited, but to the public through the press. . . .

I have another letter from Arthur Bullard, in which he complains that the press of both England and France publish garbled reports of your utterances and do not give your true meaning.

If you approve, I will get Frank Polk to have letters sent to our representatives in Europe, asking them to see that your views are brought properly before the Governments and the public. Those parts of your speeches relating to international affairs should be cabled to them and they, in turn, should be instructed to make them public. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

June 23, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a copy of a letter which has just come from Lord Bryce. It bears out what I told you concerning the French and English press misrepresenting you by publishing only parts of your speeches.

If Page would think more about presenting your views favorably to the English people and less about our mistreatment of them, it would go a long way towards helping to accomplish the purposes you have in mind.

Jusserand is constantly after his Government not to permit the French press to be discourteous.

I have a letter from Penfield in which he says: 'On May 15th a low-class journal printed the enclosed cartoon against the President. I demanded an immediate interview with Baron Burian and protested vigorously against the publication of such attacks against a sovereign ruler of a land with which Austria was not at war. Within twenty-four hours I had a written apology and the assurance of the Government that the unfriendly attitude of the papers would cease at once.'

If Penfield can do it in Austria, Page and Sharp can do it in England and France. We cannot hope to make much headway with the Allies if their press and music-halls are permitted to show disrespect to you and your Government. In times of peace it is impossible to do what can easily be done in times of war when there is a censorship.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

At London, Mr. Page was on the most intimate terms with Sir Edward Grey and through him could reach the other members of the Cabinet. Unfortunately, as the Ambassador's letters indicate, he himself did not sympathize with Wilson's

policy. While he did not advocate entering the war as a belligerent, he insisted that diplomatic relations with Germany should be broken, so as to indicate plainly that our sympathy lay with the Allies.¹ Feeling thus and with intensity, himself inclined to regard Wilson as pursuing the wrong course both in remaining friendly with Germany and in bothering the Allies about trade questions, he found it difficult to explain the President's policy to the British. Wilson had long supported Page against those who insisted that the Ambassador took the British rather than the American view of the war, but his patience began to ebb. On May 17, he wrote House that the Secretary of State was so dissatisfied with Page's whole conduct of American dealings with the Foreign Office that he wanted to bring him back for a vacation, 'to get some American atmosphere into him again.'²

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 18, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I do not think we need worry about Page. If he comes home at once, I believe we can straighten him out. You will remember I have urged his coming for more than a year.

I do not believe he is of any service there at present, and the staff are able to carry on the work. They have just added Hugh Gibson from Brussels, who is a good man. . . .

No one who has not lived in the atmosphere that has surrounded Page for three years can have an idea of its subtle influence; therefore he is not to be blamed as much as one would think. . . .

¹ This suggestion, often mooted in England by those who did not like to ask the United States to enter the war, was never regarded as practical policy by Wilson or House. A diplomatic rupture would almost certainly lead to war, as in 1917, and ought not to come unless entrance into the war was clearly foreseen and prepared for.

² The phrase is quoted from Colonel House's diary, but evidently represents what was in Wilson's mind.

He would have done admirably in times of peace, but his mind has become warped by the war.

He may wish to remain after he comes home, for private reasons; and if he does, I would not dissuade him. On the other hand, if he remains here for the ordinary sixty days' leave, he will probably recover his equilibrium and there will be no further trouble with him. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

IV

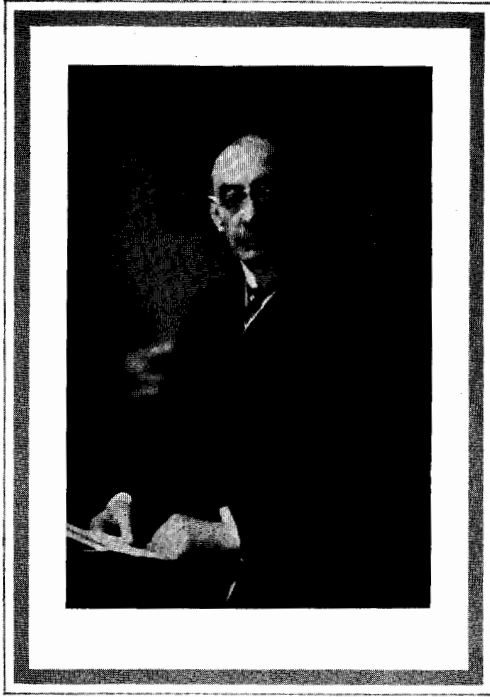
It was natural, perhaps, that President Wilson's offer to help the Allies, if Germany refused reasonable terms, should not receive immediate response. They were confident of their ability to crush Germany and dictate their own terms; they feared the words 'peace conference,' and they were suspicious of Wilson. House none the less believed that they would not be so foolish as to refuse what amounted to an assurance of victory, even though controlled by American conditions. He was encouraged by Grey's enthusiasm in London, by a hint from Balfour after he left that the offer might be taken up, and by Wilson's victory in the Gore-McLemore affair.

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

THE ADMIRALTY, WHITEHALL
LONDON, *March 2, 1916*

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

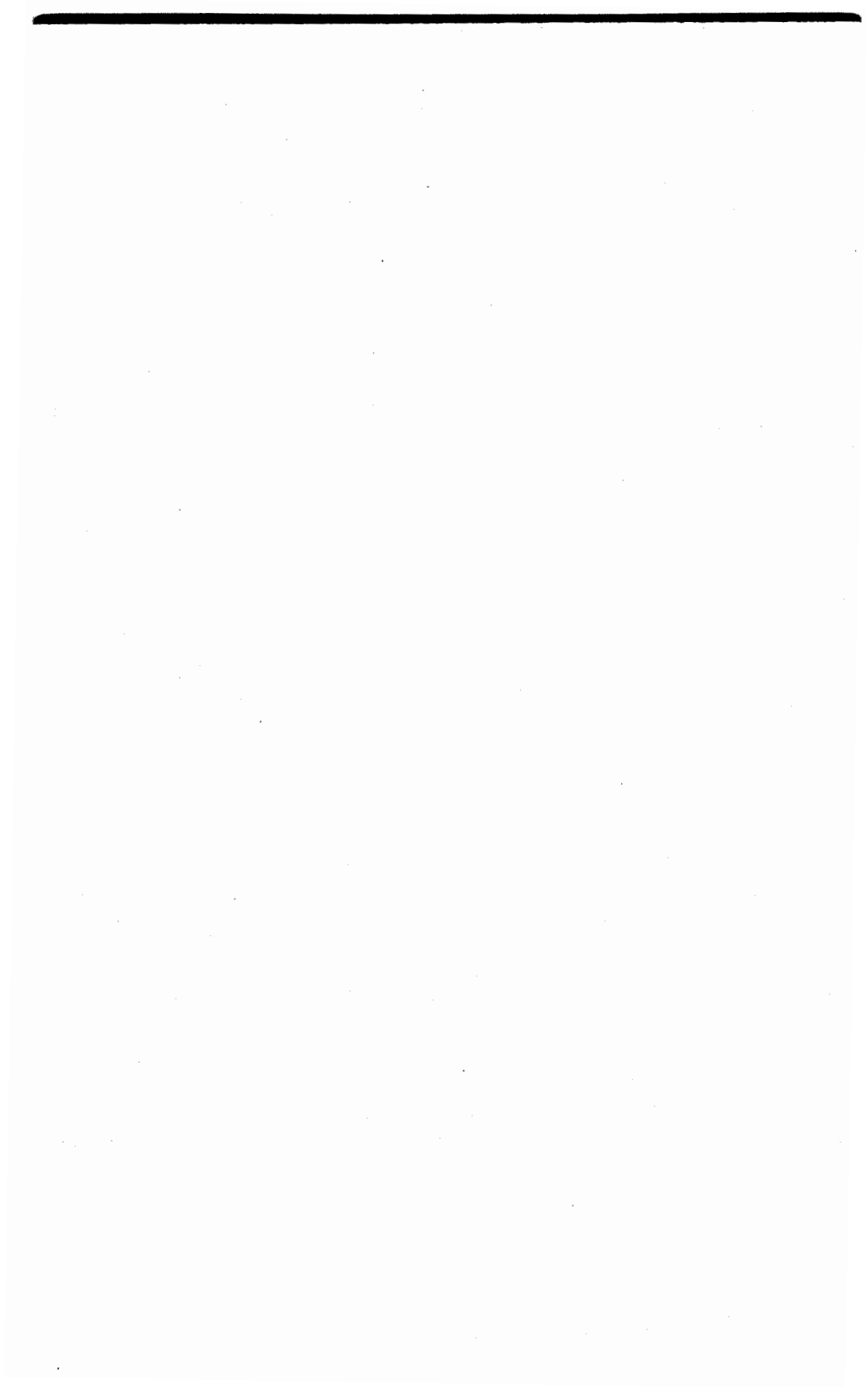
I was sorry not to be able personally to say 'good-bye' to you and Mrs. House, as I shall always regard our intercourse during your two visits as among my most interesting recollections. Unless, however, I am making a mistake, it will not be very long before I have again the pleasure of meeting you, and discussing with an open heart some of the great problems raised by the world crisis through which we are living. . . .



Here I come without one plea,
Except that the thing does look like me

W.H.P.
London
1913

WALTER HINES PAGE



LETTER FROM SIR HORACE PLUNKETT 271

If anything interesting occurs which I think you will not hear through any other channel, I will make a point of letting you know.

Please remember me to Mrs. House.

And believe me

Yours sincerely

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

Sir Horace Plunkett to Colonel House

LONDON, *March 7, 1916*

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I think I ought to let you know by this mail that the stand that the President is taking upon the right of Americans to the benefit of the humane provisions of International Law when they travel on British ships, has moved opinion profoundly in this country. At the time of writing I do not know what the attitude of the House of Representatives will be towards him, but his friends here have every confidence that they will behave as did the Senate. Whatever way the vote there may go, you may rely upon it that he stands higher in the regard of the British people than he did when his policy was even less understood over here than it seems to have been in some portions of his own country. . . .

Yours very sincerely

HORACE PLUNKETT

But the flurry in Wilson's favor was short-lived, and as the weeks passed Sir Edward Grey showed no indication of agitating Wilson's suggestion of conditional assistance. So long as Allied leaders remained under the anxiety of the initial German attacks upon Verdun, they were perhaps more open to the idea of Wilson's offer. But as the French defence stiffened, their military hopes soared and they reverted to the thought that they could handle the enemy without outside aid.

The French were naturally less inclined than the British to utilize the American offer, for they regarded the enmity of Germany as a permanent factor. No terms would really satisfy them except the political disruption of Germany following a complete military victory. Never, perhaps, would France find herself with such an opportunity for annihilating her secular foe, since it was unlikely that such a formidably anti-German coalition could again be formed. Now was the time to finish the job. Better to go on without American help, if the help were given on conditions that would interfere with France's freedom to deal with Germany as she chose.

The British by no means sympathized with all the French aspirations. They were later destined to oppose some of them with vigor. But at this time they were not minded to risk the solidarity of the Entente by hinting that if France would yield her claims, the war might be shortened. After all, the French had borne the brunt of the German attack and had thereby acquired a certain right to decide how long the struggle should continue. Furthermore, the British had signed, in September, 1914, the Pact of London, which stipulated that peace should be made in common by all the Allies. Obviously they could take no step toward American mediation without the full approval of the French.

Sir Edward Grey was the most scrupulous statesman in Europe. It was certain that he would make no move which might in any fashion be interpreted as an evasion of Britain's obligations to her allies. It is comprehensible, therefore, that he was unwilling to press House's plan upon them, for it contained the idea of a peace conference, and as he later said, 'I was afraid if I mentioned peace, the French would think we were going to *lâcher* them.' What is more difficult to understand is that he did not think it worth while to emphasize the second half of the offer; namely, that America would enter the war if Germany refused reasonable terms.

As Grey himself wrote in his memoirs, 'If Germany had refused the Conference, or refused to settle on the terms foreshadowed, the United States would have joined the Allies some months sooner than she did. This would have been a gain to the Allies.'¹

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

LONDON, March 24, 1916

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

After receiving your telegram, I told those colleagues of it who had already seen the report of our conversation to which your telegram referred.

We all feel that we cannot at this moment take the initiative in asking the French to consider a conference.

I have had no indication since I gave M. Cambon the record, that the French are more prepared to consider a conference now than they were then. The fighting for Verdun is still in doubt (though the French are said to be very confident) and I do not suppose the French could take any important decision until that is settled.

My own feeling is that the moment they express any desire to bring this struggle to an end by a conference, we should and must defer to their views. Owing to the occupation of their territory and the treatment of their population in it by the Germans, their sufferings, like those of Belgium, have been greater than ours (though our material contributions to the war all told may be greater) and we cannot urge them to make greater sacrifices than they are themselves prepared to make.

On the other hand, to urge a conference on them before they desire it, would lead them to suppose that we were not prepared to support them when they wished to go on. To

¹ *Twenty-Five Years* (Frederick A. Stokes Company), II, 136. Prince Bismarck told House in 1925 that the German Government would not have considered these terms for a moment.

give such an impression would be most repugnant to our views or feelings, besides having a disastrous political effect.

I propose therefore (1st) to let M. Briand know that since you left I have heard if France and England were willing, President Wilson would on his own initiative summon a conference to end the war on the terms and in the spirit indicated by you at Paris and London.

I will say (2) that we could not put the matter before any of the other Allies unless after consultation with and in concert with the French Government and do not therefore purpose to mention this subject at the Conference of Allies in Paris this week.

(3) That if M. Briand has any views to express on the subject he will no doubt let me know them either himself or through M. Jules Cambon, while we are in Paris.

The Prime Minister and I go there on Thursday evening. Of course there is nothing in this to prevent your making any communication to the French that you think opportune.

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 8, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Here are two letters from Sir Edward Grey which have just come.

I think I see quite clearly his desire to have us communicate directly with the French. He has some hesitation in doing so himself. While I was in London, he expressed particular satisfaction that I had approached the French directly when I was in Paris. He said it had relieved him of some embarrassment.

His Government feel that the suffering in England has been so small in comparison with that in France that they dislike to be the first to suggest a halt. It is this thought

that runs through his letter, and it was continually present in all our conversations.

What do you think of my talking to Jusserand when I am in Washington Tuesday and letting him communicate with his Government practically what we cabled Sir Edward?

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Unfortunately House had not arranged with the French Government any means of direct communication such as he had with Grey, and Ambassador Jusserand proved quite unwilling to take up with Paris the question of American mediation. A cable direct from the President to Briand would doubtless have had some influence with the French, but there was too much danger of its appearing like a formal and official offer of mediation, which in the circumstances might have precipitated a crisis with the Allies.

Sir Edward, indeed, sent to Briand a reference to the American offer, but he steadfastly refused to mention it orally to the French unless they first raised the topic, and they were evidently careful to avoid it. Curious irony, that at the Allied Conference this opportunity of bringing the United States into the war should have been passed over without a word, in the midst of the oratorical floods that failed to achieve Allied coöperation! Perhaps they hoped the German submarines would drive the United States into the war without conditions.

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

LONDON, April 7, 1916

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I sent to M. Briand, through the French Embassy here before I went to Paris, the message proposed in my letter of the 24th of March to you.

The conference itself was a huge affair confined to general-

ities, but the Prime Minister and I discussed some matters separately with M. Briand and M. Cambon and neither of them mentioned the subject.

The French press was full of the German failure at Verdun and the sinking of the *Sussex* and it was very clear from the whole feeling at Paris that the French Government could not take up the idea of a conference then.

I am bound to say that I think feeling here is the same. Everybody feels there must be more German failure and some Allied success before anything but an inconclusive peace could be obtained. The German Chancellor's speech reported to-day will harden that feeling.

I cannot think that the entry of the United States into the war would prolong it, whether it came about over the *Sussex* or over a conference and conditions of peace — indeed, I feel it must shorten it; but I remember you expressed the apprehension that Germany would force a rupture by some violent act and you preferred that it should not come about that way.

I understood and understand that, but there is no doubt that this case of the *Sussex* and the ruthless torpedoing of neutral ships, Norwegian, Dutch, and Spanish (though I do not know all the circumstances), has created a dilemma.

If the United States Government takes a strong line about these acts, it must, I suppose, become more difficult for it to propose a conference to Germany; if on the other hand, it passes them over, the Allies will not believe that the United States Government will at the conference take a line strong enough to ensure more than a patched up and insecure peace.

My personal touch with you and through you with the President makes me more hopeful, but amid such tremendous forces an individual opinion formed in private knowledge can count for little.

Yours sincerely

E. GREY

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 19, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have just received another autograph letter from Sir Edward, a copy of which I enclose.

You will notice that he makes the point that we saw was inevitable: that is, if Germany is permitted to continue her submarine policy unrebuked, we would lose the friendship and respect of the Allies to such an extent that they would not have confidence in our acting with a sufficiently strong hand in the peace councils.

Your action to-day,¹ I believe, will meet with the approval of the best opinion in this country and in Europe. It marks an epoch in American history.

With deep affection

E. M. HOUSE

v

The settlement of the *Sussex* crisis by Germany's acceptance of Wilson's demands led Colonel House to feel that a new and more definite effort must be made to induce the Allies to take up his proposal. Another slight reaction in Wilson's favor set in among the Allies. 'We're getting on pretty well with this Government,' wrote Page. 'The President's note that bagged the Germans helped mightily. If he stands no more foolishness, I'll probably live to see the war through.' House realized, none the less, that Berlin, having yielded on the submarine issue, would insist that the United States take some action to meet British interference with neutral trade, and that unless this were done the navy group in Germany would demand the resumption of ruthless submarine warfare. In view of the German setbacks at Verdun, the moment was opportune for the Allies to express their willingness to accept reasonable peace terms; if Germany re-

¹ The despatch of the ultimatum to Germany on the *Sussex*.

fused, the emptiness of her peace protestations would be clearly displayed.

With this in mind, Colonel House drafted a new appeal to Grey, emphasizing these facts and suggesting that the President, in calling for a conference, might publicly announce the willingness of the United States to take part actively in world affairs. At the same time he warned Sir Edward that if the German submarine war was really ended, anti-British feeling in the United States would rapidly develop as a result of trade restrictions and interference with mails. Wilson approved the venture heartily and gave his sanction to the message.

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

[Telegram]

NEW YORK, *May* 10, 1916

There is an increasingly insistent demand here that the President take some action towards bringing the war to a close. The impression grows that the Allies are more determined upon the punishment of Germany than upon exacting terms that neutral opinion would consider just. This feeling will increase if Germany discontinues her illegal submarine activities.

I believe the President would now be willing publicly to commit the United States to joining with the other Powers in a convention looking to the maintenance of peace after the war, provided he announced at the same time that if the war continued much longer he purposed calling a conference to discuss peace.

If the President is to serve humanity in a large way, steps should be taken now rather than wait until the opportunity becomes less fortunate. His statement would be along the lines you and I have so often discussed and which you expressed in your letter to me of September 22, 1915; that is, the nations subscribing to this agreement should pledge themselves

to side against any Power breaking a treaty. The convention should formulate rules for the purpose of limiting armaments both on land and sea and for the purpose of making warfare more humane to those actually engaged in safeguarding the lives and property of neutrals and non-combatants.

The convention should bind the signatory Powers to side against any nation refusing in case of dispute to adopt some other method of settlement than that of war.¹

I am sure this is the psychological moment for this statement to be made, and I would appreciate your cabling me your opinion as to the advisability of such a move. If it is not done now, the opportunity may be forever lost.

EDWARD HOUSE

The cable was emphasized by a letter which the Colonel sent on the following day. In it he set forth with something of prophetic insight the results of the complete crushing of Germany.

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

NEW YORK, May 11, 1916

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

... We have been on the eve of a break with Germany so long that I have not written, as it seemed it would come each day. For the moment matters are quiet again and, unless Germany transgresses further, there will probably be no break.

If we should get into the war, I feel sure it would not be a good thing for England. It would probably lead to the complete crushing of Germany and Austria; Italy and France

¹ The historian will note that this paragraph contains the essence of the principle of compulsory arbitration which underlay the Bliss-Shotwell-Miller plan to guarantee peace eight years later, was translated into the Protocol, affirmed by the Assembly of the League of Nations, and formed the gist of the Locarno Pacts. House here suggests the method, ultimately adopted, of determining which is the aggressor state.

would then be more concerned as to the division of the spoils than they would for any far-reaching agreement that might be brought about looking to the maintenance of peace in the future and the amelioration of the horrors of war.

The wearing-down process, as far as Germany is concerned, has gone far enough to make her sensible of the power we can wield. This is an enormous gain and will help in the final settlement. A year ago we could not have made her come to the terms to which she has just agreed, and it seems certain that at a peace conference she would yield again and again rather than appeal to the sword.

From my cable you will see how far the President has gone within the year. Public opinion, we feel sure, will uphold him in his purpose to insist that the United States should do her part in the maintenance of peace.

I am sure, too, that this is the psychological moment to strike for those things which the President and you have so near at heart. Delay is dangerous and may defeat our ends.

While the programme we have outlined means as much to the other nations, yet they will not see it clearly now as England and the United States see it. Therefore, England should be immediately responsive to our call. Her statesmen will take a great responsibility upon themselves if they hesitate or delay; and in the event of failure because they refuse to act quickly, history will bring a grave indictment against them.

All the things that you and I have wished to bring about seem ready now of accomplishment, and I earnestly hope you may bring your Government to a realization of the opportunity that is seeking fulfilment.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

But Sir Edward Grey, faced with the necessity of returning a definite answer, was apparently compelled to let the

opportunity pass. He was himself not in a position to exercise his independent judgment; he realized that neither his own colleagues nor the Allied Ministers were ready to consider House's proposition, and he did not believe that it was worth while to press it upon them.

A curious inertia seemed to have fallen upon the Allied diplomats, as if they were bound by fate and could not hope to influence events. In his memoirs, written after the war, Grey states that 'diplomacy could do little in Europe to win the war.' And yet here was an occasion which the Allies could utilize to bring the United States into the war on their side, surely a long step toward victory. A few sentences further on, Grey explains this inaction, when he outlines the main purpose of Allied diplomacy: 'The first object undoubtedly was to preserve solidarity among the great Allies.' If this purely passive purpose was the first end to be achieved, he could not press House's plan because in so doing he would arouse the distrust of the French. All that the French and the majority of the British Cabinet were willing to do was to fight — the war of exhaustion.

To Colonel House Grey explained Allied unwillingness to consider the American offer, in terms which indicate his embarrassment. The Allies felt that mediation was 'premature' and they 'resented' Germany's contention that the war was one of defence, entirely disregarding the American offer to enter the struggle if Germany were unreasonable. They feared the effect of Wilson's mediation on public opinion and apparently forgot that the President through House had suggested terms by no means unfavorable to the Allies. Grey's cable to House did credit to British sense of obligation to the French and Russians, but their failure to have canvassed thoroughly the American proposition suggested a tendency to drift upon military events or a curious blindness to the opportunities it opened.

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

[Telegram]

LONDON, *May 12, 1916*

I have received your telegram. My opinion without consulting colleagues and Allies is of little value, and for me to consult them now as to a peace conference would, I think, at best lead to a reply that mediation or a conference was premature, especially after the German Chancellor's last speech of which both the terms and tone were resented by the Allies.¹

The President's suggestion of summoning a peace conference without any indication of a basis on which peace might be made, would be construed as instigated by Germany to secure peace on terms unfavourable to the Allies while her existing military position is still satisfactory to her.²

The difficulty of avoiding this impression, without offence to Germany, is one which you can estimate perhaps better than I; but the danger of making the undesirable impression on the Allies is very real, for there is a belief, widespread through perhaps overconfidence, that Germany is in grave difficulties which may lead to her collapse, especially if failure to take Verdun becomes final.

For the rest, my letter of September 22 contemplated dim-

¹ A speech delivered in the Reichstag, April 5. Bethmann insisted that the war was one of defence for Germany and that the peace must bring guaranties that Belgium would not be under Anglo-French control. It is easy to see that Allied leaders would 'resent' its tone, but it is more difficult to understand why they should permit such emotion to affect a decision of high policy.

² This sentence is difficult to understand. Grey already had in his possession the memorandum drafted in February which gave clear 'indication of a basis on which peace might be made' and in terms by no means 'unfavourable to the Allies.' Assuming that the Allied leaders knew of the memorandum, they could not possibly construe Wilson's suggestion as instigated by Germany. Perhaps Grey referred merely to the effect upon public opinion, which was not informed of the memorandum.

inution of arms as the result of a league of nations binding themselves to side against any Power which broke a treaty or certain rules of war on sea or land.

I hesitated to advocate rules for directly limiting armaments, not on the ground of principle, but because of the practical difficulty in drawing up such rules.

Otherwise my personal view is in favour of agreement between nations such as you suggest; though I cannot guarantee how others would receive it. I believe it would secure a reduction of armaments. I sympathize with the President's aspirations and feel that his proposal as regards a league of nations may be of the greatest service to humanity; but as to the desirability of it now and with a summoning of a peace conference, I cannot express an opinion beyond what I have stated above. . . .

E. GREY

VI

Colonel House was naturally and bitterly disappointed. He had conceived a plan of boldness and one involving a revolution in America's foreign relations, in answer to the appeals that came from the British and French that America carry her share of the burdens of humanity. But the offer seemed to them of no value. Apparently they wanted American assistance without any conditions, not so much to secure a permanent and a just peace as to crush Germany. House did not feel that the two aims were synonymous and he knew that Grey agreed with him.

'I am disappointed [he wrote on May 13, after receiving Sir Edward's cable] that he does not rise to the occasion. For two years he has been telling me that the solution of the problem of international well-being depended upon the United States being willing to take her part in world affairs. . . . I am distinctly disappointed. We are running up against the

lack of cohesion in the British Government. Every member speaks for himself and seems to have no knowledge of what his colleagues have in mind. I can see, too, a distinct feeling of cock-sureness in the Allies since Verdun. This will grow in the event they have any success themselves, and I can foresee trouble with them. An international situation can change as quickly as relationships between individuals; that is, over-night. A situation may arise, if the Allies defeat Germany, where they may attempt to be dictatorial in Europe and elsewhere. I can see quite clearly where they might change their views on militarism and navalism. It depends entirely upon what nation uses it, whether it is considered good or bad.'

Colonel House felt it important that Grey should understand, not merely that the Allies were losing an opportunity, but also that the cold reception they gave to the President's offer might arouse some question of Allied motives. As he had warned them in February, if they did not choose to accept American help they must be prepared to see the United States insist rigidly upon their neutral rights, and to meet increasing friction over the restraints placed upon American trade. President Wilson agreed that Grey ought to understand fully the consequences of the position taken by the Allies. If they refused American mediation, even though accompanied by a contingent offer of help, they must face the effects of a continuation of the war; one of those effects was the dispute with the United States and they must expect us to maintain our rights with vigor.

On May 16, the President wrote House that it was time to get down to 'hard pan.' America, he said, must either make a decided move for peace on some basis likely to be permanent, or else must insist upon her rights against Great Britain as firmly as she had against Germany. To do nothing, he insisted, was impossible. He asked House accordingly to

prepare a cable to this effect to Grey, putting the whole matter up to him in friendly spirit, but with firmness of tone.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 17, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Your letter of yesterday came last night too late to answer.

I am enclosing you a suggestion for a cable to Sir Edward Grey. Please make the necessary changes and I will code and send it immediately.

It has been apparent that when our difficulties with Germany were settled, our difficulties with the Allies would begin; and the solution has disturbed me greatly.

The more I see of the dealings of Governments among themselves, the more I am impressed with the utter selfishness of their outlook. Gratitude is a thing unknown, and all we have done for the Allies will be forgotten overnight if we antagonize them now. Nevertheless, I am convinced that it is your duty to press for a peace conference with all the power at your command — for, whether they like it or whether they do not, I believe you can bring it about. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Once more House cabled Grey, warning him that, if the Allies refused the American offer, the United States would have to protect their neutrality and that trouble with Great Britain must threaten. He did not insist that a conference should be called at once, if the Allies believed the deadlock could be broken by military success during the summer. He did insist that the refusal of American coöperation, designed to secure the kind of settlement which Allied leaders publicly declared to be their purpose, would compel the United States to follow their own interests. The Allies could do as they chose, but they must carry the responsibility themselves and

henceforth not blame America for its indifference. And he supplemented the cable by letters, reminding Grey that under his plan Germany would have to yield or go to war with the United States.

Wilson approved the cable. He felt he had gone a long way in agreeing to help if Germany were stubborn, and he began to display some signs of emotional reaction against those who spurned his offer.

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

[Telegram]

NEW YORK, *May 19, 1916*

My cables and letters of the past few days have not been sent with any desire to force the hands of the Allies or to urge upon them something for which they are not ready, but rather to put before them a situation that arose immediately Germany agreed to discontinue her illegal submarine warfare.

America has reached the crossroads, and if we cannot soon inaugurate some sort of peace discussion there will come a demand from our people, in which all neutrals will probably join, that we assert our undeniable rights against the Allies with the same insistence we have used towards the Central Powers. . . .

There is a feeling here, which is said to exist in other neutral countries, that the war should end, and any nation that rejects peace discussions will bring upon themselves a heavy responsibility.

If we begin to push the Allies as hard as we needs must, friction is certain to arise. . . .

I am speaking in all frankness, as I have always done with you, without reservation or any motive other than that the relations between our countries may become what we have so earnestly desired. The time is critical and delay is dangerous.

If England is indeed fighting for the emancipation of Europe, we are ready to join her in order that the nations of the earth, be they large or small, may live their lives as they may order them and be free from the shadow of autocracy and the spectre of war. If we are to link shields in this mighty cause, then England must recognize the conditions under which alone this can become possible and which we are unable to ignore.

Germany has made no overtures to us looking to a peace conference, but, on the contrary, the German Ambassador gave me a message from his Government yesterday that German public opinion would not at present tolerate the President as a mediator.

It is not the President's thought that a peace conference could be immediately called, and the Allies would have ample time to demonstrate whether or not Germany is indeed in a sinking condition and the deadlock can be broken.

I would suggest that you talk with the three of your colleagues with whom we discussed these matters, for it is something that will not bear delay.

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, *May 23, 1916*

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

... We believe that the war may be ended upon terms that will make its recurrence nearly impossible, if not entirely so. Militarism is, I think, already broken, and any further prosecution of the war will not add to a desirable settlement, but rather prevent it.

We are much more able to influence a just settlement now than we would be if the war continued very much longer, or if we should be drawn into it. The favorable position which the Allies have made for themselves in this country can be used to their advantage, but it is evident that as the war goes on this advantage may lessen day by day.

I am sorry that England does not realize this. England and France seem to think that the coöperation America is willing to give them in a just settlement of the vexatious questions that are sure to follow peace, does not outweigh the doubtful advantage they would gain if Germany were completely crushed. It seems certain if this happens a new set of problems will arise to vex us all.

Your seeming lack of desire to coöperate with us will chill the enthusiasm here — never, I am afraid, to come again, at least in our day. There is a fortunate conjunction of circumstances which makes it possible to bring about the advancement and maintenance of world-wide peace and security, and it is to be hoped that the advantage may not be lost. If it is, the fault will not lie with us.

I am, my dear Sir Edward, with all good wishes,

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, *May 27, 1916*

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

. . . There is one thing to which I wish to call your attention, and that is the German Chancellor's statement that Germany would make peace on the basis of the map as it stands to-day. This cannot mean anything except a victorious peace for Germany. If England and France, under our invitation, should go into a peace conference now, it would probably lead either to Germany's abandonment of this position or war with us.¹

I thought I would call your attention to this, although I take it you have considered it.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Sir Edward's response was a repetition of his earlier reply;

¹ Meaning war between the United States and Germany.

to wit, that he could not act without the consent of France. Until France raised the topic, the British must remain immobile. As he wrote a few weeks later to House, 'No Englishman would at this moment say to France, after Poincaré's and Briand's speeches made in the face of the Verdun struggle, "Hasn't the time come to make peace?"' What mystified the Colonel, however, was England's unwillingness to say to France: 'Here is a chance to get the United States into the war and to show up Germany by accepting Wilson's offer.' It seemed almost as though the British thought that, in offering to help them, Wilson was asking a favor.

Colonel House approached Jusserand once more. The French Ambassador made it plain that the French would listen to no scheme that harbored the word 'peace.' Was it because they distrusted Wilson? Cambon, one remembers, had suggested to Grey that perhaps the President's offer was not serious and had merely been intended as a gesture to conciliate the Allies before the beginning of the presidential campaign. And in Sir Edward's cable there was an intimation that Wilson should negotiate directly with France in order that the French Government 'in this way be sufficiently impressed with his real intentions and good will.'

The French quite conceivably did not place a high value upon American assistance. They appreciated keenly the length of time it had taken the British to put a large army in the field, they knew that we were far less prepared than the British had been, and doubtless felt that the United States could bring no material aid before the issue of the war was decided.¹ Furthermore, American participation might prove

¹ Writing nine years later, House said: 'I have no doubt that when we sent the last word to Grey concerning intervention, the Allies came to much the same opinion as the Germans had come to; that is, we were totally unprepared to help or hurt further than we were doing. The Allies were getting money, foodstuffs, and arms and keeping our ships from going into neutral ports. They probably concluded, as Germany

embarrassing to them if it meant interference with the secret treaties, of which Wilson at this time had no knowledge. Russia had agreed with France that the latter should have a free hand in annexing the Rhineland with its millions of Germans, and Great Britain had agreed to a new French empire in Syria. Such aspirations France might be compelled to renounce under House's plan.

The simplest explanation of the French attitude, however, was that the continuation of the war offered the best and the last chance of eliminating Germany as a dangerous political rival. House evidently inclined to this hypothesis.

'I explained [he recorded of a conference with President Wilson on May 24] France's real feeling; that is, she had best stick to this war until Germany is crushed, for she could never again hope to have Great Britain, Russia, Italy, and Belgium fighting by her side.'

At all events, Jusserand saw no attraction in House's proposition, and the Colonel accepted the Allied refusal regretfully but philosophically.

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

NEW YORK, *June 8, 1916*

DEAR SIR EDWARD:

... I had a long conference with the French Ambassador, who came to New York for that purpose. I did not show him the cables sent you nor your replies, but told him in sub-

concluded, that we were doing about as much as we would do if in the war. In addition they probably considered that they would rather have this condition continue than to have our intervention and interference with the terms of peace.

'I do not believe the Allies thought we would make any such effort as we later did, and I believe they were as much surprised as the Germans. ... I believe our big mistake was that we were not in a position to intervene in spite of Allied or German protests.' — Letter to the author, dated April 6, 1925.

stance what was said to you without mentioning your Government.

He thinks France will not consider peace proposals of any sort at this time, no matter how far we might be willing to go towards preventing aggressive wars in the future. The feeling of France is that never again can they ever have as strong a combination fighting with them as now, and they desire to defeat Germany decisively.

I am afraid another year will go by leaving the lines much as they are to-day. I am told, on high authority, that Lord Kitchener thought just this.

What France could probably get out of it now, is peace largely upon the basis of the *status quo ante*, with perhaps Alsace and Lorraine added and Germany given compensation elsewhere, perhaps in Asia Minor.¹ Russia could get a warm seaport and Italy what she is entitled to.² The world at large could have something akin to permanent peace.

The President has gone a long way towards placing upon this country its share of the responsibility for the future. I sometimes feel discouraged when the Allied Governments and press overlook the weight the President has thrown on their side at almost every turn of the war, and pick out some expression he uses, giving it a meaning and importance he never meant. . . .

Unless you have better means of knowing the situation than we have, there does not seem to be much reason for the optimism of the Allies. It is true that the blockade is gnawing Germany and giving her much concern, but our reports are that she can hold out indefinitely as far as the food supply goes.

Your belief that the President's proposal for permanent

¹ This would not suit the Entente diplomats, who had already carved up Asia Minor for the benefit of Russia, France, and Great Britain, and had promised a share to Italy.

² That is, Italian-speaking districts of the Tyrol and Gorizia. Whether Trieste, the population of which was two thirds Italian, and the western coast of Istria ought to go to Italy, Colonel House did not make clear at this time.

peace cannot be successful with a victorious Germany, does not seem to us to enter into the matter, for what is proposed would surely be anything but that.¹ Looking at the situation from this distance, it seems that England might easily be in a worse position later, even though the fortunes of Germany recede. I think it must be looked at not only from the present viewpoint, but from what is likely to come later. In getting rid of the German peril, another might easily be created. The matter requires a dispassionate outlook free from all present prejudices. . . .

As far as I can see, there is nothing to add or to do for the moment; and if the Allies are willing to take the gamble which the future may hold, we must rest content. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

In the light of the German documents published after the war, the historian may assert with some dogmatism that in 1916 those in control at Berlin would not have considered for a moment the terms suggested by Colonel House. The yielding of Alsace-Lorraine was farthest from their intentions; their most generous conditions included, on the contrary, broad concessions by France and Belgium. If the Allies accepted the opportunity provided by the American proposal, they might thus, according to its terms, have secured the active assistance of the United States. The student may ask whether they would not thereby have prevented the Russian Revolution. He may further ponder the tremendous saving they might have effected for themselves and the world, both in treasure and in human lives.

¹ As House wrote on June 23: 'It is stupid to refuse our proffered intervention on the terms I proposed in Paris and London. I made it clear to both Governments that in the event of intervention we would not countenance a peace that did not bring with it a plan for permanent peace, as far as human foresight could do. If Germany refused to acquiesce in such a settlement, I promised we would take the part of the Allies and try to force it.'

CHAPTER X

WAR NERVES

They get more and more on edge as the strain becomes severer. There'll soon be very few sane people left in the world.

Ambassador Page to House, June 2, 1916, from London

You cannot conceive of the general breakdown of nerves among this people.

Ambassador Gerard to House, August 30, 1916, from Berlin

I

By refusing the plan which Wilson had offered through House, the Allies postponed the advent of American aid to Europe for the best part of a year. The plan, however, was not without its historical importance, for it led President Wilson to crystallize his ideas as to America's rôle in world affairs and to announce publicly, on May 27, 1916, that henceforth the United States must take active part in world politics. At the same time he advocated the creation of a League of Nations as the mainspring of a reorganized international system.

Wilson had been moving gradually in this direction during the two preceding years. He had cautiously approved House's Great Adventure of 1914, the purpose of which was to establish an understanding between Great Britain, Germany, and the United States in order to tide over the war crisis that threatened. He had accepted with enthusiasm the plan for the Pan-American Pact, which provided for a mutual guaranty of political independence and territorial integrity for all American States. At the beginning of 1916 he had cabled House, for the information of Grey and Balfour, that he was willing to enter a world pact of the same nature. Now he publicly announced the fact, extending to all the world the principles of the proposed Pan-American covenant.

Since the announcement would involve an obvious revolution in American foreign policy, the end of the traditional policy of isolation, House cast about for a suitable occasion upon which such a momentous step might be taken. 'It occurred to me,' he wrote on May 9, 'that the 27th of May, when the League to Enforce Peace meets in Washington, would be the right time to make this proposal, and I am so suggesting to the President. I have arranged with the Secretary of the League to have ex-President Taft, who is President of the League, send another invitation to the President.' The next day a letter from Mr. Taft to Colonel House brought the message inviting Wilson to make the chief speech.

It might have become an even more significant occasion than it proved to be, for as originally planned it was designed to serve a double purpose. In his speech the President would demand the calling of a conference that might end the war, at the same time that he laid down the principles upon which a durable peace must be based. Through all the speech was to run the thesis that henceforth the United States was ready to share with the other nations of the world the responsibilities of mankind for the maintenance of peace and justice.

The discouraging attitude assumed by the Allies, however, convinced Wilson and House that more harm than good would be accomplished by making the demand for an immediate conference. On the eve of delivery, accordingly, they decided to utilize the occasion simply for a general exposition of American foreign policy and American willingness to coöperate in an association of nations.

'We agreed [noted Colonel House on May 24, after a conference with Mr. Wilson] it would be wise in the circumstances to modify greatly the speech he is to make next Saturday before the League to Enforce Peace. He is to treat the subject as we have outlined it, with the exception that he is not to do more than hint at peace. He asked for a pad and

made a memorandum. We divided the subject into four parts, and indicated just how far he should go.'

House recognized fully the extent of the revolution in American policy that was indicated by the terms and the implications of the address. For Wilson threw completely to one side the doctrine of isolation. 'We are participants,' said the President, 'whether we would or not, in the life of the world. The interests of all nations are our own also. We are partners with the rest. What affects mankind is inevitably our affair as well as the affair of the nations of Europe and of Asia.'

It was therefore with a full consciousness of the seriousness of the step about to be taken that the Colonel worked out the details of the speech with Mr. Wilson. He was confident that the President could capture the moral leadership of mankind through the decisive step he was taking — 'a decision,' House wrote, 'that marks the turning-point in our international relations and in our old-time non-interference policy.'

'I feel sure, if he will follow our present plans all the way through, history will give him one of the highest places among the statesmen of the world. It does not matter whether he mediates or not; but what does matter is for him to strike the high note, the right note, and hold to it regardless of consequences to himself. He can and will become the dominant factor in the situation, because he, of all the statesmen now living, is the only one in a position of power necessary to accomplish the task.'

On May 18 the President had written to House, thanking him for suggestions and asking for more. What would House say if he were going to make the speech and base it upon the understanding he had with Grey as to future guaranties of

peace? Wilson asked also for a copy of a letter he had written him regarding those guaranties, indicating the rather surprising fact that the President did not keep copies of some of his most important letters.

Wilson obviously planned to use the Grey-House understanding as to guaranties as the groundwork of his speech, and to Grey Wilson was largely indebted for the basic idea that underlay his speech: that the World War would not have come if there had been some organized system by which nations could be brought in conference when the crisis arose. Colonel House, it is interesting to note, urged Wilson to avoid the advocacy of a complicated mechanism at this stage — such as the League to Enforce Peace put forward — and to confine himself to generalities until the nations accepted the idea of association. Then, as later in the contest with the Senate, House did not want the principle to be endangered by a dispute over details.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 19, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am sending you some data to look over which may be of service to you in formulating your speech.

Norman Angell gave me the quotations from the speeches of Asquith, Grey, Balfour, and others, and Bryce's article in *The New Republic* has a direct bearing upon the same subject.

My reason for thinking the programme of the League to Enforce Peace impracticable at this time is that I believe the first thing to do is to get the Governments to agree to stand together for the things which you have so admirably outlined in your letter to me and which I in substance cabled to Grey.¹

¹ A letter of May 16, in which Wilson summarizes his proposal in a sentence which, with slight alterations, became the chief sentence of his

When there is a committal upon these points, then the question of putting them into practical use will arise and some such tribunal as they suggest may be worked out. . . .

As soon as you begin to discuss details, you will find differences arising that might obscure the real issue.

I shall write you further Sunday.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, May 21, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am sending you my thoughts on the speech you have in hand. It is roughly and quickly done and is no more than a suggestion. . . .

I hope you will show Lansing the speech before it is delivered. He might be useful and he would surely be offended if he did not know of this important step.

I am writing hastily but with deep affection.

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

The draft which Colonel House enclosed in his letter of May 21 is of historical interest because of the extent to which the President utilized it in the address of May 27, an address which sums up the gist of his international aims during the following years.¹ Wilson's later speeches were merely a

speech: 'An universal alliance to maintain freedom of the seas and to prevent any war begun either (a) contrary to treaty covenants or (b) without full warning and full inquiry — a virtual guaranty of territorial integrity and political independence.' (Quoted in Diary of Colonel House, May 17, 1916.) In the speech Wilson changed *alliance* to read *association of the nations; freedom of the seas* to read *the inviolate security of the highway of the seas for the common and unhindered use of all the nations of the world*, (in order to assure the British that the suggestion was not directed against their restrictions on trade as much as against the submarine); *full inquiry* to read *full submission of the causes to the opinion of the world*.

¹ See Appendix to chapter, for a comparison of House's draft and the final text of Wilson's address.

refinement of details and a development of the ideas contained in this address.

Underlying the entire address ran the thought of the failure of diplomacy and the impotence of Europe as manifested in the outbreak and the prolongation of the war. A new system was essential to safeguard the principles which, Wilson insisted, must serve as the basis of international relations. Those principles he underlined carefully:

‘First, that every people has a right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live. . . .

‘Second, that the small states of the world have a right to enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty and for their territorial integrity that great and powerful nations expect and insist upon.

‘And, third, that the world has a right to be free from every disturbance of its peace that has its origin in aggression and disregard of the rights of peoples and nations.’

These were the principles which Wilson had already emphasized in his Mobile address, but he now carried his policy from a negative and abstract to a positive and concrete position, by indicating a definite mechanism to enforce them. In order to maintain those principles, international coöperation must be substituted for anarchy and conflict through ‘an universal association of the nations to maintain the inviolate security of the highway of the seas for the common and unhindered use of all the nations of the world and to prevent any war begun either contrary to treaty covenants or without warning and full submission of the causes to the opinion of the world — a virtual guaranty of territorial integrity and political independence.’ Thus was the verbiage of the Pan-American Pact extended to cover a projected world pact; it was to become of increasing importance, until, as Article X of the League of Nations Covenant, it seemed to Wilson the heart of the entire settlement.

II

There were some who at the time realized the significance of this address which promised to the rest of the world the help of the United States in maintaining security, peace, and justice. Mr. Brand Whitlock wrote from Brussels to Colonel House: 'It is the most important announcement concerning our foreign policy since the announcement of the Monroe Doctrine, although it will take many years before this fact is brought into relief and fully understood.'

Colonel House himself felt that Wilson was creating a great opportunity by his public exposition of the ideas over which the two had worked together, and which House believed to be fully in consonance with those of British liberals. Characteristically, after giving all the help in his power, he had not gone to hear the address and had not seen Wilson's final draft. This was perhaps unfortunate, for the President introduced a brief phrase, entirely unconnected with the body of his address and entirely unnecessary, which might be interpreted to indicate indifference to the meaning of the war. It was a fatal habit with the President, who vitiated the effect of his most important utterances, on at least four occasions, by the use of phrases subject to misinterpretation.¹

'I am delighted with the President's speech [noted the Colonel on May 28]. He has followed the suggestions I made more closely than I thought he would. . . . I hope the country and the world will rise to his call. There was one unfortunate phrase about the war; i.e., when he says, "with its causes and objects we are not concerned." The Allies will overlook all the good in it and accentuate this. It is a great speech, and, as I wrote the President, will be a landmark in history. It marks a beginning of the new and the decline of the old order

¹ 'Too proud to fight.' 'With its causes and objects we are not concerned.' 'The objects on both sides . . . are virtually the same as stated in general terms to their own people and the world.' 'Peace without victory.'

of statesmanship. It is in line with the President's Inaugural Address and his Mobile speech.'

As House had foreseen, the real significance of Wilson's announcement was lost upon the Allies, who passed over the whole address to criticize a single phrase. It is possible that in the state of Europe's mind, nothing could have pleased them, for the war was beginning to touch the belligerents' nerves and to create an irritability that destroyed perspective. A few of the British liberals responded cordially. 'It is a great thing,' wrote Lord Loreburn to House, 'that men should uphold ideals when in the seat of power. I am profoundly convinced that this frightful materialism and the bestial views of life which it breeds will be overthrown, not by arms but by the inevitable predominance of moral forces, when this horrible war is over. Meanwhile Europe is steadily committing suicide and that will bring disaster to the other continents of the world as well.'

Lord Bryce also wrote to House more than once of the encouragement which Wilson's speech brought to those in England who were working for a plan to prevent aggression and wanton breaches of the peace of the world. Without America, Bryce insisted, there would be small hope of progress; with America much might be done. He promised that he would do his best to make the President's declaration better known and that, so soon as the end of the war came in sight, prominence would be given to the League of Nations, with emphasis upon the importance of American approval of the idea.

But the general impression of the President's speech among the Allies was that he was placing France and England on the same plane as Germany; that if Wilson did not know that the Kaiser started the war and that the Allies were fighting to protect the rights of small nations, he ought

not to make speeches; and in any case, Bernstorff had fooled him and the speech was merely a lever to start a German peace drive and the Allies had better not pay any attention to it.

Sir Horace Plunkett to Colonel House

DUBLIN, June 7, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . Unquestionably, the misunderstanding of the President's Peace League speech has done immense harm to the popular feeling in England. . . . I took the words 'With its causes and objects we are not concerned' to mean that the United States had absolutely no part or responsibility in the outbreak of the war, that the immediate issues were restricted to the international relations in Europe and that, whatever objects were sought by the belligerents, whether in Europe, in Asia or in Africa, were equally no concern to your country. On the other hand, principles which vitally concerned the whole of western civilization were at stake and the neutral rights which had been prejudiced were largely American.

All this, of course, is perfectly true, but you cannot prevent people in these stirring times seizing upon some sentence — the shorter the better, because the easier remembered — and putting their own interpretation upon it. . . .

Very sincerely yours

HORACE PLUNKETT

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, May 30, 1916

DEAR HOUSE:

. . . The President's peace speech before the League for the Enforcement of Peace has created confusion. Some things in it were so admirably said that the British see that he does understand, and some things in it seem to them to imply that

he doesn't in the least understand the war and show, as they think, that he was speaking only to the gallery filled with peace cranks . . . They are therefore skittish about the President. . . .

They can't quite see what the President is driving at. Hence they say, as you will observe from the enclosed clippings, that he is merely playing politics.

To that extent, therefore, the waters are somewhat muddied again. The peace racket doesn't assuage anybody: it raises doubts and fears — fears that we won't understand the war at all. . . .

But you can read these few clippings (I do not send you a lot of scurrilous ones, as I might) as well as I can. . . .

Heartily yours

W. H. P.

P.S. *June 2, 1916.* The confounded flurry gets worse. There is just now more talk in London about the American (and the President's) 'inability to understand the war' and about our falling into the German peace-talk trap than there is about the war itself. The President's sentence about our not being concerned with the *objects* of the war is another too-proud-to-fight, as the English view it. I have moods in which I lose my patience with them and I have to put on two muzzles and a tight corset to hold myself in.

But peace-talk doesn't go down here now, and the less we indulge in it, the better. The German peace-talk game has made the very word offensive to Englishmen.

Then, too, they get more and more on edge as the strain becomes severer. There'll soon be very few sane people left in the world.

W. H. P.

What troubled House chiefly was that Sir Edward Grey himself, although he approved naturally the main thought of the speech and wrote to House, 'I read the speech in the light

of my talks with you and welcomed it,' seemed to share somewhat the generally critical attitude. He complained that Wilson had introduced 'mention of the security of the highway of the seas . . . without any definition of what is meant,' which made the British press suspicious.¹ Grey also noted the chilling effect of the phrase relating to the causes and objects of the war.

House admitted fully Wilson's mistake in phraseology, as useless as it was harmful, and attributed it to the President's failure to study European opinion.

'I wish the President [he noted on June 23] would pay more attention to foreign affairs. He seems to be interested mainly in domestic matters, which bears out his own assertion that he has "a one-track mind." I do not believe he reads Gerard's or Penfield's letters, which come to me through him and are sent in that way for his information as well as mine. If he would keep himself informed, he would not destroy his influence abroad as he does from time to time by things he says in his speeches.'

Even so, Colonel House could not entirely repress an exclamation of impatience at the inability of Europe to appreciate the significance of Wilson's proposal. Her statesmen had complained of American aloofness and had insisted to House that nothing could be secure in the world without American help. But they evinced little interest and no enthusiasm when the President made his declaration.

'The President's proposal for permanent peace [wrote House on June 23] has had no response whatever from official Great Britain or France. The only murmur we have

¹ Obviously what the President meant was that neutral trade should be free alike from the vexatious restrictions of the British Admiralty as well as from the murderous attacks of German submarines.

had has been of criticism; in France because of some expression of no consequence, and in Great Britain because of the proposal for a measurable freedom of the seas. It is not the people who speak, but their masters, and some day, I pray, the voice of the people may have direct expression in international affairs as they are beginning to have it in national affairs.'¹

'I have come to feel [wrote House to Page] that if the Allies cannot see more clearly in the future than they have in the past, it is hardly worth while for us to bother as much as we have.'

III

Unquestionably, Mr. Wilson was emotionally affected by the unresponsive attitude of the Allies, and the more so that Germany, yielding to his insistence upon the submarine issue, was furnishing no further trouble. France and England had disregarded his offer of immediate help to force reasonable peace terms on the Germans, and they paid no attention to his offer of future help to ensure the settlement. And yet the Allied press complained that the President was blind to the issues of the war and that the American people thought only of their dollars. A less sensitive man than Wilson would have been irritated and, like the belligerents, the President showed signs of nerves that were rasped. From this period dates his suspicion of Allied motives in the war, which was not entirely dissipated by co-partnership against Germany after 1917 and was intensified during the Peace Conference.

The British did not help the situation by increasing the restrictions on neutral trade during the summer of 1916. After some weeks of the Allied attack upon the Somme, it

¹ On the other hand, one may ask whether the difficulty lay so much in the repression of popular sentiment as in the irritating effect exercised by war emotions upon the public mind which prevented reasoning judgment.

became obvious that this offensive, like the German onslaught on Verdun, would prove impotent to end the war. British General Headquarters expressed satisfaction because Germans were being killed in great numbers; their losses were perhaps almost as great as those of the Allies. But British politicians felt that progress was slow, and public opinion demanded that the blockade be further tightened.

After long delay the British and French had replied to the American note of protest of the previous autumn. It did not make for a cordial understanding. An American correspondent of Sir Horace Plunkett, who was a stalwart advocate of Anglo-American friendship, criticized the note in a letter to Sir Horace in almost the same terms as those applied by Ambassador Page to the State Department protests:

‘Having just re-read Sir Edward Grey’s recent reply to the American note of last November, I have lost heart. As he has taken six months to consider the matter, I suppose the reply is definitive.

‘Its tone is that of a clever debater who dodges essentials (he ignores the Zamora decision) and who tries to “score points” off his opponent on details. There is no suggestion of a desire towards conciliation, to meet and smooth out difficulties, no effort to lay the foundations of a real accord.

‘You know how anxious I am to see a real Entente arrived at. I am convinced that there is no serious conflict of interest and ideals. But this reply is utterly discouraging. . . .

‘We who are friendly to Britain and want a feeling of friendship to supersede the present distrust, can do nothing without your help. I cannot, for instance, see any immediate gain to Britain in taking half a hundred suspects off the American ship *China* which can compensate for the hard feeling such an incident arouses. And then to add jeers to outrage, Sir Edward says he did it to save us trouble. Our police might have been bothered by the unneutral acts these

passengers might have committed! . . . If Sir Edward had tried hard, he could scarcely have contrived anything which would more surely be a damp on the pro-English ardor of such Americans as myself. . . .

'We cannot persuade ourselves that all the errors are on our side. We are ready to make large concessions in the cause of friendliness, but we cannot give up our claim to have a right to an opinion of our own in matters which seem as vital to us as this question of International Law at sea. . . . I do not see any hope of more cordial relations until it is generally recognized in England that all the neutrals feel that they have a real grievance against Britain. I do not want to argue over the right or wrong of the neutral attitude — the important thing is an understanding of how they actually do feel about it.

"Blood is thicker than water," "We are fighting your fight," "We have drawn the sword on behalf of International Law," "We are defending the rights of small nations," such assertions have little effect in America, when every letter from a European neutral which slips past your censor to us, tells of real or fancied wrongs suffered at your hands, when every effort of ours to reach an accord is met by scornful rebuffs.'

The effect of the Anglo-French reply to American protests was the more unfortunate in that it was received in the midst of the *Sussex* crisis, at the moment when the entire attention of the State Department was concentrated on relations with Germany. No one who knew the officials of the British Foreign Office believed that it was their intention to utilize the crisis so 'as to slip across an unsatisfactory answer unnoticed.'¹ But the British Ambassador himself recognized that the occasion was not entirely auspicious and Colonel House, who was usually charitable and always objective, described the sending of the reply at that time as stupid.

¹ This suggestion was actually made.

'April 19, 1916: Gaunt came after Morgenthau left [recorded the Colonel] to deliver a message he had received in cypher from the British Ambassador, asking my advice as to whether the Anglo-French note just received should be delivered to the State Department or withheld. I advised withholding for the present, in order that it might not become entangled with our controversy with Germany.

'April 21, 1916: The lack of intelligence displayed by diplomatists among the belligerents is past understanding. The stupid things each of the Governments do from time to time makes one skeptical of the final outcome of a peace settlement. . . . The sending of their answer to our notes at this time is an incredible performance.

'A small illustration of their methods may be seen in having Lord X bring an important letter from Sir Edward Grey, which X later casually sends to me in New York, instead of delivering it himself. When I mentioned this to Captain Gaunt, he was dumbfounded.

'April 22, 1916: Captain Gaunt called at dinner time. He had a letter from the British Ambassador, asking him to get my opinion as to whether the Anglo-French note should be delivered Monday and whether certain passages which he pointed out should be emphasized and given to the press. I gave an affirmative answer to each question. . . . Since it is here and since it is known that it has come, it might as well go in.'

A month later another upset of nerves threatened and over an equally small detail, when the American counter-protest, in answer to the Allied explanation of mail seizures, was sent to the British without a duplicate to the French. The control of trade restrictions had naturally been taken by the British, and the participation of the French was largely a matter of form. House had pointed out to Grey the danger of not sharing with the French the opprobrium of the blockade

and the Allied note was sent jointly by both Powers. This seemed to escape the notice of our State Department, which in matters of trade thought only of the British. Fortunately there was time to remedy the omission, naturally disturbing to Grey, who evidently feared that some sinister influence was at work in Washington.

Sir Edward Grey to Ambassador Spring-Rice

[Telegram]

LONDON, *May 23, 1916*

It was not due in the first instance to the special initiative of His Majesty's Government that action was taken in regard to the mails. His Majesty's Government have acted in common with the French Government, and some, at any rate, of the complaints in regard to seizure and delay are not due to the action of the British authorities at all.

The British Government entirely concurred in the ground on which we are acting, but it was, as a matter of fact, adopted by them on a note drawn up by the French Government which was therefore presented by the two Governments jointly in French.

The two Governments carry out all blockade operations jointly and French cruisers take part in our patrols. The assent and coöperation of the French Government are obtained for the carrying out of every modification of the blockade policy of His Majesty's Government, modifications sometimes being instigated by the French.

The selection of cases for which the British Government are alone believed to be responsible to the exclusion of all others, and the sending of a separate note to us, would in the circumstances be felt in the United Kingdom to be unfair and unfriendly.

It is very well known to the State Department that we cannot reply to their note or alter our procedure in this matter except in agreement with the French Government,

and that for us to reply without consulting them would be equivalent to a breach of the alliance with France. We are accustomed to attempts made by Germany to discriminate between the Allies with a view to separating them and to put one in an invidious position with regard to the other, but an analogous procedure by the United States Government was not expected.

The note not having yet arrived, this must not be understood as making any complaint of its contents before receipt; but you should point out to the Secretary of State unofficially and verbally in advance the considerations urged above as to the presentation of a note to all on this subject separately to His Majesty's Government.

I shall also tell the American Ambassador to-morrow what my feelings are. The procedure which the State Department is adopting is the one most calculated to make the feeling in the United States yet stronger and beyond control.

E. GREY

'*May 23, 1916*: Gaunt has just returned from Washington [recorded Colonel House], and gave me a copy of a despatch which the British Ambassador had received from Sir Edward Grey. . . .

'Gaunt was much disturbed, and so, it seems, is Grey. They wish us to send a duplicate note to France regarding mail seizures. They appear to have just waked up to the fact that it is not a good thing for Great Britain to take all the burden of responsibility. . . .

'*May 24, 1916* [conference with President Wilson in New York]: I showed him Sir Edward Grey's note to the British Ambassador, and was surprised to hear him say that our note had already gone to the British Government. I asked him to send at once a duplicate to France, which he agreed to do. He thought it would be wise for me to cable Grey that this was being done. I handed him a pad and asked him to write what he thought should be sent. . . .

'Miss Denton coded it at once. The President seems entirely satisfied to accept my judgment of her discretion, and he knows that no one excepting himself, myself, and Miss Denton have knowledge of these confidential negotiations. . . .

'Gaunt said the British Ambassador was much exercised at the harshness of our note on mail seizures sent to the British and French Governments. He thought the same object might be accomplished by a softer tone. I am not sure he is right. It looks as if a club was necessary before they take any notice.'

Colonel House to Sir Edward Grey

[Telegram]

NEW YORK, May 24, 1916

I can assure you, on the authority of the President, that no thought of putting separate responsibility on Great Britain has ever been entertained here and that no influences to that end are at work in the State Department.

The cases complained of with regard to the mails have all arisen out of the action of British authorities, but a duplicate note will be sent to the French Government.

EDWARD HOUSE

Sir Edward Grey to Colonel House

[Telegram]

LONDON, May 26, 1916

Much relieved note about mails is to be addressed both to France and ourselves. . . .

E. GREY

The incident illustrates the value of the informal relations which House had developed with Grey and which enabled him to settle a matter of detail and yet of importance smoothly and expeditiously. Unfortunately, no amount of diplomacy could remove the basic opposition of the two

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countries, which led House later to affirm that but for the murderous and the equally illegal maritime methods of Germany, it would have been next to impossible to avoid war with Great Britain. Neither the British nor the Americans could yield; they were controlled by their material interests and by the force of public opinion, which on both sides gave indication of increasing incapacity to look at the problem without irritability.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

LONDON, June 16, 1916

DEAR HOUSE:

... Sir Edward (and other men in high position) are a good deal disturbed lest the American Government continue to harp on the blockade. They won't relax it; they can't. Public opinion wouldn't stand it an hour. As things are now, an Admiral has said in a public speech in London that it is necessary to hang Grey if they're going to win the war. We've planted ourselves firmly on (1) we've stated our position on the international law involved; our record on that score stands; and (2) we've cleared the ground for claims for damages. As I see it, that's all we can do — unless we are prepared to break off relations with Great Britain and get ready for war, after arbitrators have failed.

The greatest damage done has been done by the tone and content of the Trade Department's instructions. . . .

Heartily yours

W. H. P.

Colonel House to Ambassador W. H. Page

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
June 30, 1916

DEAR PAGE:

... I am sorry to hear you say that the British are inflexible concerning the blockade, for I am afraid before Con-

gress adjourns trouble will develop there. They tell me so in Washington. The people feel particularly irritated over the mails. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

The situation was not improved when, on July 18, the British Government made public a list of more than eighty business firms in the United States with whom British subjects were forbidden to trade because of their commercial relations with enemies of the Allies. The total number of boycotted firms in neutral countries amounted to about fifteen hundred.

To many Americans it appeared obvious that the scope and effect of such a blacklist must necessarily be harsh and unfair. It added little to the effectiveness of the blockade of Germany, for already the trade of suspect American firms had been closely restricted and the number of American firms listed, in view of the total, was small. But the wording of the blacklisting order achieved in the United States a maximum of discontent. British steamship companies were warned not to receive cargoes from proscribed firms, and neutral lines understood that if they accepted freight from them they were likely to be denied coal at British ports. Neutral bankers feared to grant loans to blacklisted firms, and neutral merchants hesitated to contract for their goods. Other firms were given to understand that they might be placed upon the blacklist at any time and without notice.

Counsellor Polk to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, July 22, 1916

DEAR COLONEL:

. . . This blacklisting order of the English, which has just come out, is causing tremendous irritation and we will have to do something. It is nothing new and if the British Government would only keep quiet it could have been handled

comparatively easily, but . . . they did it, of course, in a wrong way. . . .

Yours faithfully

FRANK H. POLK

President Wilson was still more disturbed. On July 23, he wrote to House that Page had been called back from London, and expressed the hope that he might thereby get something of the American point of view. As to the British and the Allies, Wilson confessed that he was near the end of his patience and felt that the blacklist was the last straw. He had spoken frankly to the British Ambassador about it, and both Spring-Rice and Jusserand regarded it as a blunder. The President had at last reached the point where he considered asking Congress to authorize him to prohibit loans and restrict exportation to the Allies. He reported that he was concocting a very sharp note to Germany on the submarine. He wanted House's judgment.

Colonel House had taken to the woods in a double sense, after the Allied refusal of the American offer of assistance; for he expected no important developments during the summer and he sought to avoid the thousand and one questions that were brought to his consideration, and the innumerable personal visits which formed his daily routine when he was on the North Shore. He spent the summer in New Hampshire.

'*May 31, 1916: Sunapee is nine miles from a railroad and four miles from a post-office. I purposely selected this isolated spot in order to be free from interruptions. At our usual abiding place on the North Shore of Massachusetts, I should have been disturbed every hour. At Sunapee I can rest and read and think. It is so remote from the beaten path that some one has said, "It is one of those places you start for but never reach."*'

From his retreat, Colonel House advised Washington to act with circumspection in dealing with the Allies. They were perhaps ill-advised in their methods and blind to their opportunities, but ultimate coöperation between them and the United States he believed to be inevitable. In the meantime the dispute should be smoothed over wherever possible. Their attitude resulted largely from a failure to grasp the strength of the American determination to maintain trade rights and a sort of instinctive feeling, perhaps, that the high seas were British property. The sensible solution of the difficulty was a clear but confidential reiteration of the American point of view.

Colonel House to Counsellor Polk

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
July 25, 1916

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Your letter of July 22 comes to me along with one from the President.

He seems very much disturbed and inclined to take drastic measures. . . .

It would be better if we could get what we are after without taking such a positive stand publicly. It is the publicity of these things that always does the harm and to which they object. They have told me repeatedly that if we would tell them confidentially our position, they would try to meet it. I think you would get the same effect on the American public in this way, for they would understand what had happened. Anyway, the record would show. . . .

I am delighted that you have succeeded in bringing Page home. . . . As a matter of fact, if he had said to the British Government what the President and you have said to Spring-Rice, this blacklist order would never have been published.

When he comes, I hope too that he may be sent west to get a complete bath of American opinion. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

July 25, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I am sorry that a crisis has arisen with Great Britain and the Allies. . . . Before asking Congress for authority to prohibit loans and restrict exportations, I would suggest that you let Jusserand and Spring-Rice inform their Governments that you intend to do this unless they immediately change their method of procedure. I would explain to them that you did not have much leeway, because of the probable early adjournment of Congress, and therefore had to ask them to move with celerity.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

In August, Mr. Polk wrote again to House that the seizure of American mails by the Allies was still irritating the situation, and that it was impossible apparently to extract from them any reply to the American note of protest. He saw nothing for it but to give the President power to restrict American exportations and loans at his discretion, as a form of reprisal. 'I know it is a dangerous subject to touch,' he said, 'but I feel that it would be a good idea for the President to get some powers from Congress, to be used as a club for Great Britain if they do not give some real relief on trade interference. Their position has been most unsatisfactory.'

Polk's advice was followed, and in September, just before the adjournment of Congress, that body voted to the

President power to take drastic retaliatory measures. On September 8, Congress also proceeded to vote the largest naval appropriation ever passed by any legislative body of a state not at war. The bill provided for the construction of 137 new vessels of all classes, and would place the United States a close second among the world naval powers.¹

Those two steps, coming so closely together, raised the question as to whether the United States Government was preparing actually to dispute by force the mastery of the seas held by the British. House, who had returned from his retreat in the woods, warned the President of the danger of creating such an impression, and of the difficult position the United States would be in if, at the end of the war, the friendship of a victorious Allied group had been completely alienated. Wilson, who felt less sympathy with the Allies at this period than at any other, seemed indifferent and willing to take the consequences.

'The President came to my sitting-room in the morning [noted Colonel House on September 24], and we spent several hours going over foreign affairs, principally our differences with Great Britain. Page had left a mass of memoranda, which the President read aloud. I also gave him my last letters from Sir Edward Grey, Lord Bryce, Noel Buxton, and others. It was my opinion that the real difference with Great Britain now was that the United States had undertaken to build a great navy; that our commerce was expanding beyond all belief; and we were rapidly taking the position Germany occupied before the war. No one in England would probably admit that the things I mentioned were causing the growing irritation against us, but it was a fact nevertheless. The President replied: "Let us build a navy

¹ Writing on March 14, 1925, Colonel House says: 'I threshed this out thoroughly in Paris at the armistice proceedings and later at the Peace Conference, and many of the British and American authorities thought the bill would make us not equal but superior to any navy in the world.'

bigger than hers and do what we please." I reminded him that Germany had undertaken to do that and Great Britain had checked her before she could accomplish her purpose, and in the spring of 1914 I had predicted that she would. I thought it unlikely the British would be willing to permit us to build a navy equal to theirs if they could prevent it.'

Grey was worrying about more immediate contingencies. He has since confessed that his chief fear was that the United States would decide to convoy American merchant boats with warships. In such an event the blockaders either would have to permit passage, which would mean the end of the blockade, or would attempt to stop the convoy by force, which would mean war.

Feelings were further ruffled by the suspicion in England that the American attitude was based less upon principle than upon anti-British sentiment, which unquestionably had been stimulated by the treatment of the Irish problem following the Easter rebellion. Sir Horace Plunkett wrote to House: 'The Irish situation has been mishandled in a way which beats even the record of British blundering in my unfortunate country.' American sympathy blindly concentrated upon the treatment of the Irish prisoners, which was probably not the mishandling to which Plunkett referred, and found expression in a Senate resolution. This did not ease official relations with Great Britain.

Lord Grey¹ to Colonel House

LONDON, August 28, 1916

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

... I hope the United States will make it clear that in all questions of international law taken up by them, it is the merits of the question and not the unpopularity of Great Britain or anti-British feeling that is the motive force.

¹ Grey had been raised to the peerage as Viscount Grey of Fallodon.

We are not favourably impressed by the action of the Senate in having passed a resolution about the Irish prisoners, though they have taken no notice of outrages in Belgium and massacres of Armenians. These latter were outrageous and unprovoked, whereas the only unprovoked thing in recent Irish affairs was the rising itself which for a few days was a formidable danger. I enclose a short summary that was drawn up here as relevant to the Senate resolution, though we have not yet sent it to the President. The natural question on the action of the Senate is, 'Why if humanity is their motive do they ignore the real outrages in Belgium, etc.? . . .'

Yours sincerely

GREY OF FALLODON

IV

With Ambassador Page, who had been called to the United States on leave, House discussed the problem of friendly relations with Great Britain; but the two were unable to discover any solution. Page felt strongly that the United States, having made its protests, should leave the whole question for arbitration after the war. House did not regard this as practicable, inasmuch as there was no indication how long the war would last, and in the meantime injury might be done to American trade which no arbitral decision or indemnity could repair.

'September 25, 1916: Walter Page called this afternoon [he wrote] and we had a two-hour conference. I cannot see that his frame of mind has altered. He is as pro-British as ever and cannot see the American point of view. He hit Lansing wherever he could, but expressed profound regard for the President — a feeling I am afraid he exaggerates. He complained that Lansing discusses matters with the British Ambassador without informing him. At the same

time he told me with some satisfaction that Lansing said the British Ambassador was totally unfit for his duties, and should be replaced by some one with a more equable temperament and one who had a better understanding of the situation. Page does not know that Lansing's opinion of the British Ambassador is perhaps a shade higher than his opinion of Page himself.

'He said the British resent our trying to bring about peace. . . . I did not think this was as ignoble an effort as it seemed to Page. He declares none of us understand the situation or the high purposes of the British in this war. I replied that we resented some of the cant and hypocrisy indulged in by the British; for instance, as to Belgium. Page admitted that the British would have been found fighting with France even if France had violated Belgium in order to reach German territory more effectively.

'I asked Page if he thought the irritation apparent in Great Britain had increased because of our naval programme, and whether we were not getting in the same position, from the British viewpoint, as Germany. I spoke of the traditional friendship between Germany and Great Britain, which existed until Germany began to cut into British trade and to plan a navy large enough to become formidable; and I wondered whether they did not see us as a similar menace both as to their trade and supremacy of the seas.

'Page thought not, and yet he said Great Britain would never allow us to have a navy equal or superior to theirs. If we built, they would build more, although they would do it in a friendly spirit.

'Page thought good relations might have been brought about with Great Britain had we acted differently. This irritated me, and I told of the number of ways in which the United States had shown friendship and partiality for the Allies, only to find our relations worse now than at the beginning of the war. I ventured the opinion if we sent Bernstorff

home and entered the war, we would be applauded for a few weeks and then they would demand money. If the money was forthcoming, they would be satisfied for a period, but later would demand an unlimited number of men. If we did it all, they would finally accuse us of trying to force them to give better terms to Germany than were warranted.'

House's prognostications were to be justified with curious correctness during the course of the next two years; and his foresight as to the character of Allied demands and his understanding of the European attitude toward America explain much of the service he later was to render the cause of inter-Allied coöperation. He confessed his discouragement at the prospect, as news came to him from all directions of the friction developing between English and Americans in the early autumn of 1916.

'This has been an interesting day [he recorded on September 20]. Frederick Dixon, of the *Christian Science Monitor*, called at the instance of the British Ambassador to acquaint me with the feeling in Great Britain and France regarding the retaliatory measures passed by the last Congress. Dixon believes the tension is greater than we realize. He had long talks, when he was in England, with both Grey and Cecil, and, while Grey was moderate as usual, Cecil said if we attempted to put such measures into effect it would probably mean breaking off diplomatic relations and the withdrawing of all trade. That I look upon as in the nature of a bluff. . . .

'X [of the State Department] expressed much concern over our strained relations with Great Britain, which are growing worse rather than better. He attributes it to the two Ambassadors, Page and Spring-Rice. Of the two Spring-Rice is more to blame, because Page is *persona grata* in London and creates no irritation, since he wholly agrees with the British point of view. Spring-Rice, on the other

hand, irritates and is himself irritable. Phillips thinks Spring-Rice constantly sends word to London leading them to believe we are anxious to have a row with them.'

Following his principles and habits, Colonel House set himself to smooth out the irritation by frank and friendly discussion. The greater the difficulties with any Power, the more important it was to keep in close touch with its representatives. Thus on the day after his conversation with Phillips, the Colonel noted:

'Ambassador Spring-Rice and Captain Gaunt took lunch with me. Sir Cecil was at his best, and no man can be more charming than he. We spent a delightful two hours together and ironed out several matters of an irritating nature. I telephoned Polk at Washington and asked him about one matter in controversy, and received an explanation which was entirely satisfactory to the Ambassador. When Polk began to explain, what he said was so lucid that I turned the receiver toward Sir Cecil so that he might hear just what Polk was saying. . . .

'The Ambassador and I arranged to keep in closer touch, and he asked if he might let me know in advance when he saw breakers ahead, so I might take a hand in averting trouble. We parted in great good humor, as we always do when he is in an amiable mood.'

With Jusserand also, House maintained intimate relations. Upon him he impressed very frankly his criticism of Allied conduct of the war, for House did not believe in the war of exhaustion. It might indeed bring final victory to the Allies, but at a cost far beyond the value of the ultimate gain. Peace purchased at such a price would leave Europe helpless — as, indeed, she already was — to solve her problems without assistance from outside.

'October 10, 1916: The French Ambassador called at ten o'clock [recorded House] and remained for an hour. I found him less aggressive and not quite so firm in his assertion that France would fight until complete victory crowned her efforts. I called attention to what I considered the mistakes of the Allies. It was reiteration, but I wish to reiterate until I impress my point of view upon him. He admitted I had been right in many of my forecasts. I again predicted that the Allies would not make material advances on the western front, and, if victory should come, it would be by putting Austria out of commission in Southeastern Europe. . . .

'I insisted that the Allies made a mistake in not carrying out the tentative agreement we made in Paris and London last February, which would have brought the war to a close in all probability and would have given France a favorable peace. If not, it would have involved us in the struggle.'

A new crisis threatened in early October, when a German submarine, the U-53, entered Newport Harbor and, after remaining a few hours, put out to sea and, close to Nantucket (but outside territorial waters), proceeded to sink a number of boats. The whole affair was conducted according to the rules of cruiser warfare, for warning was given in each case, and in visiting Newport the submarine observed all conventions limiting duration of stay. The British, however, were appalled by the vision of the extending radius of submarine activity and, in their vexation, did not hesitate to criticize the United States. Mr. Polk felt that British suspicion of American negligence in its treatment of the submarine was due largely to the nervous irritability that daily became more manifest and to their misunderstanding of the circumstances. Fortunately, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice viewed the matter calmly, and Mr. Polk himself handled the crisis with diplomatic skill.

'October 9, 1916: Captain Gaunt came at four o'clock [noted House]. I have never seen him quite so perturbed. The sinking of six vessels by U-53, just off our coast, was a little too much for even his staunch nerves. I counselled calmness until we could see where we stood. I am always afraid some one will precipitate trouble when a moment's quiet will carry one over a crisis.'

Ambassador W. H. Page to Secretary Lansing

[Telegram]

LONDON, October 18, 1916

Lord Grey in a purely private conversation informs me that his speech last night in the House of Lords was an effort to hold back the almost fierce public feeling here against our Government till we shall officially make known the facts about the German U-53 submarine. He expressed the hope that we may very soon publish the facts.

The newspapers have reported that the submarine was given an opportunity at Newport to ascertain the movements and whereabouts of British and neutral ships, and went forth at once and sunk them. Lord Grey said to me: 'I do not know whether that be true or not, but, if it is true, let me put this question to you: Suppose a British cruiser had gone into Newport and got similar information and had gone out and stopped neutral ships and searched them for contraband in these same waters, would we not have received a protest immediately?'

Then he added: 'If a German submarine be allowed by the American Government to sink neutral ships so near to American waters, the British Prime Minister will push the British Government to search neutral ships for contraband in the same waters.'

While he confessed to strong feeling about the matter himself, he declared he would not make any judgment till the official facts were made known, but that he could not

prevent premature judgment by others and that a very strong public feeling was fast rising because of our Government's silence.

There is abundant confirmation of this fierce public feeling. The subject is the prevailing topic of conversation everywhere. The public discussed the phase of the subject mentioned by Lord Grey, but they are asking particularly whether it be true that our destroyers obeyed the German Commander's order to get out of his way so that he might sink neutral ships. On this phase of the subject, Earl (not Viscount) Grey made a speech in the House of Lords last night, contrasting with the reported action of the Commander of our destroyer the conduct of the British Commander at Manila as Admiral Dewey himself explained it to Grey. They also talked of Bernstorff's reported declaration that Germany was keeping her pledge to us while her submarines are constantly sinking merchant ships without warning and with loss of life in the far North Sea and the Mediterranean.

The British public are disposed to construe our longer silence as an unwillingness even to protest to Germany about the exploits of the U-53.

PAGE

The natural tendency of a belligerent nation to accept rumor for truth, thus resulted in strong anti-American feeling in Great Britain, where it was not understood that the actions of the U-53 were entirely in accord with the usages of naval warfare and that the accusations levelled against the American destroyers were without foundation. Mr. Polk very properly took the position that the State Department was quite willing to answer questions, but certainly would not volunteer any explanation or put itself in the position of explaining anything.

Counsellor Polk to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, October 19, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... To my mind, it is up to the British to discuss this thing with us, if they wish any information. They could do it in a friendly spirit that would not be offensive. Spring-Rice invited me to luncheon to-day. He was most cordial and said he kept away from the Department, as he felt that it would cause too much gossip in the papers if he called. He asked no questions at first; but I rather encouraged him to talk and he, Barclay, and I had a pleasant but, in some spots, guarded conversation. . . .

I told him there was no reason why we could not frankly discuss these matters in confidence and I thought frankness always paid. My own feeling is that they are sore and upset and do not know exactly what to take hold of. . . .

My personal feeling is that we should tell Page to tell Grey informally that there was no evidence that the submarine secured any information, and every one knew that all the submarine had to do was to wait off the Nantucket Lightship and she was bound to get plenty of ships; that we were taking every precaution to prevent our coast from being made a base, and we were considering what steps, if any, we should take in regard to controlling the arrival and departure of all warships, whether submarine or surface; that Great Britain had been maintaining, and still was maintaining, a patrol of our coast; that we were quite willing to discuss the matter informally, but, of course, it was our intention to be guided in making our decision by the present and future interests of *this* country. It might be well also to intimate that the President had expressed himself on the general subject of torpedoing ships off our coast, to the German Ambassador. We can then repeat, in closing, that this information is merely given to make our position clear and in no case did we feel that

the British Government had any right officially to question us as to our intentions.

Yours faithfully

FRANK L. POLK

Mr. Polk was able to smooth the incident over. He persuaded the American Navy officials to take out of the secret archives the report of the activities of the Destroyer Division which went out to sea when the U-53 was operating off Newport, and to put its substance into a personal letter to himself. He then forwarded this to the American Ambassador in London, suggesting that it might be shown to the British. This was done and Lord Charles Beresford in Parliament made a handsome apology for British misunderstanding. But the affair left a bad taste and official relations continued none too cordial. Unofficially, House maintained his close intimacy with both the British and the State Department, and was able to pour oil when the occasion demanded. But he admitted discouragement. If the British were rendered irritable by the strain of the war, the Americans did much that was unnecessary to increase their irritation.

'*October 26* [conference with Captain Gaunt, British Naval Attaché]: I talked to Gaunt frankly, and he admitted it would be best for Great Britain and the Allies for the United States to continue her benevolent neutrality for the present. He also admitted that if the Germans turned loose their full power upon British commerce, a very serious situation would arise, and the help America might give by coming in would not compensate them for an unbridled submarine warfare. . . .

'I told him it was very difficult for the United States to play the part of a benevolent neutral when there was so much hostile sentiment against us in the Allied countries, and when they accepted as true every foolish rumor started. He asked

me to remember that when people were at war they did not reason calmly. . . .

'November 17, 1916: Captain Gaunt says the feeling in Great Britain against the United States grows apace. The working people feel it, and in the trenches every shell that goes over and does not explode is called "a Wilson." Gaunt deprecates this feeling and says he does everything he can to quiet it. His explanation is that his people have lost all sense of proportion. He considers it a dangerous situation. He sails secretly for England the last of next week. No one is to know of his departure excepting the British Ambassador, whom he has not yet told. I am planning to send some letters and confidential messages over by him. With their state of feeling and with the President's distaste of their methods, I regard the situation as serious.

'I had a long conference with Polk. He agrees with me that we are in deep and troublous waters. I urged him to have Lansing keep in close touch with me until the skies are clear. We must do team-work and keep our wits about us. We not only have foreign countries to deal with, but the President must be guided. . . . He has always been more interested in domestic problems than in foreign affairs. . . . This gives me much concern. His tendency to offend the Allies . . . is likely to lead us into trouble with them. If we are to have war, let it be with Germany by all means. She has forfeited every right to consideration, and the situation demands, for our own protection, that we hold with the Allies as long as we can possibly do so with dignity.

'I will confess that the Allies are irritating almost beyond endurance.'

v

The tenseness of the situation illustrated forcibly the conviction which House always impressed upon his British friends, that only one danger could ever threaten Anglo-

American relations, but that single danger was so real that everything should be subordinated to its elimination: some arrangement must be found by which American commerce could go free and unobstructed when Great Britain was at war with a Continental enemy. It was British interference with American trade which caused the War of 1812. The same difficulty was again manifest. It would happen in the future, so long as maritime law remained unreformed. To meet it House had suggested the principle of the freedom of the seas — the inviolability of merchant shipping in time of war. Then and always he insisted that until some such reform were introduced, there would always be a cloud on the horizon of Anglo-American relations.

Germany, however, could invariably be counted upon to make a mistake in political psychology at the critical moment, and was already preparing a step which caused all Anglo-American disputes to be forgotten.

During the summer and early autumn, the general tenor of relations with Berlin had remained even. The German Government had followed Bernstorff's advice, which in turn had been passed on to him by House, and made no further demands that the United States break the British blockade. 'I myself am doing everything to be forgotten as much as possible,' wrote Bernstorff to House on June 16. The German submarine campaign, so far as reported to the State Department, was conducted according to cruiser rules and the pledges given by Berlin.

But it was certain that unless the military deadlock in Europe could be broken, the pressure of the navalists on the Government would result in the launching of an unrestricted submarine campaign. Bernstorff warned House of the danger in June, and every letter from Ambassador Gerard bore out his fears. The civil officials, Chancellor and Foreign Secretary, were clearly threatened. 'Although von Jagow is a Junker of the Junkers,' wrote Gerard, 'the Junkers are against

him and claim he is too weak. He may be bounced.' On June 7 and July 12: 'The U-boat question may break loose again any day.' — 'Much underground work for a resumption of reckless submarine war going on, all part of a campaign to upset the Chancellor.'

Ambassador Bernstorff to Colonel House

NEW YORK, July 14, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . I am happy to say, the improvement in all American and German relations has continued. . . .

Nevertheless, however, as you will have seen yourself by the newspapers, my Government is having a hard time and has been strongly attacked for having given up the U-boat war at the request of the United States. You know the situation in Berlin so well that I need not discuss it at any length. I will only mention that there seems to be danger of the Chancellor being forced to retire on account of these attacks. That would, of course, mean the resumption of the U-boat war and the renewal of all our troubles.

The chief argument which is being brought to bear against the Chancellor is that he gave in to the United States Government, although he knew that this Government was no neutral and was bringing pressure on Germany only, whilst it willingly permitted violations of International Law by England. There is certainly some truth in these attacks, as the British violations of International Law are increasing daily — cfg. for instance, the latest Order in Council which abolished the Declaration of London. . . .

If you wish to talk matters over with me and think that any good may come of such a confidential conversation, I am, as you know, always ready to pay you a visit from Dublin, as I suggested to you before you left New York.

My present address is, Hotel Ritz-Carlton.

Yours very sincerely

J. BERNSTORFF

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, August 16, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... The bitter attacks on the Chancellor continue. At a recent meeting in Bavaria resolutions were passed that the first objective of the war was to get rid of the Chancellor and the second was to 'clean out the Anglophile Foreign Office,' which prevented Germany from 'reckless methods for the swift winning of the war.'

As a son-in-law of a high official told me to-day, the break between the military and navy on one side and the civil Government on the other has widened into almost civil war. The same man told me that the K. had lately become quite apathetic and lets events take their course. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

BERLIN, August 30, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL:

... To-day Hindenburg is named Chief of the General Staff, and his Chief of Staff, Ludendorff, is made Quartermaster-General. Falkenhayn, former Chief of Staff, is bounced without even the excuse of a diplomatic illness. This is all a great concession to popular opinion. I do not know where Hindenburg stands with reference to America, but have heard that he is a reasonable man. Of course, here the army has as much to say in foreign affairs as the Foreign Office, if not more. When I was at the General Headquarters, Falkenhayn, although I know him, did not call on me and dodged me, even not appearing at the Kaiser's table when I lunched there. From all this I judge he was against America on the submarine question. I have also heard that at this time, when Helfferich was talking before the Kaiser in favor of peace with America, Falkenhayn interrupted him, but

was told by the Kaiser to 'stick to his last' or words to that effect.

These people here are now nervous and unstrung and actually believe that America will now enter the war against them. You cannot conceive of the general breakdown of nerves among this people. . . .

Zimmermann has now gone on a vacation, his place being temporarily taken by von Treutler, Prussian Minister to Bavaria, who since the commencement of the war has been with the Kaiser. I judge this means the Kaiser is looking personally into matters at the Foreign Office. Von Treutler is, I think, against the resumption of reckless submarine war; he is lunching with me to-day. He is rather the type of the intelligent man of the world and sportsman, and has little of the Prussian desire to 'imponieren' by putting his voice two octaves lower and glaring at one like an enraged bullfrog. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

House was at first pleased by the news of Hindenburg's formal accession to power, for he counted upon him to exercise a moderating influence and to support the Chancellor. He knew that he had been opposed to the reckless submarine warfare, and he supposed that he understood the impossibility of breaking the European deadlock and would approve reasonable peace terms which the Allies could hardly refuse. The Colonel talked the whole question over with Bernstorff in early September.

'September 3, 1916: Count von Bernstorff telephoned last night, asking if he might come to see me to-day. I invited him and the Countess, who has just arrived from Germany, to lunch.

'We had an interesting two hours together. . . .

'In talking to Bernstorff about the recent appointment of

Field Marshal von Hindenburg as Chief of Staff in place of von Falkenhayn, I considered it a move directly in favor of the Chancellor. When I was in Germany, the Chancellor in talking of peace measures said that von Hindenburg was willing to throw the weight of his influence on the side of peace terms which would not be popular in Germany, but which would probably be acceptable to the Allies. Bernstorff had no intimation of this, and the information caused him to give me some inside confidence. The Chancellor told Countess von Bernstorff as she was leaving Germany to tell the Ambassador that he did not know how long he could hold Germany from unbridled submarine warfare, and to be prepared to leave the United States at a moment's notice. While the Countess was *en route*, and after von Hindenburg had been appointed Chief of Staff, the Chancellor cabled Bernstorff to disregard the message he had sent by the Countess. Until I told him of the relations between the Chancellor and von Hindenburg, he did not understand the reason for the cablegram.

'Bernstorff said from the beginning he had tried to impress upon his Government the seriousness of their submarine warfare policy. They only partially realized it after the *Lusitania* and *Arabic* were sunk, and they censured Bernstorff for going beyond his instructions in the *Arabic* settlement. It was not until the *Sussex* was sunk that they fully realized how near they were to war with us. This brought forth our ultimatum, and in their reply they were compelled to go far beyond what Bernstorff had agreed to in the *Arabic* case.

'I asked why Germany got into war with both Great Britain and Russia at the same time. War with either was bad enough, but to have them both against her showed a lack of judgment which seemed to me appalling. Bernstorff said that in his opinion war would not have happened if a man of the first class had been in charge of the destinies of any of the

Great Powers in Europe — such a man, for instance, as Bismarck. When I suggested that Germany should have brought Great Britain to her side as soon as it became evident that France and Russia had become allies, he agreed with enthusiasm. In this event Great Britain, I thought, would have been glad to have Germany's militarism grow to an even greater perfection than it has.

'Bernstorff thought that Prince Lichnowski was such a pacifist that he misled Sir Edward Grey and the British Government into the belief that there would be no war. If a strong man had been there, he thought matters might have shaped themselves differently.

'In explanation of the German foreign policy and of the difficulties in which she has finally found herself, he said it was thought wise to balance Great Britain and Russia against one another. The German Foreign Office had not believed since Bismarck's time that Great Britain and Russia could ever be brought into an active alliance, and it was to Germany's advantage to keep them apart and not link up with either the one or the other.

'As to the war, he believes von Hindenburg may even yet stem the tide in Southeastern Europe,¹ and when winter closes in there may be a deadlock. He thought it was clearly to the interests of the United States that there should be a deadlock between the belligerents. . . .

'I told him I had tentacles reaching into each of the belligerent countries, and that opinion immediately hardened against the United States in Germany when they were more or less successful, and the same thing happened in the Entente countries when they were successful. I said I was in Sunapee quietly resting, but I was in close touch with affairs. He smiled and answered, "It is not necessary to tell me that; and the reason I have not communicated with you oftener

¹ Rumania had just entered the war on the side of the Allies, but her armies were rapidly defeated and her southern provinces overrun.

during the summer, or have not seen you before, is proof that relations between our two countries are satisfactory.”

‘Bernstorff is the only one of the Ambassadors among the belligerents who has retained his equilibrium and has been able to smile upon the present and philosophize as to the future.

‘*October 11, 1916*: My first caller was the German Ambassador. He wished to tell me of his interview with the President yesterday. The President was unusually pleasant to him, and Bernstorff commented upon it. The President asked him to send a cable to his Government, warning them of the danger of submarine activity along our coast. He made it clear to Bernstorff that if the practice continued, trouble would ensue, and he hoped in behalf of good relations they would heed his warning. . . . I expressed the hope that U-boat 53 had returned home and would cease depredations along our seaboard. He fervently echoed my hope, as he sees only too clearly the risk of such activities.’

VI

From a clear sky fell suddenly the plainest of portents. Evidently Hindenburg's accession to power was to bring decisive action in Berlin and end the long contest between Chancellor and navalists. If Allied nerves were frazzled and led to errors of judgment, German nerves showed signs of collapse by throwing all judgment to the winds and seeking counsel of desperation. They could not stand the deadlock, which must be ended or broken. If Gerard, who had returned on leave to the United States, should find Wilson able to initiate peace negotiations, well and good. Otherwise Germany would break the deadlock by a submarine campaign without any restrictions. It was left to Bernstorff to decide whether the President should be informed of the direction German policy was taking, and Bernstorff passed the decision on to House.

Ambassador von Bernstorff to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, October 18, 1916

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I received the enclosed memorandum from Berlin. My Government wishes me to give it to Mr. Gerard before he sees the President. I am, however, at liberty not to deliver the memorandum, if I consider it wiser not to do so. Of course the memorandum is strictly confidential and is not intended as a threat of more drastic U-boat warfare on our part.

In view, however, of the methods of our enemies, which become more ruthless every day — Greece, blockade, illegal pressure on neutrals — my Government wishes to remind Mr. Gerard of the confidential negotiations which were carried on last spring.

I do not know where Mr. Gerard is now and do not like to risk sending this letter to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. You will certainly see him before he goes to Shadow Lawn, and in view of our continuous confidential relations I gladly leave it entirely to you whether you will give Mr. Gerard the memorandum or speak to him about it. This way I am sure that the matter will be dealt with quite confidentially and in accordance with the wishes of my Government.

Should you wish to speak to me about this matter or any other, I am, as you know, always at your disposal and prepared to go to New York at any time.

With many thanks in advance,

Very sincerely yours

J. BERNSTORFF

[Enclosure]

Your Excellency ¹ hinted to His Majesty in your last conversation at Charleville in April that President Wilson possibly would try towards the end of the summer to offer his

¹ Ambassador Gerard.

good services to the belligerents for the promotion of peace.

The German Government has no information as to whether the President adheres to this idea and as to the eventual date at which this step would take place. Meanwhile the constellation of war has taken such a form that the German Government foresees the time at which it will be forced to regain the freedom of action that it has reserved to itself in the note of May 4th last and thus the President's steps may be jeopardized. The German Government thinks it its duty to communicate this fact to Your Excellency in case you should find that the date of the intended action of the President should be far advanced towards the end of this year.

Despite Bernstorff's disclaimer, the letter was, as House noted, 'clearly a threat to resume submarine warfare, in the event the President does not immediately intervene in the European war.'

Thus, at the moment when the Allies, by their refusal to admit the desirability of American mediation and their disregard of Wilson's offer of American coöperation in world affairs, seemed to be pushing America back into a policy of isolation, Germany threatened to drag us into active belligerency by the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare. As yet, no one could foresee what course American policy would follow, for in November came the presidential election and until the final moment the reelection of Mr. Wilson remained a matter of doubt.

APPENDIX

COMPARISON OF THE HOUSE DRAFT AND WILSON'S
SPEECH OF MAY 27, 1916

HOUSE DRAFT, *May 21, 1916:*

One reason this war has come — one reason why other wars will come — is because nations are secretive as to their intentions toward one another and do not in advance outline their thoughts and purposes.

If Great Britain had said before the war, 'if France is attacked by the Central Powers we will join her,' Germany would in all human probability have consented to a conference as proposed by Grey.

... If we had said before this war, what I shall say to-night, the war in all human probability would not have occurred. It would have been notice to each of the belligerents that we are fundamentally opposed to certain policies and that we would use all our moral and economic strength, and, under certain circumstances, even our physical strength, against the nation or nations violating these principles....

It is clear the world must come to this new and more wholesome diplomacy. If an agreement can be reached by the Great Powers as to what fundamentals they hold to be to their common interest, and agree to act in concert when any nation or nations violate these funda-

WILSON'S SPEECH, *May 27, 1916:*

It is plain that this war could have come only as it did, suddenly and out of secret counsels, without warning to the world, without discussion, without any of the deliberate movements of counsel with which it would seem natural to approach so stupendous a contest.

It is probable that if it had been foreseen just what would happen, just what alliances would be formed, just what forces arrayed against one another, those who brought the great contest on would have been glad to substitute conference for force.

If we ourselves had been afforded some opportunity to apprise the belligerents of the attitude which it would be our duty to take, of the policies and practices against which we would feel bound to use all our moral and economic strength, and in certain circumstances even our physical strength also, our own contribution to the counsel which might have averted the struggle would have been considered worth weighing and regarding....

...the peace of the world must henceforth depend upon a new and more wholesome diplomacy.

Only when the great nations of the world have reached some sort of agreement as to what they hold to be fundamental to their common interest, and as to some feasible

mentals, then we can feel that our civilization has begun to justify its being.

Nations in the future must be governed by the same high code of honor as we demand of individuals. It must be said in some humiliation that the United States has not always maintained so high a level, but the lapses have been few and have constituted the exception and not the rule.

If we may take the utterances of the spokesmen in other nations — belligerent as well as neutral — we must believe that this feeling lies as deep and strong with them as it does with us. . . . If its voice is clearer and more definite in the Americas, it is perhaps because we are under less restraint than the other continents and can express ourselves without the fear of being misunderstood.

We have Mr. Asquith at Dublin, September 28, 1914, repeating what Mr. Gladstone had said nearly a half-century ago: 'The greatest triumph of our time will be the enthronement of the idea of public right as the governing idea of European politics'; and he added that it seemed to him to be now, at this moment, as good a definition as we can have of our European policy. . . .

We have all become neighbors now

method of acting in concert when any nation or group of nations seeks to disturb those fundamental things, can we feel that civilization is at last in a way of justifying its existence and claiming to be finally established.

It is clear that nations must in the future be governed by the same high code of honor that we demand of individuals.

We must, indeed, in the very same breath with which we avow this conviction admit that we have ourselves upon occasion in the past been offenders against the law of diplomacy which we thus forecast; but our conviction is not the less clear, but rather the more clear, on that account.

If this war has accomplished nothing else for the benefit of the world, it has at least disclosed a great moral necessity and set forward the thinking of the statesmen of the world by a whole age.

Repeated utterances of the leading statesmen of most of the great nations now engaged in war have made it plain that their thought has come to this, that the principle of public right must henceforth take precedence over the individual interests of particular nations. . . .

The nations of the world have become each other's neighbors. . . .

CHAPTER XI

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

If the campaign is properly organized — and it must be — we will win.
House to Wilson, June 15, 1916

I

'THE life I am leading transcends in interest and excitement any romance. I cannot begin to outline here what happens from day to day, how information from every quarter pours into this little, unobtrusive study.'

Thus wrote House, on March 10, 1916, in the midst of the diplomatic projects which he and Wilson planned, projects designed to end the war or to bring America into the struggle on the side of the Allies; in the midst, also, of the thousand and one minor details which fell upon the shoulders of the man who was known to be nearest to Wilson. Not even the importance of his diplomatic preoccupations saved him from the letters and visits of those who wanted advice and assistance. Cabinet members in search of candidates, candidates in search of positions, made of his study on Fifty-Third Street a clearing-house. Editors and journalists sought his opinions, and despatches to the foreign press were framed almost at his dictation. United States Treasury officials, British diplomats, Southern cotton planters, and metropolitan financiers came to his study to discuss their plans for the purchase of the surplus cotton crop, threatened by the British blockade. To House were brought the documents proving the questionable character of German propaganda, which Dr. Albert carelessly permitted a secret service agent to pick up, as he left an elevated train. To him also came Paderewski with his plans for the resuscitation of Poland, which with the Colonel's assistance developed to such an extent

that the great virtuoso-statesman wrote to him: 'It has been the dream of my life to find a providential man for my country. I am now sure that I have not been dreaming vain dreams.'

This mass of business — personal, national, and international — he transacted with no help except that of his secretary, Miss Denton, who, like the Colonel, doubtless survived in a physical sense only because of an amplitude of poise, humor, and common sense. To return to the New York apartment after an absence must have required an excess of courage on the part of both. 'I find my desk,' wrote the Colonel on September 16, 1916, 'piled high with accumulated mail, foreign and domestic. I am getting this out of my way before attempting to get in touch with any one. I changed my telephone number so no one can reach me until I am ready.'

So far as the questions that came to him touched domestic politics, House was frankly impatient. He who had worked so assiduously to help the President in his appointments during the first year of the Administration, now regarded the problems of administrative politics as so many vexatious trivialities.

'The President [he wrote on March 29, 1916] appeared almost more interested and absorbed in these local situations than in the foreign crisis. I myself am so little interested in them that I talk of them with reluctance, and it is immaterial to me whom he appoints. Ordinarily, I should insist that he should not appoint one of X's henchmen, but it seems so insignificant compared with the vital questions now on the boards, that I find myself not caring what he does, so he drops it from our discussions.'

But in 1916 domestic problems could not be dropped from discussion, since in the autumn would come the presidential

election. Interest in the contest was abnormally slow in development, because of the foreign situation. As late as April 14, House wrote to Gerard: 'Our relations with Germany and the Mexican expedition have crowded politics to the rear, and only professionals are taking an interest.' None the less, it was impossible that House should not become absorbed in this election, inasmuch as the failure of Wilson would mean the end of the plans for American coöperation with Europe. As political artist, furthermore, House could not resist the lure which the technical problems of organizing an electoral campaign presented.

That Wilson would be renominated was a foregone conclusion. He dominated his party in the country and in Congress, and at no time was there serious question of another candidate. But House realized that the President's reëlection was a matter of extreme doubt. He had been the choice of a minority in 1912, and a complete reunion between Progressives and Republicans would mean certain defeat in 1916. His sole chance lay in holding what he had in 1912 and in securing sufficient of the independent and Progressive vote to overcome the normal Republican majority.

In the East it was undeniable that the trend of popular opinion seemed against the President. His handling of the Mexican problem was criticized as anæmic, and the pro-Ally elements, which controlled opinion, anathematized the patience he had exhibited in his dealing with Germany. His friendly attitude toward labor aroused the distrust of the capitalists, who formed the backbone of political conservatism. Business men in the Northeast disliked his policies, complained that their interests had not been given a hearing, and that the men who surrounded him were incapable or untrustworthy. House was made keenly aware of such criticism and appreciated its political effect, although he regarded it as unmerited.

'Frank Trumbull called [recorded House on March 23, 1916] to recite the grievance of Wall Street against the President. He claims to be a defendant of the President, and I believe he is. He says the quarrel is not with the President personally, but with his Cabinet, especially McAdoo, Williams, Daniels, and Burluson. . . .

'*March 26, 1916*: S. R. Bertron was full of the mistakes of the Administration, not so much of the President as of those near him. I have come to the conclusion that it is practically impossible for any Administration to deal fairly with the Wall Street group and not come under the ban of their displeasure. The Banking and Currency Act is the most beneficent measure for the relief of business that has ever been enacted in this country, and yet no appreciation is coming to the President because of it. His effort to place the railroads upon some such broad basis as the banking interests are, is also forgotten. No President within my memory has done so much in a legitimate and wholesome way for business, and yet the eternal cry is for "more." . . .'

On the other hand, the President had a mass of accomplishment upon which to base an appeal for reëlection, especially in the regions west of the Mississippi, where anti-Administration business interests did not exercise so much political influence. It would have been easy for him to defend his foreign policy if he could have disclosed his offer to the Allies. Those who complained of his lack of interest in the cause of civilization would have been silenced. But even with his lips sealed as to this positive attempt, he could point to a steady maintenance of American rights which compelled Germany's acquiescence in his insistence that the unrestricted submarine war must stop, and to an emphasis upon moral factors in international affairs which was to give America, for a season, the leadership in world politics.

It was not difficult to excoriate the President's mistakes

after they were committed, but for an opposing candidate to criticize his policy constructively, and to promise a superior policy, would require exceptional statesmanship, tact, and courage. Could the Republicans produce such a candidate? Mr. Page, who disapproved of Wilson's treatment of the foreign problem, none the less recognized the strength of his position.

Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

BOURNEMOUTH, May 23, 1916

DEAR HOUSE:

... We wonder here much about the campaign, but we can't do much more than wonder whom the Republicans will nominate. They seem, by a million miles or so, to lack the ideal man. Nor do I see what winning war platform they can put together. They dare not favor war. They dare not favor an ignominious peace. The President seems to me to hold a handful of trumps, and unless somebody throws 'em away, I can't see how he can lose — unless he lose thro' the weakness of many men he has about him. Nobody's big enough for the great places in our Government; but I sometimes feel that there must be a good many available men bigger than some that hold these great places. That, it seems to me, is the one visible danger to the President and to the party. . . .

Yours very heartily

W. H. P.

A far more vital factor in Wilson's strength lay in his legislative accomplishment. Americans may become excited by foreign affairs, but their votes are cast in accordance with domestic interests. The President had pushed through with rapidity and success a series of legislative reforms which proved the sincerity of his liberalism as well as his powers of leadership. The Democratic Party was not a liberal party, but Wilson, in the words of a prominent Progressive, 'had

hammered the Democratic Congress into a constructive body. To do so he had to lead his party away from the Democratic traditions of half a century.' ¹ The Rural Credits Bill, the Child Labor Bill, the Workman's Compensation Act, the Inheritance Tax, the Federal Reserve Act — these, as the same Progressive insisted, 'and a series of small wedges which the Democrats have driven into the trunk of iniquity, will finally help to split the trunk. And the Progressives, who are watching these wedges take hold, are of course pleased.'

The moral strength of Wilson, Colonel House believed, must lie in his willingness to transform the Democratic Party into a truly liberal party. House looked for the help of the Progressives, even at the risk of offending the conservative Democrats, and long before the election sought means to build bridges for the Progressives to cross over to the Democratic camp.

'Davies ² came over from Washington to see me [House wrote, January 28, 1915]. . . . We laid out rather a comprehensive campaign in regard to getting the Progressive forces in line for 1916. I told Davies, as I had Woolley, that I would rather have the President defeated than to have him win by deserting the progressive principles for which we had fought. The Democratic Party must change its historic character and become the progressive party in the future. . . .'

As a matter of fact, there was no hope of Democratic victory unless Wilson could attract the Progressives of the West, so thoroughly had the Northeast become anti-Wilson. If the Republicans could select a candidate capable of reuniting the Republican and Progressive elements, Wilson was doomed.

So important did the Progressives appear to House that he

¹ William Allen White, in *Collier's*, December 16, 1916.

² Joseph Davies, of the Federal Trade Commission.

not merely made every effort to win them over, but he assumed that the Republicans would nominate Roosevelt, the only man certain to hold the Progressive vote. Common sense dictated his choice, but the Republican chiefs balked at the thought of accepting the leadership, perhaps the mastery, of the man who had wrecked the party in 1912. Mr. Root would certainly alienate the Progressives. There were no younger men of distinction clearly available. But on the Supreme Court was Mr. Hughes, who had fought the bosses and might attract the Progressives, while with the conservative elements he had the reputation of being 'sane and steady.' By his seclusion on the Federal Bench, he had escaped all connection with the quarrel of 1912.

To put in nomination a member of the Supreme Court seemed to many persons a dangerous approach to bringing the judiciary within the realm of partisan politics. In the summer of 1912, Mr. Hughes had told a friend that under no circumstances would he become a candidate for the Presidency after holding a place on the Supreme Court, and was reported as stating that 'A man on the Supreme Bench who would run for political office is neither fit for the office he holds nor for the one to which he aspires.' It was a statement which the Democrats used with some effect during the campaign of 1916.

As early as the autumn of 1915, signs began to multiply that unless the Republican Old Guard would swallow their pride and their fears, accepting Roosevelt, strong pressure would be brought to bear upon Hughes to resign his judicial position and make the race.

'John R. Rathom ¹ called [recorded House, September 28] . . . to tell . . . of the political situation in New England in its bearings on the Republican presidential nomination. He believes New England will finally be for Justice Hughes, and

¹ Editor of the Providence *Journal*.

he believes Hughes will accept the nomination. He has just been on a fishing trip with Hughes in Maine. I hope this is not true, for I believe the Supreme Court should be kept out of politics. When a man accepts a position upon that great Court, he should forswear further political ambition; otherwise the Court will fall in the estimation of the people and their decisions will be looked upon with suspicion.'

In the early spring of 1916, House felt that, whatever their prejudices, the Republicans would seize upon the one big figure capable of attracting the Western vote. 'It looks like Roosevelt for Republican nominee,' he wrote Gerard on March 24, 'though Hughes may be.' But on May 11, he wrote to Penfield: 'The Roosevelt tide has receded and that of Hughes is advancing. Roosevelt has over-played his hand and the reaction has set in. He may be nominated, but it does not look like him to-day.' When the Republicans held their convention, it became obvious that, as a compromise candidate between Root and Roosevelt, Hughes was a necessity. Root was the choice of the regulars, but he could not carry the West. Roosevelt was still anathema to the party leaders. On June 10, Hughes was nominated. Three days previous, Roosevelt had been offered the Progressive nomination, but, eager for the defeat of Wilson and realizing that the reunion of Republicans and Progressives was necessary to effect it, he refused the nomination and urged his followers to work and vote for Hughes. Thus he destroyed the organization he had himself created.

Colonel House to the President

SUNAPEE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
June 10, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... The news of the nominations at Chicago has just reached me. . . . Now that Hughes is the candidate, it is all

the more necessary for us to gather in the Progressive vote. I think we can show Hughes up as a thorough conservative who obtained the name of progressive because of his refusal to let the bosses dictate to him. His veto of the income tax and the support which the Germans have and will give him, will, I think, ensure his defeat.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

II

From the beginning to the end of the campaign, House insisted that the Democrats must work to capture the independent voter and the Progressives of the West. The entire strategy of the campaign was to be founded upon the principle of permitting the Republicans to spend their efforts and money on the anti-Wilson States east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio, while the Democrats would hope to win the West — which, with the solid South, might give a bare majority in the electoral college. It seemed risky, this disregard of the great States of the Northeast, but it offered the only chance of success. Upon this idea was based the choice of a Democratic campaign manager and also the decision as to which States should be the centres of Democratic campaign activity.

If the Progressive vote was to be won, the Democrats must secure a campaign manager with markedly liberal tendencies and willing to accept the bold plan which was being mapped out. He must have courage and imagination and, preferably, should not be too closely connected with the old-style party managers, whom the Progressives distrusted. On various counts the Democratic Chairman of the 1912 campaign, W. F. McCombs, was obviously not fitted for the work. House had always befriended McCombs, but he was not willing to permit sentimental factors to interfere with the chances of Democratic success. Fortunately McCombs him-

self, and his advisers, realized that he could not take charge of Wilson's campaign.

'B. M. Baruch was with me this afternoon [wrote House, on April 18, 1916] to discuss the McCombs matter. He believes he has gotten McCombs to a point where he is willing to write the President declining to serve again as National Democratic Chairman. I promised Baruch if he would get the letter, I would undertake to get from the President a letter equally courteous and complimentary, or would return McCombs' to him. . . .

'Baruch expressed the sincerest sympathy for McCombs, because he realizes he is in no position to aid the President or to maintain himself in a directing capacity. He therefore wishes everything done, as indeed I do, to save his feelings.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 21, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

After wrestling with McCombs two days, Baruch got the letter from him. Here is a copy of it.

Baruch is holding the original, expecting me to go to Washington and take it in person. We both regard it as important that you clinch the matter by accepting his offer to eliminate himself from the situation. If you will write McCombs upon receipt of this and send the letter to me, I will make the exchange. . . .

Baruch is anxious for you to write as cordially to McCombs as you feel that you can, believing that it will have a good effect all round.

Will you not write the letter to-morrow and send it by special delivery, so the McCombs incident may be closed for good and all on Sunday? This will give him time to make his announcement on Monday.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson responded with a letter which is an excellent example of the grace and charm which he could, when necessity demanded, inject into a delicate operation. 'I hope that what I have written,' he said rather timorously to House, 'will seem the right thing.'

*The President to Mr. William F. McCombs*¹

WASHINGTON, April 22, 1916

MY DEAR McCOMBS:

I have your letter apprising me of your inability to retain the chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee for the approaching campaign.

I fully appreciate the necessity you feel yourself to be under to resign after the convention shall have been held in June; I know you would not have reached such a decision had not your new business obligations made it unavoidable. I do not feel at liberty, therefore, to urge you to make the sacrifice that a retention of the chairmanship would in the circumstances involve.

You have made many and great sacrifices already for the Party, and I know I am speaking the sentiment of all loyal Democrats when I express the very deep appreciation I have felt of the great services you have ungrudgingly rendered.

I am sure that the greatest regrets will be felt at your retirement, and that a host of friends will join me in the hope that your new business connections will bring you continued abundant success. With best wishes

Sincerely yours

WOODROW WILSON

More difficult was the positive problem of selecting McCombs' successor. For a time, the President and Colonel House seem to have agreed upon Frank Polk, Counsellor of the Department of State. Later, the Colonel began to feel

¹ McCombs, *Making Woodrow Wilson President*, 271.

that Polk could not be utilized, as Mr. Lansing, whose health was poor at this time, counted upon his assistance in the Department; but he found difficulty in changing Wilson's mind.

'I have gotten the President so thoroughly imbued with the idea that Frank Polk is the right man for Chairman [he recorded on May 3] that I cannot shake him loose.

'Polk mentioned several men who he thought might do. I told him the President would not take any of them, because he knew them. Polk asked why the President was willing to take him, and added, "I have only seen the President two or three times to talk with him." I smilingly replied, "If you had seen more of him, he would probably not want you any more than the others." . . . Polk took this as good-naturedly as it was meant. . . .

'The President and I lunched alone, and I took up with him several of the names of men Polk and I thought might do for National Chairman. None of them suited him. I told him it would inconvenience Lansing too much to lose Polk. He thought the contrary. Lansing's convenience was not as important as it was to have a proper man for National Chairman. He declared he did not desire to be President any longer, and it would be a delightful relief if he could conscientiously retire. He said he felt it his duty toward his country and his party to continue. He believes a second term may be an anti-climax.

'The reason I had wanted Polk as National Chairman and the arguments I gave the President for wishing him, are that he has good judgment and is absolutely clean in purpose and thought. He would never "go to sleep at the switch," and the President never need have a moment's worry concerning the manner in which the campaign was being conducted. There could be no scandal or anything approaching one with Polk at the helm.'

Ten days later, however, House wrote to Wilson: 'I wish some one could be found other than Polk, for it seems a pity to disorganize the State Department — as I am afraid it will, even if he leaves only temporarily.'

Then, on May 15, in a postscript to a letter discussing the keynote speech at the convention: 'What do you think of Vance McCormick as a substitute for Polk as National Chairman? I do not know him, but I am to see him on Wednesday.'

The President agreed that McCormick might do admirably, and told House to pursue his inquiries.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 19, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... Vance McCormick is to be here to-day. I am having him to both lunch and dinner, in order to get a thorough view of him. I will let you know about it later.

Frank Polk, Dudley, Woolley, Newton Baker, Daniels, Morgenthau, and others think he is the man you want for Chairman. The fact that he comes from Pennsylvania¹ is not altogether against him, for the reason that he will not be involved in any of the factional quarrels that seem to prevail in the doubtful States. Every faction would feel with such a man that they would have a hearing without prejudice. . . .

Since dictating the above, I have spent some time with Vance McCormick. Unless something develops that is not apparent, I believe he is the man you want. He reminds me very much of Frank Polk. He seems to be of the same high type. He appears to have poise and good judgment. I cannot judge on so short an acquaintance of his political sagacity, but I am favorably impressed with him.

If you take Polk, you will have Lansing a sick man on your hands. Of this I am convinced, and so is Polk.

¹ Inevitably Republican.

If possible, I hope you can make a decision within the next few days, as I would like to talk freely with whomsoever you select and outline the organization as I think it should be. I can do it so much better now than later, when the real hot weather sets in. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The President replied to this suggestion by expressing deep interest in House's opinion of McCormick's availability after his personal interview. He intimated that he would like especially to be convinced that McCormick was aggressive enough and not too 'high-brow,' and perhaps intolerant of the 'rougher elements' which Wilson felt had to be handled and dealt with.

Colonel House was able to give the required assurance and reported that McCormick seemed to him the best choice. But for various reasons the latter, who had been as a young man Mayor of Harrisburg and had become a leader of the liberal group of Pennsylvania Democrats, was slow to accept. With a modesty not too common in such circumstances, he asked to have his name withdrawn from consideration. House continued his search. 'I am combing the country for the right man,' he wrote on May 29.

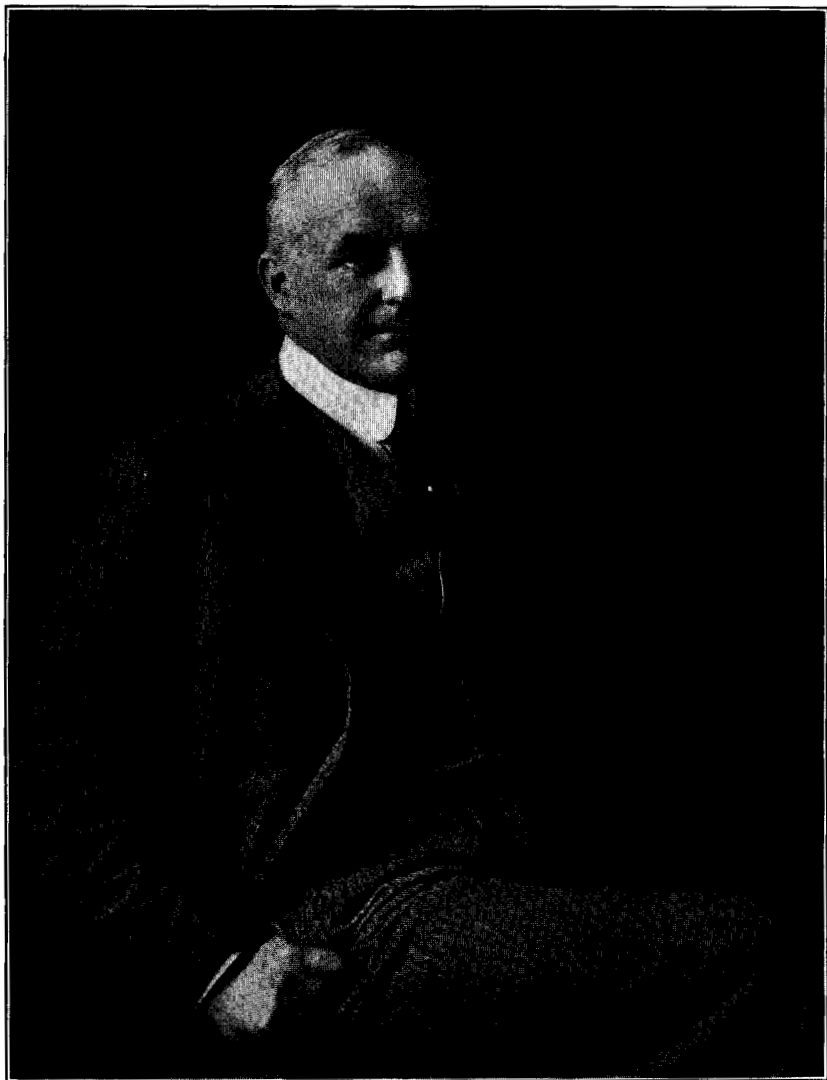
Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 30, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

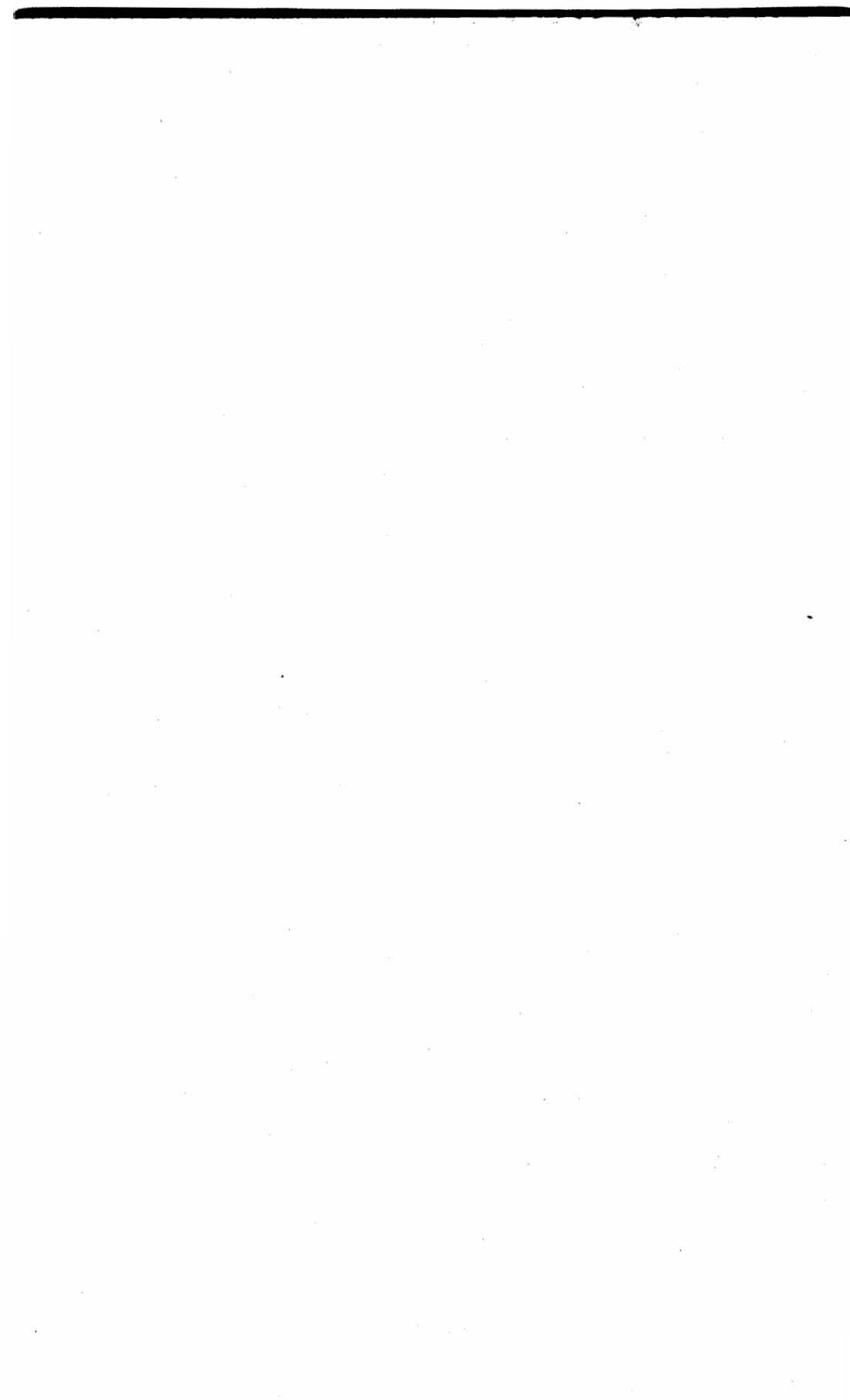
. . . For two days I have done but little else than look for a suitable Chairman of the National Committee to suggest to you, but it is next to impossible to find one that is satisfactory.

In seeking I have endeavored to eliminate the three R's, Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion, and, in doing so, the best material is not available. If you get a Roman Catholic, the



Photograph by Underwood & Underwood

VANCE C. McCORMICK



religious question might become an issue. If you get a Southerner, there is the possibility of that being raised; and, of course, the liquor question in any form should be shunned.

I have not only sifted the country by States and by districts, but have gotten the help of almost every one whose opinion is of value, even including such men as Cobb of the *World* and McAneny of the *Times*.

John W. Davis, Solicitor-General, has occurred to me as being the most available one, provided you think West Virginia is not too far south. As a matter of fact, their affiliations are more Western than Southern.

I would appreciate it if you will let me know to-morrow what you think of Davis.

Polk, I believe, must be considered unavailable. Lansing is a much sicker man than even his close friends know, and to take Polk from him would be to put the finishing touch upon him. I suggested Polk to Cobb, and he thought it would not do to take a man from the State Department to use for personal or party reasons. This view is held by many others.

It will not do to get an old-time politician. He should be of the new school, able and forward-looking, and willing to play the game with all that seek to help. I have never known a national campaign to be properly organized, and organization is almost the most essential element in success. If we can get the right man, I think we can get the organization, for it is a simple matter to an intelligent man when he is told how.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

President Wilson, one notes with interest, was evidently fearful of any man untried in electoral manoeuvres and, unlike House, was willing to accept a 'professional.' He was

himself so new to politics that he had a good deal of respect for the vote-getting ability of the old-timers. He wrote House that if the men in the political trenches were to be inspired to their best work, a leader must be selected who knew them, and whom they did not regard as an alien or a 'high-brow.'

House insisted, in his reply, that to trust to one of the 'regular' party managers would mean defeat. 'I am not nearly so afraid,' he wrote, 'of losing the rank and file, as I am of not getting the necessary votes from the outside to win. The regulars have nowhere to go, and if we get them all we are still in the minority, and I think we should be more concerned in bringing into the fold those that are on the outside.'

Almost up to the moment of the Democratic Convention at St. Louis, Wilson remained undecided. On June 10, he wired to the Colonel, asking if he could possibly act himself, and sent Dudley Malone to persuade him. But Colonel House insisted that his health would not stand the strain of routine. 'Even in Texas,' he wrote, 'I always had some one else who could relieve me, not only of the details, but of the constant pressure of seeing unimportant people that demand interviews of a Chairman. Of the remaining possibilities, Vance McCormick looks by far the best choice.'

Wilson agreed, and McCormick, regarding the call to duty as imperative, this time accepted. Not without some surprise, the old-timers on the National Committee received the definite order to select the Pennsylvanian; and there were moments when it required all of his geniality to prevent a sharp line being drawn between 'professionals' and 'amateurs,' which would have threatened discord. House, however, wrote Wilson that he was delighted with the choice. McCormick, who as quarterback and captain of a champion football team had learned that the best strategy is based upon the unexpected, was admirably fitted to carry out the

plan of campaign designed to catch the Progressive vote and to concentrate the main Democratic effort in a few doubtful States. He was recognized as a liberal, and he was free from commitments to local machine leaders.

III

Plans had already been drafted for the two essential features of the campaign: First, the line of argument to be followed in speeches by the President and his supporters; second, the method of discovering the regions in which a maximum effect, as counted in electoral votes, could be secured with a minimum of effort.

As to the main lines of argument to be adopted, it was easy to agree that no apologies should be made regarding either foreign or domestic affairs. Wilson must insist upon the positive character of his policy of neutrality as conceived in the interests of America and the world, and to express the willingness of America to enter into a coöperative agreement with the rest of the world to maintain peace.

The Republicans were to hold their convention a week before the Democratic Convention, and House suspected that it was because they intended to put something in their platform concerning the war and its settlement, thus forestalling the Democrats. He shared his suspicions with Wilson. 'I felt so certain of this,' he recorded on May 3, 'that I advised him to make a speech prior to the Republican Convention, outlining our policy in such a manner that they could not appropriate it.' This, as we have seen, the President agreed to give on May 27, before the League to Enforce Peace. House was delighted with the result. 'I cannot tell you how pleased I am with your speech last night,' he wrote to Wilson on May 28. 'It will be a landmark in history.' To emphasize its importance, House felt that the principles of the speech should be officially approved by the Democratic Party.

*Colonel House to the President*NEW YORK, *May 29, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Do you not think that your speech before the League to Enforce Peace should be endorsed by the St. Louis Convention?

Many people with whom I have talked to-day regard it as the real Democratic platform. Some of them say it leaves the Republicans without a single issue either foreign or domestic; that Taft, Root, Choate, and most of the Republican leaders are compelled to endorse it because of their previous position.

I am delighted the way it has been accepted. I expected some criticism, and you have gotten it, but the chorus of approval makes the criticism seem very vain and partisan.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Regarding domestic policy, it was decided that Wilson should rest his case upon the mass of liberal legislation which he had extracted from a Democratic Congress, and should emphasize the degree to which the Progressive programme of 1912 had been carried into effect by the Democratic Administration. Great care was taken in arranging that the proper note should be struck at the convention, and that in the campaign the President should appear as the champion of Progressive principles.

'*May 3, 1916* [conference with Wilson]: We definitely decided on Governor Glynn for Temporary Chairman of the St. Louis Convention, and the President and I will aid him in preparing the keynote speech. I agreed to take charge of it, and after the speech is finished, I am to send it to the President for criticism.'

More important still, in the belief of Colonel House, was

the question of organization, especially the determination of those districts which were absolutely certain to be for or against Wilson, and those which, by well-directed effort, might be induced to exchange hostility for friendship. 'If the campaign is properly organized—and it must be—' he wrote to Wilson on June 15, 'we will win. It is only necessary to do the thing right, for we are in the position of advantage. This must not be a slipshod campaign, and we must definitely know by the first of October how you stand with the voters.'

'I motored into the country [he noted on May 12] with X, and took lunch at his daughter's cottage. . . . We took this occasion to discuss the coming campaign, and I gave him for the first time what I had in mind. He was much surprised and remarked that I seemed to have thought it out pretty thoroughly, and I think he wondered why I had not taken him into my confidence before. He was pleased with the entire plan, and hoped the President would accept it as a whole.

'X tells me one minute he wants nothing, only desiring to serve; in the next minute he speaks of his ambition to become a member of the Cabinet, in order to show the country how efficiently he could run a department. . . .'

The basis of House's plan was to divide the country into the smallest possible units that could be arranged for with available campaign funds. The smaller the unit, the greater efficiency. In each unit local workers must segregate the certain Republican and certain Democratic voters. 'Roughly speaking,' wrote House, 'we must assume that in a unit of 100,000 voters, eighty per cent of them will be unchangeable voters, which would leave twenty per cent that can be influenced by argument.' That twenty per cent must be worked intensively. 'We must run the President,' he told

Daniel C. Roper, who was in charge of organization, 'for Justice of the Peace and not for President; we need not consider the disposition of sixteen or seventeen million voters, but the disposition of the voters in individual precincts.'

This intensive work in the districts was carried out by Roper under the direction of McCormick, in what House later described as 'an effective manner,' despite the fact that the whole organization had to be built up hurriedly. 'What we lack,' wrote House, 'is party machinery to utilize the organization to the best advantage on the day of election. If it had not been for McCombs, we should have had this machinery in perfect working order.'

For the purpose of determining where the major effort of the Democrats should be exerted, House classified in three categories the States he regarded as important. In the first he placed such States as New York, Maryland, Missouri, Arizona, Wyoming, where, because of the number of electoral votes involved or the approximate equality of the candidates, an expenditure of effort would be worth while. In a second and a third class, the less vital States were placed, States where chances of success were less and an equally intensive effort would probably bring smaller returns. As reports came in during the campaign, the classification might be changed and activities increased in some States or lessened in others. In this way, effort would not be wasted on States which were certain to go either in favor of Wilson or of Hughes. At all times the central organization should know from local reports just how sentiment was developing in each locality, and determine the emphasis of the campaign accordingly.¹

During the summer House kept in touch with the campaign leaders, and, while he avoided the details of organization, he spent much time and thought upon the larger lines along which the campaign was to be fought. Wilson wrote to

¹ See Appendix to chapter, giving text of House's plan.

him in July, asking what he thought of the general situation as to party politics and his reelection. House was non-committal.

Colonel House to the President

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
July 5, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... As to the general political situation, I think it is too early to prophesy. If the election were held to-day, I have no doubt you would win. Conditions and issues are so different from the usual, that it is idle to speculate as to the final result.

This is my reason for urging a complete organization in certain vital States. If we once get this organization, we will know where we stand, and the opposition will probably not know. If we do not get it, everything must necessarily be guesswork up to the last moment.

It looked at one time as if the 'hyphenate' issue would be the paramount one and the one upon which you could easily win. However, if Germany pursues her present course, one can imagine a radical change in feeling here. Even now, I notice a lack of interest in that question. If the Allies continue their blockade rigorously and if they push the Germans back to their boundaries, a feeling of something akin to sympathy [with Germany] may arise in this country. Germany's complete change of attitude, both here and abroad, has done much towards lessening the war spirit in America.

I believe that certain lines of attack should be agreed upon in the campaign and the fight forced in these directions. If we centre our fire, it will inevitably put the opposition upon the defensive, and that is what we want. Fortunately, we have all the arguments on our side, but they have the money.

It is the plain people that will determine the result, and we

must get the issue properly before them. The keeping the country out of war¹ and the great measures you have enacted into law, should be our battle-cry. It will be the aim of the opposition to bring into line against you every dissatisfied element. It is their only chance for success. . . .

I am getting in great shape here, and by the first of September I shall be ready for the fray.

My heart goes out to you every day in admiration, in gratitude, and in devotion.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
July 25, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I hope they will not disturb you too much about the campaign. There is no need why you should be bothered with the details.

Roper was here yesterday, and I feel satisfied that we will have the only efficient organization that has ever been constructed in a Democratic national campaign. Roper seems to understand the job and appreciates its importance, and we have agreed to keep in close touch with one another.

I suggested a coördination between the organization, Publicity, and Speakers' Bureaux. The centre of this should be the organization, and Roper will be able to tell Cummings² the kind of speakers that are needed in each particular section, and will tell Woolley³ the kind of literature to send. I

¹ House had himself advocated a plan which under certain conditions would have brought the country into the war, and he had done so regardless of political consequences. Since the attitude of the Allies had prevented the execution of the plan, it would have been rather Quixotic to have disregarded the political advantages resulting from the Allies' refusal.

² Homer Cummings, in charge of the Speakers' Bureau.

³ Robert Woolley, in charge of Publicity.

have asked him to explain this to McCormick and let him bring about the coördination himself. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Facing a normal Republican majority in the country as a whole, unpopular in the Northeastern States with their large vote in the electoral college, equipped with inferior campaign funds, the Democrats were destined to snatch a bare victory by the exercise of consummate strategy and the development of painstaking organization.

APPENDIX

HOUSE'S PLAN OF CAMPAIGN, *June 20, 1916*

In preparing the organization I would suggest that the following States be classified in this way:

- Class 1. Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, Indiana, Missouri, Wyoming, Arizona, and New Mexico.
- Class 2. Maine, Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, Colorado, California, Oregon, and Washington.
- Class 3. Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa.

We should put forth our maximum effort in the States of Class 1, a strong effort in those of Class 2, and a lesser effort in those of Class 3.

There are seven States in Class 1 of prime importance, which we should and must carry. These States should be divided into units of not larger than 100,000 voters.

By having the State organizations coöperate closely with the national organization, it will not be over-difficult to have the certain Republican and certain Democratic voters of these units segregated. This can be done by writing to the precinct chairmen in those units and obtaining from them lists of the entire electorate, putting the absolutely certain Republicans and absolutely certain Democrats in one class and the fluctuating voters in another.

This independent vote should be classified as to race, religion, and former affiliations. Roughly speaking, we must assume that in a unit of 100,000 voters, eighty per cent of them will be unchangeable voters, which would leave twenty per cent that can be influenced by argument.

The size of these units must necessarily depend upon the size of our campaign fund. If it is small, a larger unit will have to be considered; if sufficient money is raised, a smaller unit can be made. The smaller the unit the more successful, of course, will be the result.

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Literature, letters in sealed envelopes, and personal appeals should be made to each of these doubtful voters.

One member of the Campaign Committee should be placed in charge of the organization of these units, with nothing else to do. He, in turn, should place one man in charge of each unit. The duty of this man should be to keep in touch not only with the State Executive Committee of his particular unit, but also with each one of the doubtful voters in that unit.

The State Executive Committee should cooperate by giving to the man in charge of the unit the names of precinct chairmen, and also the names of influential citizens of Democratic persuasion in each precinct, and give information as to what things that community has a special interest in.

The influential men in these units that favor the President's policies should be invited to the National Headquarters and should be seen by the Chairman in person, by the member of the committee in charge of organization, and by the man in charge of the particular unit from which the visitor comes. The subtle flattery which an invitation of this kind carries will win the best endeavors from those to whom it is extended. In addition, it gives the manager in charge of organization and the man in charge of the unit a personal touch with the situation that he cannot get otherwise.

If the campaign is organized in this way, it will not be difficult at any time after the first of September to know just where we stand.

The man in charge of these units should ask of the local Democrats in charge, what argument we are using appeals most to the voters of his community. This enables us to soft pedal in some directions and push harder in others.

Towards the end of the campaign, the best Democratic workers in each precinct, of each unit, should be given charge of certain voters to see that they cast their votes on election day. If this is not done, a valuable percentage of the vote will be lost because of lack of interest or from a desire to do something else.

The literature of the campaign should be considered as a whole. Certain issues should be decided upon as being the ones upon which the campaign is to be fought. When these issues have been determined, the treatment of each issue should be likewise determined, and the best writers obtainable should be given the task of preparing articles, letters, or speeches upon the particular subject. These should be short, eloquent, and convincing.

Dead-beats and political hacks should not be employed by the Committee at the instance of politicians from various States, particularly those States that are unalterably Democratic or Republican. Almost every campaign organization is filled with such men. They come recommended by United States Senators, Congressmen, Governors, and leading editors of their respective localities, and are a clog to the organization.

I would suggest holding as few committee meetings as possible without

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giving offence. In lieu of this, I would consult members of the organization individually. In this way, each one consulted would feel that the campaign manager and himself were running the campaign. General meetings promote friction and take a lot of time.

Instead of having members of the organization coming in at will to discuss matters, I would fix a time to see each. Some of them should be seen each day, others twice a week, and still others once a week. They should be invited to make notes of the things to be discussed and to save the discussion of them until the time allotted to them. An infinite amount of time and trouble will be saved if this plan is adopted.

I would suggest that at the beginning the Chairman should ask the cooperation of everybody in avoiding personalities and friction of any kind, within the organization, and I would state that all would have a square deal and when differences arose they should be discussed openly and with good feeling.

The Speakers' Bureau should be informed that all speeches to be made must be based upon the issues as outlined by the Campaign Committee and as indicated in the campaign literature.

Coördination between the national and State campaigns should be brought about, so that there may be no friction or misunderstandings.

CHAPTER XII

WILSON REELECTED

At daybreak the returns began to come in from the Far West. . . .
Extract from Diary of Colonel House, November 9, 1916

I

DURING the summer, while the plan of campaign was in process of development, Colonel House remained in his retreat in the woods, never losing touch, however, with McCormick and his lieutenants as they built up the organization, determined which regions demanded especial attention and sent out their campaign literature and speakers. Upon occasion they took the long trip to Sunapee for consultation on larger problems of policy.

To Wilson House sent frequent suggestions for topics that he might take up in his speeches, which the President developed with skill and vigor. Wilson left the matter of campaign strategy to McCormick and never interfered with details. He was thus an ideal candidate on the negative side, while positively he delivered a series of campaign addresses which did much to win the Progressives. He agreed with House that the Democrats must emphasize liberal principles and exploit the obvious unwillingness of the Republican candidate to commit himself upon any of the major issues.

Colonel House to the President

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
August 3, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

In your speech of acceptance, I have been wondering whether or not it would not be well to speak almost wholly on foreign affairs.

There is much more involved in this election than domestic

issues, and much more involved in the world situation than our people realize. Democracy hangs in the balance, and the result of our election may determine its fate not only here but throughout the world.

We find the reactionary forces dominant in Germany and trying for dominion in the other belligerent countries. We find, too, that the same principles are involved in the Mexican upheaval.

You could make a speech along these lines that would rally the liberals of the world and cause them to look to you as their champion.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
August 3, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

What would you think of answering Hughes' speeches as he goes along, so that the misinformation he conveys may not become fixed in the minds of anybody?

You could call in the reporters, as you formerly did, and tell them that your duties prevent you from speaking, but at this critical juncture in the affairs of the United States and the world you do not feel that it is right to let misinformation and unjust charges against America go unchallenged. . . .

Could you not say that Mr. Justice Hughes' seclusion on the Supreme Court has left him with but little information as to current events, otherwise, you were sure, he would not willingly make some of the statements that he has made in his speech of acceptance?

He criticizes you for upsetting our diplomatic corps in general, and that of South America in particular. The facts are that you retained all the Ambassadors in South America excepting in Argentina, where the incumbent did not desire reappointment.

Why not tell the country the truth about Herrick? ¹ He was retained for more than a year beyond his term, although he wished to be relieved. Mr. Hughes evidently does not know that Mr. Sharp was appointed, confirmed, and in Paris before the war began. You have letters, I think, from Herrick, thanking you for your extreme courtesy to him.

Mr. Hughes seems not to know that the Rural Credits Bill has become a law. Some one should inform him. Would it be out of place for you to do so?

He defends Huerta. Could you not say that he was well within his rights in doing so? (Is he correct in his statement that England, France, Germany, Russia, Spain, and Japan had recognized Huerta?)

He criticizes the disposition of the troops sent to Mexico. Could you not say that you were guided in this by our army officers in command, and ask him would he, under similar circumstances, disregard the advice of the General Staff and use his own military judgment?

He also criticizes ordering the militia to the Mexican Border. Here, again, you acted upon the advice of the General Staff. Would he have acted upon his own initiative?

In speaking of Mexico he says, 'To a stable government appropriately discharging its international duties we should give ungrudging support.' Is there any citizen of the United States that would not? An anxious American public would like to know how he would suggest getting such a government.

In regard to the protection of American property on the high seas, he says you have been 'too content with leisurely discussion. . . . It is entirely clear that we failed to use the resources at our command to prevent injurious action and that we suffered in consequence.' What would he do were he

¹ Ambassador to France.

President? Would he have declared war, or would he have negotiated as Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln did under similar circumstances?

The platform of the Progressive Party four years ago contained many suggestions of value, which the Democratic Party did not hesitate to use for the benefit of the country. Careful scrutiny of the Republican platform adopted at Chicago in June fails to disclose anything of value other than the things the Democrats are already writing into law.

He should be complimented, I think, because of his endorsement of your proposal for permanent peace, made at Washington May 27. He should be congratulated upon accepting your idea of the mobilization of our industrial resources; upon your idea of putting our transportation system upon a firmer basis. And last, but above all, upon your idea of making America first. . . .

What laws enacted under your Administration is Mr. Hughes in favor of repealing or amending? Would it be the Federal Reserve Act, or the Rural Credits Act? Would he be opposed to the forming of the Trades Commission, or to the Panama Tolls Bill, or to the amending of the Clayton Bill making labor no longer a commodity?

Will he not indicate what constructive legislation he will advocate should he become President? These are fateful hours, and one who aspires to the Presidency of this great Republic should offer something better than hindsight criticism.

If any one else should say these things, the papers would not carry them. You can get the entire American people for an audience, and no one else can. The Democratic papers will attack Hughes with intelligence and vigor, but these attacks will be read almost wholly by Democrats, while what you say will be read by Republicans and Progressives as well.

Anyway, I wanted to give you my opinion of the weak points in the speech, to use or not as you think best.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

II

It is obvious that Colonel House felt that chances of Democratic success were greatly enhanced by the campaign methods of the Republican Committee and candidate. On August 19, 1916, he wrote to Plunkett that the campaign was going steadily in favor of the President. 'Mr. Hughes has greatly disappointed his followers. It seems incredible that the American people will choose him unless he gives them something more than platitudes, which he seems to think are issues.' The Republicans from the beginning made the mistake of resting their case upon Wilson's unpopularity in the East, and evidently planned to avoid the declaration of any decisive policy. Previous to their convention, House wrote to the President: 'I had an advance copy of Senator Harding's keynote speech and thought to send it to you, but it was so tame that I decided it was not worth while.'

As the campaign advanced, Hughes' manner indicated either a lack of courage or else very definite orders from his campaign managers to offend no one. 'He makes a fine solemn appearance,' wrote a critic of the campaign with some rudeness, 'but the Democratic papers should immediately call on him to unmask physically and intellectually, shave his beard and expose his thoughts and his face.' The Democratic papers responded, at least with a demand for intellectual unmasking; but the Republican candidate confined his speeches to criticism of Wilson and refused to say definitely what he himself would have done or would do.

By a skilful and courageous campaign Hughes might have won the Progressives. 'When Mr. Hughes left the Supreme Court,' writes William Allen White, then an enthusiastic

Progressive, 'the West sincerely believed that a new national leader was coming. . . . The West expected courage and candor. . . . They were listening for a big man to speak important things. . . . Instead of feeding the fire which should amalgamate the parties, Mr. Hughes began playing the hose of his criticism upon the Progressive ardor which President Wilson had been able to kindle in a Democratic Congress. The Progressives . . . found nothing in the Hughes speeches in which to set their teeth. He talked tariff like Mark Hanna; he talked of industrial affairs in the McKinley tongue. . . . To get the loyalty of the Progressives, Mr. Hughes had to convince them. He took them for granted and failed. . . . Naturally they turned to Wilson. He at least had Progressive achievement; not what they had hoped for, but something upon which to build.'¹

'The Republicans [wrote House on October 16] have made a series of blunders, the principal one being to advise Hughes not to commit himself upon pending issues, but to become what might be termed the national scold. The people are not interested these critical days as to past mistakes. What they want is to be shown the road they are to travel in the future. Hughes declines to do this, believing, if he does not offend anywhere, the regular Republican vote of the country is large enough to elect him.'

An excellent example of the effect of the campaign upon Progressives was to be seen in New Hampshire, where a strong Progressive movement had been organized by John Bass and Winston Churchill. Among the leaders was George Rublee, prominent in his advocacy of liberal legislation in Congress, who, although not a Democrat, had been appointed by Wilson to the Federal Trades Commission. The

¹ William Allen White, *Woodrow Wilson* (Houghton Mifflin Company), p. 316.

appointment pleased Progressives the country over and ultimately gave New Hampshire's electoral votes to Wilson, the more surely in that the stand-pat Republicans in the Senate were bitterly opposed to it. 'The surprise of the day after the election,' wrote William Allen White in *Collier's*, 'came from New Hampshire. Yet it was the logical result of the reaction of the Republican Party and Mr. Wilson on the local situation.'

'George Rublee, of the Federal Trades Commission [recorded House, on October 27], called to ask advice as to whether he should vote for the President or Mr. Hughes. He wishes to vote for the President, because he says Hughes has converted him into a Wilson man, but he thinks it would be awkward for the President in the event he reappointed him as a Republican. Rublee votes in New Hampshire, so I advised him to stifle his conscience and vote for Hughes.'

Republican leaders were responsible for what later appeared to be expensive and quite unnecessary errors in arranging for far-flung stumping tours in behalf of Hughes, particularly a 'Golden Special' to the West, which brought many votes to Wilson. They made the mistake first of sending Hughes to California and then of refusing to cooperate with the followers of Hiram Johnson, as a result of which the Progressives decided to cast their votes against Hughes and ultimately brought the State into the Wilson column. It was the crux of the electoral contest. After the election, House discussed with Mr. X, a member of the Republican Campaign Committee, the strategy of Republican leaders.

'I expressed regret [recorded House] that the Democratic Committee's finances were in such condition that we could not offer to pay for certain undertakings of the Republicans during the campaign. I thought we were in honor bound,

for instance, to pay for the "Golden Special" which they sent to the West, and I thought it only fair we should pay for Mr. Hughes' trip to California.

'X admitted our liability for both of these ventures, and said there were other items which might properly be added to the list. He thought the entire campaign was wretchedly managed. . . . He said Hughes was stubborn and would not take advice from those like Murray Crane, who were most capable of giving it. I insisted that I must refuse to listen to criticism of Willcox or Hughes, because gratitude forbade it.'

And later House wrote the President, regarding the request of a prominent Republican for an interview with Wilson: 'I hope it will be possible for you to give him a few minutes of your time, for we had no more valuable aid in the campaign than he gave . . . [while serving on] the Republican Committee.'

Mistakes of the Republicans were intensified by the marked divergency apparent between the attitude of the candidate and that of Progressive leaders, not merely on domestic questions, but in the matter of foreign affairs. Roosevelt left no one in doubt of his attitude toward Germany and the Allies, and insisted that if he had been President he would have taken forcible measures against Berlin. Hughes was ordered to avoid the issue; when he was heckled on what he would have done after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, a wit reported, 'he cleared his throat.' The Democrats did all they could to call attention to his indecision and evasions.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, October 5, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I am told by newspapermen that Hughes is becoming more irritable and that it is caused largely by Roosevelt's

speeches. Would it not be well to take some of Roosevelt's most violent utterances and assume that he is voicing Hughes? This would increase the schism. . . .

If this is pushed, it will bring Hughes to a point where he will either have to accept what T. R. is saying about foreign affairs or he will have to disavow it. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House was evidently not disturbed by the German-American attacks on the President. On October 3, at the end of a conference with Bernstorff on foreign problems, he noted:

'We touched upon the very delicate question of the election. He asked how things were going with us. I told him well, and that it would not surprise me if the President were overwhelmingly reëlected. He laughed and said it was utterly impossible to influence in any way the rabid German-American vote; that they were more pro-German than the Germans themselves. He said to argue with them was futile; they had conceived the idea that the President had branded them as disloyal, and they would take their revenge by voting for Hughes. Bernstorff said many traps were laid for him to express himself about the election, but he never mentioned the subject to any human being excepting to me. I replied that nearly all the Germans were Republicans anyway, and their vote against the President gave us no concern.'

III

But while House believed that the capture of many Progressive voters by Wilson and that the close organization of the Democrats combined with Republican errors would give the President his reëlection, he knew that the contest would

be close. The strategy of the campaign was based upon the uselessness of attempting to win the Northeast. Except for Ohio and Maryland, which he regarded as sure, and New York, New Hampshire, and Indiana, which were doubtful, it seemed probable that Wilson would lose everything east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio. No Democratic candidate with the exception of Madison and Buchanan had ever won a presidential election without New York, and the Democrats at National Headquarters became anxious. In an election that was bound to be close, the forty-five electoral votes of New York were likely to be decisive. Much depended upon Tammany.

'Vance McCormick came to lunch [wrote House on September 30], and later Morgenthau and Tom Chadbourne joined us, and we discussed different phases of the campaign. We are distrustful of Tammany, and it is a question whether to read the riot act now or wait a little longer to see whether they intend to "throw us." . . .'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, September 30, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Roper tells me that to-day we stand to win by five per cent in Indiana. He has sent out new slips in order to get the results of the eight-hour law. These will not be in and tabulated until the end of next week. He does not know whether it will increase or lessen the percentage.¹

Our main trouble now, as it has always been, is here in New York. McCormick and I have just had a long sitting on that situation.

If Tammany plays fair, we will carry this State; otherwise we will lose it, as things stand to-day. Every one of our friends has a different opinion as to whether they will work

¹ Indiana was ultimately lost to the Republicans by one per cent.

with us or not, and all of these opinions, I think, are valueless. We are feeling our way cautiously for the present, hoping that they may clear themselves soon of all suspicion.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. Your telegraph to O'Leary is the best thing so far in the campaign, and will do more good than you can realize.¹

NEW YORK, *October 23, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you another report, which Roper and I have just gone over.

You will notice how close the margin is in all the States we hope to win. You will also notice how much stronger the drift has been within thirty days. . . .

I am glad to tell you that Tammany seems to be getting in full swing. I have little doubt now that they will do their utmost to give as large a majority here as is possible.

McCabe of Albany, with whom I am in constant touch, tells me that the drift to you in his county is becoming more and more pronounced. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, *October 27, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I believe it is exceedingly important for you to give Tuesday and Wednesday to the up-State.

It is just this: The result may be against us if we lose New York, and we can carry New York if the interest of the voters continues to be aroused. Your staying in the State for these

¹ An anti-British agitator, Jeremiah O'Leary, had sent a letter to Wilson which both sides admitted might be termed offensive. The President had replied: 'I would feel deeply mortified to have you or anybody like you vote for me. Since you have access to many disloyal Americans and I have not, I will ask you to convey this message to them.'

two days and coming to the city on Thursday will probably set the sentiment for you. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson's visit to New York City, to which House referred, developed the most spectacular rally of the campaign, although it proved to be without influence upon the election. It was planned as a method of arousing an enthusiasm for the President which was badly needed, in view of the apparently lukewarm efforts of the Tammany magnates. Wilson, who was irritated by the hostility of the metropolis, came unwillingly, but in public acted his part graciously.

'Harris, of the State Committee [recorded House on October 11], and Senator Wagoner called to ask if I would not arrange to have the Tammany Hall rally, at Madison Square Garden on November 2, turned into a meeting at which the President would consent to speak. I advised that the entire programme be revamped and changed from a political meeting to a non-partisan welcome to the President by New York, in order to give the people an opportunity to show their gratitude. . . .

'*November 1, 1916*: Final touches were given this afternoon to the rally at Madison Square Garden. I hope everything will work out as planned, though there is danger it will not — for much must depend upon luck, as matters are supposed to happen spontaneously which are really prepared far in advance. For instance, the head of the parade must be down at Thirty-Fourth Street and Fifth Avenue at 8.30. At twenty minutes of nine, the President must come out of the Waldorf Hotel and start for the Garden, stopping at Thirty-Fourth Street and Madison Avenue for ten minutes to receive the cheers of the crowd and review the parade for that length of time. Glynn is to commence his speech at the

Garden at fifteen minutes of nine, so as to count on five minutes of applause. The speech is to take ten minutes to deliver and the President must walk on the speakers' platform just as it ends, in order to receive continuous applause of Heaven knows how many minutes. The idea is to have the applause unbroken after Glynn's speech.¹ . . .

'November 2, 1916: Everything to-day has worked according to schedule so far. The President arrived promptly at nine o'clock. McCormick and I met him and went with him to the *Mayflower*, which is anchored in East River. We talked to him for an hour and a half, and it was the most acrimonious debate I have had with him for a long while. He did not like the New York programme, he did not like the Republican expenditure of money to defeat him, as evidenced by the full-page advertisements in the morning papers. The Republicans had sixteen columns to our one and a half. He thought New York "rotten to the core," and should be wiped off the map.

'I defended Democratic newspapers for taking Republican advertisements, and so did McCormick. I thought it was much more to our advantage to be able to get into the Republican press in that way than not to be able to get in at all. I also defended New York by telling him he had as many friends here as in any other part of the Union, even if they were not among the moneyed class. He thought both McCormick and I had "New Yorkitis," and that the campaign should be run from elsewhere. He was absolutely certain of the election without New York.

'The President thought organization amounted to nothing, and that the people determined such matters themselves. If he had been in politics as long as I have, and knew it from the point of a worker rather than as a candidate, he would

¹ The programme was maintained perfectly, and the President appeared on the platform at the moment Governor Glynn finished his speech.

understand how easy it is to change the vote of a State in one way or another. To hear him talk, you would think the man in the street understood the theory and philosophy of government as he does and was actuated by the same motives.

'To-night I went to the Garden to see how large the crowd was and whether we could count upon the crush expected. I then walked up the Avenue to Thirty-Fourth Street, to see whether the arrangements there came off as scheduled. I was gratified to find there was as much precision as could be expected in the circumstances. After the President had passed down the Avenue, I returned to the Garden to find it packed to the doors and the streets beyond. I merely looked in to hear the cheering, and to find that everything was going as planned, and then left for home. All reports say it is the biggest demonstration of the kind ever given a President or a candidate for President in the City of New York.'

IV

The manufactured 'spontaneity' of the rally, however, did not necessarily mean votes, and House evidently feared that New York could not be counted upon. As it finally developed, Hughes carried the State.¹ The margin of victory without New York would be slim, and the Colonel faced the situation frankly. He made out and gave the President, on November 2, a list of the States which he regarded as absolutely certain. It included the solid South, various border States, and some that were scattered.² The result found it to be absolutely correct as far as it went, assuring Wilson of 230 electoral votes. Since 266 were necessary to an election, 36 must be found in the doubtful States.

'It is a queer list for a Democrat to make [wrote House], with any expectation of winning. Never in the history of the United States, so far as I know, has a President been

¹ By about seven per cent.

² Appendix to chapter.

elected by either party without Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Indiana, or Illinois. Some of these States have always been necessary, but in my list none of them are to be found. Then, too, the list I made was widely scattered and seemingly without purpose. Of course, it was based upon absolute figures.'

House believed that the thirty-six other electoral votes which Wilson needed, would be forthcoming, but if New York and Indiana were both lost, the danger of defeat was real. Following his habit of looking ahead at an unpleasant possibility, he pondered the situation that would arise. The foreign crisis was acute. If Hughes were elected, there would be a period of sixteen weeks, from November to March, during which Wilson, although repudiated by the nation, would still be in power. Common sense and prudence demanded that in such a case the Republicans should assume power and responsibility at once. House bethought himself of the constitutional provision that in case the offices of President and Vice-President became vacant, the Secretary of State should succeed as President. If, following his election, Hughes were made Secretary of State, the path to the Presidency could be immediately opened to him by the resignations of the President and Vice-President.

'It occurred to me yesterday [House wrote on October 19] to suggest to the President, in the event of his defeat, to ask both Marshall and Lansing to resign, and then appoint Hughes Secretary of State. He should then resign himself, making Hughes President of the United States. Times are too critical to have an interim of four months between the election and inauguration of the next President. If the submarine warfare should be reopened, the President would not wish to take any action which might embarrass the incoming Administration. It would be the brave, it would be the

A STARTLING SUGGESTION TO WILSON 379

patriotic and the proper procedure to allow Hughes to assume the reins of government at once.

'The defect in our government shows itself here, and its negative quality (as I pointed out in "Philip Dru") is a source of weakness at such times.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *October 20, 1916*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... If Hughes is elected — which God forbid — what do you think of asking both Lansing and Marshall to resign, appoint Hughes Secretary of State, and then resign yourself? This would be a patriotic thing to do. . . .

Such a procedure would save the situation from danger and embarrassment. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*October 20, 1916*: Gregory took dinner with me and we went to the theatre afterward. I told him of my suggestion to the President. . . . Gregory was startled and was silent for full five minutes. He then gave the plan his unqualified approval. . . .

'*October 27, 1916*: I told Polk of my suggestion to the President. . . . He seemed as deeply impressed as Gregory, and thought it would have a good effect upon the country if it were known in advance of the election that he would resign if defeated. I told him I could not bring myself to advise injecting such a startling issue into the campaign when everything was going well with us. . . .

'*November 3, 1916*: I spoke to Lansing of my suggestion to the President about resigning in the event Hughes is elected, permitting Hughes to become President at once. Lansing was somewhat staggered at first, but recovered himself and finally expressed approval. He said he had worried con-

siderably over the thought of the interim between November 7 and March 4 in the event of the President's defeat, but the way would be immediately cleared if the President would do as I advised.

'I thought, to carry the plan out as I had in mind, it would be necessary for Hughes to reappoint him, Lansing, Secretary of State, and then take his time as to removals and the formation of a new Cabinet. . . .'

Wilson did not reply at the time to House's suggestion, but after the election the Colonel returned to the subject.

'*November 19, 1916:* I asked him the direct question whether he had made up his mind before the election to follow my suggestion about resigning. He said he had absolutely decided to do so, and that it was in line with his lifetime views upon the subject, and that he had taken the precaution to write Lansing before the election in order to put himself on record so that he could not be charged with doing something hastily from pique. I asked how soon he would have resigned, and he replied, "Immediately." By "immediately" he meant just as soon as the result of the election was definitely known.

'It seems that during the uncertain hours of Tuesday night, November 7, both the President and Mrs. Wilson were cheered, as I was, by the thought of the dramatic dénouement we had in mind in the event of defeat.'

At no time, however, was House really discouraged at the prospect, nor was he disturbed by the fact that betting odds in New York favored Hughes. 'We have had a hard fight,' he wrote Plunkett later, 'but I never lost confidence at any time. We were well organized and knew what to expect.' Wilson remained philosophical during the final trying moments of the contest.

'The President [wrote House] has left everything in our hands, and has not . . . written a suggestion or given a word of advice, although his fortunes are so wholly at stake. He seems to have been confident that every means was being taken to protect his interests, and he has allowed it to rest at that. Several times he has had the White House Offices telephone me, to ask how things were going and what I thought of the outcome.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, November 4, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have taken a final survey of the field, and I cannot reach any other conclusion but that the fight is won. The *Herald* poll to-morrow will indicate your election, but their distribution of votes does not agree with ours. In my opinion, our figures are infinitely more accurate. It is the first time we have ever known in advance, with any degree of certainty, the final result.

I cannot tell you how satisfactory the campaign has been from start to finish. From McCormick down to the most insignificant worker, there has been unity of purpose without bickering or fault-finding of any sort whatsoever.

Woolley, Roper, Wallace, and some of the others have done really brilliant work, and Gordon tells me that the early hours of the morning have often found them still at it.

I have perfect confidence in the result.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

v

No athletic contest ever provided such thrills of anxiety and excitement as the election returns of November 7. By evening it became apparent that Hughes had carried the Eastern States with large majorities, so large that the *Times*

searchlight early indicated Republican victory. Even the newspapers that had supported Wilson most strongly conceded the election of Hughes on the morning of November 8, to the confusion of editorial writers who a few hours later were compelled to swallow their early morning words. For, as reports from the West trickled in, doubts arose. By noon it was clear that Wilson was making inroads upon normally Republican States. A note from the editor of *Life* suggests the atmosphere of suspense.

Mr. E. S. Martin to Colonel House

November 8, 1916, Noon

Mr. Martin is holding up the funeral wreath he ordered for Colonel House, till he knows the result of the current proceedings to reanimate the corpse.

Meanwhile he begs Colonel House not to feel neglected.

One after the other, the Western States upon which the Democrats had centered their efforts fell into the Wilson column, and by the morning of November 9, it was clear that the extra thirty-six electoral votes House had hoped for would in all probability be secured. Minnesota and California were doubtful. In both States voting was close; if Wilson won either, the victory would be his. On the 11th, returns from California definitely showed a small Wilson plurality. He had received 277 electoral votes as against 254 for Hughes.

'Election day [recorded Colonel House on November 9] was fairly quiet until about four o'clock in the afternoon, when the first news began to come in. . . . The afternoon returns were fairly favorable to the President, since most of them came from Kansas, strangely enough, where they seem to count the votes as fast as they are registered. Then came the deluge. By seven o'clock it was certain New York had

gone heavily against us. Later Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana seemed lost. At one time Ohio was said to be threatened.

'The campaign managers had prepared an elaborate banquet at the Biltmore Hotel, to which I was invited, but to which I declined to go. While I did not expect defeat, I did not wish to be at such a gathering without knowing whether the President was successful. McAdoo, Lansing, Lane, McCormick, etc., etc., all attended, and they tell me there was never such a morgue-like entertainment in the annals of time. . . .

'The United Press, the Associated Press, and the different newspaper offices were in constant touch with me, as were distant cities throughout the country. When things were at their worst, Gregory, who was with me for the evening, thought it well to look into the question of the President's resignation. Gregory was not certain as to some points of law, and it seemed to him, as indeed it was beginning to seem to me, that the President's defeat was imminent; so we went to the Bar Association to look up the Federal statutes on the subject. We found it would be necessary for the President to call the Senate in session, so that Hughes might be confirmed as Secretary of State, before he would be eligible to the Presidency. Then we looked up the question as to how much notice must be given the Senate before the date of assembly was named.

'Gregory left me and went to his hotel under the firm impression we were defeated.

'I had not given up the ship, for the reason that the vote I had given the President was being confirmed State by State. When he was here Thursday, I told him that in my opinion he would carry the States, a list of which is appended,¹ which would leave him thirty-six votes short of an absolute majority. . . .

¹ See Appendix to chapter.

'I expected, indeed, that we would carry many States we lost, but I at no time considered them certain and we lost no State I had placed in the certainties. I regard this with some degree of pride. The President was skeptical regarding the value of organization. I wonder if he is now, for if it had not been for organization we could not have forecast the result, and we could not have carried the States we did, since we would probably have scattered our strength and lost everything.

'It seemed certain, if we were to win, that it must be by the votes in the Far West, and these returns would not be in before the early morning. I therefore went to bed by eleven o'clock and left Gordon and Janet in the study to receive returns, which they did until three o'clock in the morning. By five o'clock, while still in bed, but with the telephone at my bedside, I again got into the game. At daybreak the returns began to come in from the Far West favorable to us, and it became evident that the election was to be a close one. I immediately got in touch with Headquarters, where a force had been on duty all night, and advised them to send telegrams to the county chairmen of every doubtful State, urging them to be vigilant and to pay no attention to press reports that Hughes was elected. I called up the *World* and other newspapers, as well as the United Press, and urged them to undo, as far as possible, the harm done by the morning press in conceding everything to Hughes. I was afraid if this was not done, everything would go by default, and the States which we carried in the West by close margins would be neglected and we might be robbed of victory.

'I visited Headquarters, to find a motley mob. . . . The all-night vigil and the certainty of defeat, followed by hope, had been too much for them. There was not an old stager around excepting Hugh Wallace, who was more composed.

'I asked the Attorney-General to remain over until tonight, and I have been in constant consultation with him

regarding measures to protect the ballot boxes in States where the votes were still being counted and which were in doubt.

'I believe I can truthfully say that I have not worried a moment. If I had, I could not have stood the strain. It was not that I was altogether certain of the result, but I never permit myself to worry about matters over which I have no control.

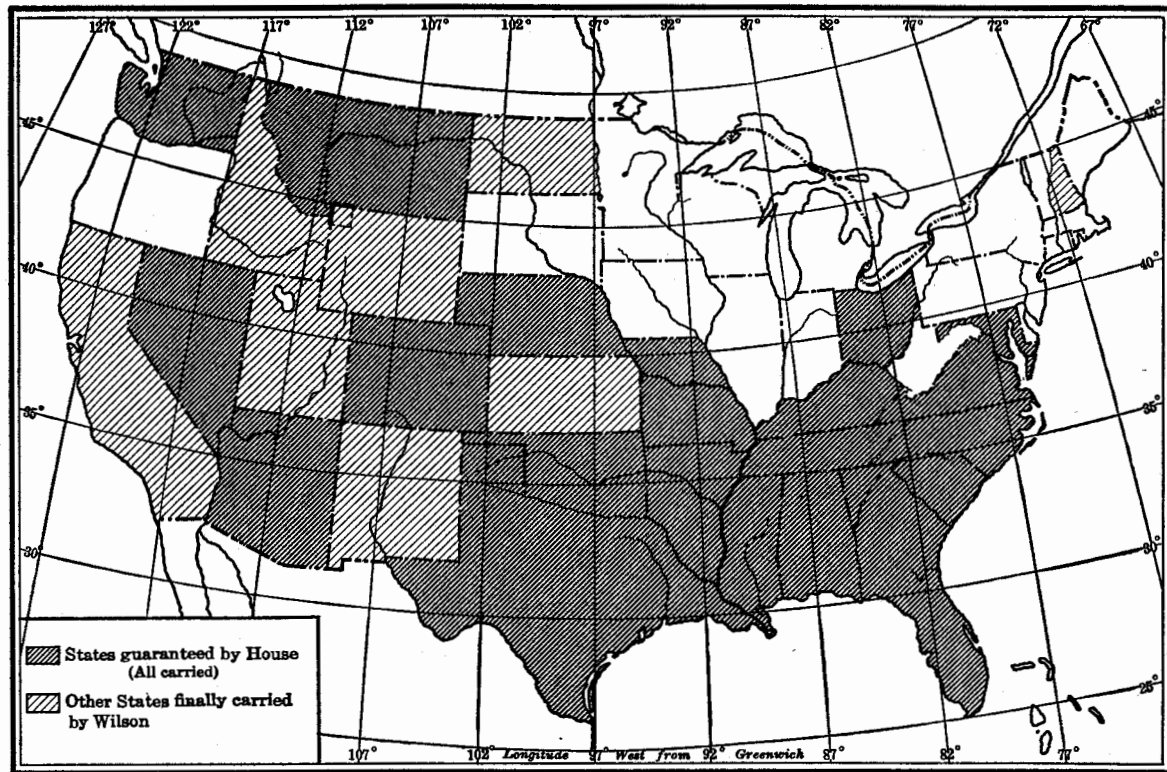
'*November 12, 1916: Friday, Saturday, and to-day have been taken up largely by party leaders coming to tell me how they did it. . . . They are a good lot, the best I have ever known in a political campaign — clean, able, and intelligent, and they deserve much credit. The desire to talk, however, seems to be a passion which some people make a vice. . . .*

Thus was Wilson granted four years more of power, the first Democratic President to succeed himself since Andrew Jackson. Thus was he assured a position of world influence that might be utilized to forward the principles of a new organization of nations which, since the beginning of 1916, had come to be his purpose. He had promised the country to keep out of war if it was consistent with American honor and safety; he had also warned the country that it might prove impossible to remain at peace. Most definitely he had stated that the time had come for America to play an active rôle in establishing and maintaining the peace of the world. What these declarations might portend, the events of the succeeding weeks soon made plain.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF 'CERTAIN' WILSON STATES GIVEN WILSON BY HOUSE, No- vember 2, 1916:	OTHER STATES FINALLY CARRIED BY WILSON:
Alabama	12
Arkansas	9
Arizona	3
Colorado	6
Florida	6
Georgia	14
Kentucky	13
Louisiana	10
Maryland	8
Mississippi	10
Missouri	18
Ohio	24
North Carolina	12
Oklahoma	10
South Carolina	9
Tennessee	12
Texas	20
Virginia	12
Washington	7
Montana	4
Nebraska	8
Nevada	3
	230
Extra votes needed for election	36
Necessary total	266
California	13
Idaho	4
Kansas	10
New Hampshire	4
New Mexico	3
North Dakota	5
Utah	4
West Virginia	1
(Electors split)	
Wyoming	3
	47
House's 'Certain' States	230
Wilson's total	277



PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1916

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CHAPTER XIII

FUTILE PEACE PROPOSITIONS

We utterly distrust the German Government's good faith.

Lord Bryce to House, December 27, 1916

I

EVEN as the final election reports trickled in from California, bearing the news of the victory achieved by so narrow a margin, the thoughts of President Wilson turned once more to the European situation. Signs were multiplying that the lull in relations with Germany, inaugurated by the *Sussex* pledge, could not long continue. Despatches from the American Embassy in Berlin emphasized the pressure brought to bear upon the German Government to disregard this pledge and resume the ruthless submarine campaign. On October 17, Joseph Grew, American Chargé in the absence of Mr. Gerard, wrote to House: 'Our Government should therefore be fully prepared for an eventual resumption of the indiscriminate submarine warfare against commerce in violation of the rights of neutrals on the high seas.' As we have seen, House received from Bernstorff the direct intimation that, unless Wilson made some move for peace, Germany would take what measures seemed best calculated to break the Allied resistance.

On October 14, the Colonel wrote to Grey:

'There is a strong belief in Germany, in army and navy circles as well as among the people generally that, if they pursue an unbridled submarine warfare, England could be isolated. The German Government themselves, as now constituted, are against this policy, but it is doubtful whether they will be able much longer to stem the tide.'

The correspondence of Count Bernstorff with Berlin, published since the war, proves the correctness of House's information. The military chiefs insisted that Germany was beginning to feel the effects of the blockade and could not stand the conditions of deadlock indefinitely. The war must be stopped. If Wilson could stop it by negotiation, as the Chancellor and Bernstorff hoped, well and good. If the Entente, however, would not agree to negotiation upon the basis of German terms, then England must be isolated by the unrestricted use of the submarine and the Entente Powers compelled to yield. The German army and navy leaders were not greatly impressed by Bernstorff's warning that such a step would result in American intervention on the side of France and Great Britain. They promised that, long before America could render effective aid, the submarine would have starved the British out.

Thus, all through the election campaign, Wilson faced the danger of a new submarine crisis which might bring war at any moment. In view of the delicacy of the situation, there was no little irony in the Democratic posters: 'He has kept us out of war.' Some intimation of the danger is to be found in Wilson's public speeches, but both publicly and privately he insisted that he would not permit war to come until he had exhausted every pacific expedient consistent with national honor.

The President and Colonel House did not agree as to the method by which the United States should meet the danger. Wilson believed that the simplest and most effective step was a frank demand by the American Government that the war must stop, in deference to the necessities and welfare of mankind. He was confident that such a demand, backed by the moral influence of the United States, would lead to negotiations. He saw no other means by which the entrance of the United States into the struggle could be averted, and he seems to have been willing at this time to approve a stale-

mate. The refusal of his offer of help, made the preceding spring, apparently convinced him ~~that~~ the war aims of the Allies were as selfish as those of Germany.

House opposed any attempt at mediation made without Allied approval.¹ He feared lest it give Germany a chance to insist that she was ready for peace, but that the Allies were intent upon conquest, and thus perhaps furnish some justification for resuming the submarine warfare on the plea of self-defence. Since the Allies had refused the American offer of help, there was nothing to be done, for any offer of mediation would be offensive to them and would merely help Germany to manœuvre into a favorable diplomatic position. He remained always distrustful of German peace offers, for he was convinced that the German leaders had not renounced their hope of dominating the continent.²

'October 20, 1916: Ambassador Gerard called [recorded Colonel House], and I showed him the memorandum sent me by Count von Bernstorff. . . . I am of the opinion that Bernstorff and the German Government "played us" in order to get Gerard home. It will be remembered that Bernstorff told me at Sunapee his Government wanted to convey to us unofficially their belief that it would be of benefit to both countries if he were brought home for a while

¹ 'I was trying,' he wrote on April 6, 1925, to the author, 'as you have noted, to keep Wilson from the threat of intervention without first having the Allies' consent.' House's reason was that, in view of our military unpreparedness, mediation without the consent of one side or the other could not succeed; it would have been possible to secure German consent in the autumn of 1916, but only to terms that meant a German victory. Hence his conclusion that, to mediate in the direction of a just peace, the consent of the Allies would be essential. If we had been adequately prepared, intervention might have been possible. President Wilson, House continued, 'did not seem to see the difference between our having a great military establishment and no preparation at all. Therefore . . . I believe our big mistake was that we were not in a position to intervene in spite of Allied or German protests.'

² A suspicion justified by the peace terms formulated by Germany at the end of the year.

on vacation. As a matter of fact, they wished him here so as to press peace moves.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, November 6, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... At spare moments I have kept in close touch with the European situation, and I find indisputable evidence that Germany is not yet ready to agree to peace terms that this country could recommend to the Allies. They sneer at such proposals as a league to enforce peace and believe, as they have believed heretofore, that large military armaments are necessary to enforce peace. ...

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson, however, did not make the same distinction as House, between Germany and the Allies; and his fear of drifting into war with Germany was quickened by the sinking of the *Marina* on October 28 under doubtful conditions, which seemed to indicate that the *Sussex* pledge had already been disregarded. The moment his reelection was assured, he summoned House to Washington to discuss his plan of mediation.

'November 14, 1916: I left New York this morning [wrote Colonel House], arriving at the White House at six o'clock. The President immediately came to my room and we had a long conference. We went at once into the matter about which he called me to Washington.

'The President desires to write a note to the belligerents, demanding that the war cease, and he desired my opinion. His argument is that, unless we do this now, we must inevitably drift into war with Germany upon the submarine issue. He believes Germany has already violated her promise

of May 4, and that in order to maintain our position we must break off diplomatic relations. Before doing this he would like to make a move for peace, hoping there is sufficient peace sentiment in the Allied countries to make them consent.

'My reply to this was that the Allies would consider it an unfriendly act, if done at a time when they are beginning to be successful after two years of war;¹ that they will also see that his object in making the move now is to avoid a crisis with Germany on the U-boat controversy, and it would appear as if he wanted to reward Germany for breaking her promises to us and acting in total disregard of international obligations.

'He was much worried over my position and asked me to think it over at length.

'The President wondered if the matter could be furthered by my going to Europe and visiting each of the belligerent countries. We dismissed this after some discussion, because of the time it would take to do it and because of the adverse criticism which would be created in each of the Allied countries before I could make the round of capitals — knowing, as they surely would, that I had come upon a peace mission. He then suggested that I go to England and France and, upon my arrival, he would give out the message, letting me brave the British and French Governments and public. I was entirely willing to do this if it were thought best, although my feeling was that I should prefer Hades for the moment rather than those countries when such a proposal was put up to them. . . .

'We then argued over and over again the question of what was best to do, I holding that for the moment nothing was necessary and we should sit tight and await further developments, the President holding that the submarine situation

¹ A reference to the successful French counter-attacks at Verdun and the Allied advance on the Somme.

would not permit of delay and it was worth while to try mediation before breaking off with Germany. I argued again and again that we should not pull Germany's chestnuts out of the fire merely because she desired it, was unruly, and was gradually forcing us into war. . . .

'November 15, 1916: I breakfasted alone. The President was unusually late, which bespoke a bad night. I was sorry, but it could not be helped. I dislike coming to the White House as his guest and upsetting him to the extent I often do. . . .

'The President said we should never get anywhere in the discussion unless he wrote his views in concrete form, and he had made up his mind to write his message and then write a note to the belligerents; that after he had written it and made his points clear, we could go over it again and discuss it with more intelligence.

'I did not yield a point in my opinion that he would make a mistake if he finally sent it, nor did he yield in his argument that it might be effective.'

House returned to New York convinced that any attempt at mediation at this time would simply muddy the waters. His conviction was based upon his distrust of the Germans, who had come to desire negotiations either as a means of capitalizing their military success and demanding a peace of victory, or simply to find an excuse for the renewal of submarine warfare on the ground that Allied obstinacy offered full justification. With this in mind, Berlin was now anxious for Wilson's mediation and obviously intended to utilize the threat of a ruthless submarine campaign in order to hasten it. As House realized, Wilson was extremely sensitive to this threat.

'November 20, 1916: The Germans [he noted] intend to push us to the closest point in the submarine controversy, in

order to force us to intervene rather than go to war with them.

'In my opinion, the President's desire for peace is partially due to his Scotch Presbyterian conscience and not to personal fear, for I believe he has both moral and physical courage. . . .'

II

President Wilson's mind was evidently made up. On November 21, he wrote to House that he was confirmed in his impression that the moment was near, if not already at hand, for his move for peace. He said he had just completed his message to Congress and was about to sketch the draft of the peace note. He hoped to make the best haste consistent with his desire to have the paper the strongest and most convincing he had ever written.

Four days later, Wilson summoned his friend once more to Washington. He said that he had finished a first draft; he hoped he had a clear enough head for it. Events were thickening, he felt, and a definite course of action should be determined immediately.

In response, House left at once for Washington to discuss the proposed note. 'I am fearful of its effect,' he wrote in his journal; nor was his anxiety alleviated when the President read him the draft.

'November 27, 1916: After dinner we went to the study and began the discussion of the object of my visit. He read several letters and despatches from abroad which Polk had already shown me. He then read a draft of the proposed note to the belligerents urging them to state what terms they demanded as a basis of peace.

'It was a wonderfully well-written document, yet, strangely enough, he had fallen again into the same error of saying something which would have made the Allies frantic with rage. I

have called his attention to this time after time, and yet in almost every instance where he speaks of the war he offends in the same way.

‘The sentence to which I objected was: “The causes and objects of the war are obscure.” I told him the Allies thought if there was one thing clearer than another, it was this; that their quarrel with him was that he did not seem to understand their viewpoint. They hold that Germany started the war for conquest; that she broke all international obligations and laws of humanity in pursuit of it. They claim to be fighting to make such another war impossible, and so to break Prussian militarism that a permanent peace may be established.

‘I urged him to insert a clause, in lieu of the one to which I objected, which would make the Allies believe he sympathized with their viewpoint. I thought he could do it in a way to which Germany would not object and might even take as vindication of her own position.

‘I also suggested another clause, which he inserted, stating specifically he was not trying to mediate or demand peace.’

House returned to New York pleased that he had persuaded Wilson to alter the character of the note so that it no longer represented an insistent offer of mediation, but was merely a suggestion that both sides state clearly the terms upon which they were ready to discuss peace. He maintained his opinion, however, that Wilson would be merely playing into the hands of the Germans if he issued the note at a time when the Allies were determined to listen to no hint of peace.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, November 30, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have been thinking a lot of your proposed note to the belligerents, and I cannot bring myself to believe that

it should be done immediately or without further preparation.

You have before you the biggest opportunity for service that was ever given to man, and I hope you will not risk failure. Since you first suggested your plan, I have talked with everybody within my reach whose opinion I value, many of them having an intimate knowledge of the situation in the Allied countries, and there is not one that believes it could be successful at this time. . . .

I believe you have the situation in your own hands, and, if you do not act too hastily, you can bring about the desired result. If you do it now, there does not seem to me one chance in ten of success and you will probably lose your potential position for doing it later.

The Germans are the only ones that believe it can be done now, and the wish with them is father to the thought. They do not care how you come out of it, so it is done, and they reap a certain measure of profit in any event.

Before the step is finally taken, a good many things, I think, should be done. A background should be laid in both France and England, so that public opinion would listen with favor to any proposal from you. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House was certain that neither France nor Great Britain would regard an attempt at mediation in any light but that of a willingness to play Germany's hand. This conviction was intensified by a conversation with Ambassador Jusserand on December 3, in which the French Envoy spoke very freely and critically of what he regarded as Wilson's pro-Germanism. 'If I had not determined to keep my temper,' recorded House, 'I could have found grounds for saying things he would have remembered a long while.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, December 4, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I had a long and spirited conversation with Jusserand yesterday. He promised to send a cable to his Government, embodying the things we have done for France since the war began. Jusserand was inclined to be critical because we had not sent Bernstorff home and had not held Germany to strict accountability in the submarine controversy. He mentioned the *Sussex*, *Marina*, and several of the latest incidents.

I turned on him when he had finished and made him confess that, if Germany started an unrestricted submarine warfare, there was a possibility of practically isolating England. He admitted that the course you had followed was the one most favorable to the Allies. The substance of my reply was that the Allies did not seem to know what was best for them and that they had better take our guidance.

He admitted that it was probable that no material change in the western line could be made for at least a year or more, and I suggested the wisdom of accepting your offer of last spring to mediate. He seemed to concur in this, but at the last moment, upon leaving, he veered away into the high-flown foolish declaration that France would fight to the last man.

Bernstorff is the only Ambassador of the belligerent countries that seems to have any sense of proportion and who never criticizes this Government in the slightest for anything that occurs. He takes what comes philosophically and tries to make a favorable impression if possible. The others seem at times to say what they can to irritate. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

It was obvious that, as in the previous spring, France would resent any move on the part of Wilson which might

interfere with the complete defeat of Germany. Great Britain would be even less willing to consider negotiations, because of the Cabinet crisis in December which resulted in the retirement of Asquith and Grey and the assumption of control by Lloyd George. The overturn of Asquith was the result of popular protests against his supposedly lackadaisical attitude, protests which had been whipped up by the Northcliffe press.

House regretted the resignation of Grey, and he did not believe that the revamped Cabinet would prove more effective. But it was clear that the country had lost faith in Asquith, and that the new Prime Minister would be compelled to base his policy upon the 'knock-out blow' theory, which excluded all possibility of negotiations with Germany.

'I am watching with a good deal of concern [he wrote Wilson on December 3] the crisis in the British Cabinet. If the Lloyd George-Northcliffe-Carson combination succeed in overthrowing the Government and getting control, there will be no chance of peace until they run their course.

'I do not know [he recorded on December 7] that Great Britain can better herself in the way of a Cabinet, although I can understand why there is general resentment at so many failures. I believe if Asquith had driven his Cabinet with a firmer hand, matters might have been different.

'Sir Edward Grey's mistake has been that he allowed Sir Cecil Spring-Rice to remain here at the most critical time in the history of the two countries. . . . Grey failed to see that conditions demanded radical changes and that the ordinary diplomatic corps was unequal to the new situation brought about by the war.'

House continued his close relations with British leaders, despite the change in the Cabinet. Grey cabled him that

Sir Eric Drummond, his secretary, would hold the same position with Balfour, the new Foreign Secretary, and that Balfour would expect House to use the private code as necessity arose. 'If Grey had to leave,' wrote the Colonel to Wilson, 'the next best man in the Kingdom for us is Balfour. This will give Sir Horace great influence upon American affairs, since Balfour and Plunkett are the closest friends and Balfour will look largely to him for guidance. This again is fortunate.'

III

The closer Colonel House's relations with the British, the more keenly he felt that the President's note should be delayed. He realized the existence of a body of liberal opinion in Great Britain, which advocated a negotiated peace with Germany; but it was as yet without influence. Articulate public opinion demanded that the new Lloyd George Cabinet must discard all ideas except that of military victory. It would regard a demand for a peace conference by Wilson as definitely unfriendly.

The President hesitated and, as he did so, the Berlin Government exploded a diplomatic bombshell. On December 12, the Germans, wearied of waiting for Wilson's mediation, published a note which expressed their willingness to enter a peace conference. The proposal contained no suggestion of specific terms, but its tone permitted the interpretation that Germany would consider no peace which was not one of victory, and the more recent publication of German documents has verified this suspicion.

It is certain that the terms German leaders had in mind would have been unacceptable to the Allies, and it is likely that the Germans knew it. The purpose of the note was, at least in part, to make it appear that the responsibility for the continuation of the war must rest upon the Allies. Nevertheless, some of the British felt that it was a mistake to

return a categorical refusal even to consider the proposal. Amongst them was a young British officer who, after being gassed at the fighting front, had been attached to the British Embassy at Washington and who later was to play a rôle of unsuspected importance. This was Sir William Wiseman, a natural diplomat, of whom Lord Reading later said, 'Wiseman is well named.'

In him Colonel House found a kindred spirit, and, despite the disparity in years, there sprang up a friendship which had significant effects. Wiseman was liberal, open to suggestion, but shrewd and fully aware of the peril of negotiating with Germany. He was convinced that the future welfare of the world depended upon an intimate understanding between Great Britain and the United States. Wiseman further perceived that the war, if carried on to the crushing defeat of Germany, might bring dangers as well as blessings to his country and the world; he thus joined heartily with Colonel House in every effort to achieve the earliest possible settlement consistent with safety from German imperialism. Between House and Wiseman there were soon to be few political secrets, and from their mutual comprehension resulted in large measure our close coöperative association with the British.

The advent of Wiseman in December was especially timely, for there was a need of better means of communication between Washington and London. The retirement of Grey from the Foreign Office meant that there was no one with whom Ambassador Page would be on thoroughly intimate and sympathetic terms. The British had begun to realize that Page did not exactly represent the Washington point of view, and they knew that in Washington the relations between Spring-Rice and the State Department were not entirely satisfactory. They recognized the need of a regular channel of communication with House, whom the British Foreign Office knew and of whose sympathy they

were certain. Wiseman himself thus describes the first stages of a mission which came to be of great political significance:

‘The British Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, wished to make a confidential communication to Colonel House, and asked me to convey his message personally. The message itself was of no particular importance, but the talk I had with Colonel House convinced him that I should be a sympathetic and discreet channel of communication. From that date until the time that the United States came into the war, I was confidential intermediary between Colonel House and the British Ambassador.

‘I also communicated to the Foreign Office, through my Chief in London, certain information and suggestions which Colonel House thought they ought to have. Before doing this, however, I obtained permission from Sir Cecil, as I felt that, in communicating with the Foreign Office direct, I was encroaching on the prerogatives of the Embassy. Sir Cecil replied without hesitation that anything should be done in any way that would help the Cause; and that his own position in the matter was not to be considered. From then on until the time he left Washington, he gave me every possible encouragement and help.’¹

Sir William, unlike most of the British in official position, believed that, if the replies of the Entente Powers to the German peace note could be delayed, some chance of profitable negotiation might be discovered. At least the Allies ought not to make the obvious mistake of returning such a brusque reply as to justify the German Government before its own people.

¹ Memorandum communicated to the author, November 16, 1925.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, December 17, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The British Ambassador has sent Sir William Wiseman of the Embassy to see me.

He suggested that I find out unofficially Germany's terms. This, I told him, could not be done before Friday or Saturday, since I was sure that Bernstorff did not know them; that what Bernstorff had was what his Government had given him for public consumption and they were not entrusting him with what they really had in mind.

The British Embassy is cabling their Government to-day, asking whether or not it would be possible for the Prime Minister to delay his answer until Friday or Saturday, telling them of his [Wiseman's] conversation with me and what is planned. They expect an answer by to-morrow afternoon at five o'clock.

If it is favorable, I am to get in touch with Bernstorff and see what can be done there.

It looks as if you might soon be having the belligerents talking; at least there is hope.

I am writing in great haste, because of the lateness of the hour. Will you not advise me promptly, by telegraphic code or letter, if you have anything further to suggest?

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

The procedure suggested by House and Wiseman had much to commend it. The German Government were perhaps merely putting out their peace feeler as a method of quieting opinion at home and justifying Germany before neutral opinion; on the other hand, they might be willing to make broad concessions to secure peace. In either case it was to the advantage of the Allies to know what was in the German mind.

But the British Foreign Office seemed to be so much in a hurry to announce to the world that they would not consider peace that they had no time to utilize this opportunity of securing invaluable information. It may have been that they feared that if they once began to talk, as House suggested, peace would come before the complete defeat of Germany.

'December 18, 1916: The British Embassy [recorded House] received a reply from their Government, stating it would be impossible to postpone a statement by the Prime Minister regarding peace terms. They asked that their thanks be given me for my proffered service.'

It is possible that the request of the British Embassy for delay on the part of the British Foreign Office was not understood in London, for Lord Robert Cecil spoke of the request as signifying that Washington desired information as to the nature of the reply, whereas all that was asked for was delay. It seems unfortunate that Mr. Page was so thoroughly out of sympathy with Wilson's policy, since he gave the British to understand that Washington did not expect the German note to be taken seriously and he knew of no reason for delay. Some light is thrown on this incident by a letter of Lord Robert Cecil to the British Ambassador in Washington, repeating a conversation with Mr. Page in London:

Lord Robert Cecil to Sir Cecil Spring-Rice

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 19, 1916

SIR:

The American Ambassador came to see me this afternoon.

I asked him whether he could tell me why his Government were anxious to have confidential information as to the nature of our response to the German peace note.

He replied that he did not know, but he imagined it was to enable them to frame the representations of which he had spoken to me.

I then told him that we had asked the French to draft a reply and that it would then be considered by the Allies and in all probability an identic note would be presented in answer to the German note. I thought it probable that we should express our view that it was impossible to deal with the German offer, since it contained no specific proposals.

He said that he quite understood this, and that we should in fact reply that it was an offer 'to buy a pig in a poke,' which we were not prepared to accept. He added that he thought his Government would fully anticipate a reply in this sense, and he himself obviously approved it. . . .

I am, etc.

ROBERT CECIL

It is easy to appreciate the British criticism that the German note contained no specific conditions, but it is more difficult to understand why they and Mr. Page could not see the value of Wiseman's proposal, which might have led to something specific, if merely the definite proof that Germany had impossible terms in mind.

The German peace offer, which took even Bernstorff by surprise, was bound to rob Wilson's note of any effect it might have had. If he issued the note at once, he would be accused of acting in collusion with Germany, and the Allies would be still less inclined to take heed of it. The President, however, instead of giving up the plan and awaiting a more propitious occasion, decided to issue his note immediately. He seems to have feared lest Great Britain and France might definitely bang the door upon all negotiations by a brusque refusal of the German proposal. He concluded to take this step without consulting House, who did not see the final draft of the note. Events had moved so fast, he wrote to House on December 19, that he did not have time to get him down to Washington to go over it with him. It was written

and sent off within a very few hours, evidently in the fear that the Governments of the Entente might in the meantime so have committed themselves against peace as to make the situation even more hopeless than it had been. Wilson added that the note proceeded along a different line than the draft which House had seen.

The President, however, did follow House's suggestion not to make a categorical demand for peace. His note was merely an appeal to the belligerents, emphasizing the interest of the United States in the future peace of the world and its willingness to coöperate with Europe in maintaining it. He underlined the danger of irreparable injury to civilization if peace were long delayed, and intimated that there was a chance of securing immediate peace if the belligerents would make explicit disclosure of their war aims.

'It may be that peace is nearer than we know [said Wilson]; that the terms which the belligerents on the one side and on the other would deem it necessary to insist upon are not so irreconcilable as some have feared; that an interchange of views would clear the way at least for conference and make the permanent concord of the nations a hope of the immediate future, a concert of nations immediately practicable.'

Colonel House, as we have seen, disapproved the basic idea of issuing a peace note at this time, when the Allies were obviously in no mood to receive it favorably. He was further troubled by Wilson's phraseology, for the President, pursued by some verbal Nemesis, again gave voice to an expression which was bound to irritate the French and British. 'The objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war,' said Wilson, 'are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own peoples and to the world.' The sentence was accurate, if the words were understood in a strict sense, and they contained a cer-

tain ironic humor. But the Allies would not enjoy the implication that their war aims were on the same plane as Germany's.

'December 20, 1916: The President sent me to-day [House recorded] the original draft of the note which he has sent to the belligerents and neutrals. He asked me to return it, so I took a copy with the eliminations and changes just as he had made them. I thought it might sometime be interesting, since the President may destroy the original.

'I have seldom seen anything he has written with so many changes. . . . I deprecate one sentence, which will give further impetus to the belief that he does not yet understand what the Allies are fighting for. That one sentence will enrage them. I talked to him for ten minutes when I was there and got him to eliminate from the original draft a much more pronounced offence of the same character, but he has put it back in a modified form. He seems obsessed with that thought, and he cannot write or talk on the subject of the war without voicing it. It has done more to make him unpopular in the Allied countries than any one thing he has done, and it will probably keep him from taking the part which he ought to take in peace negotiations. . . . It is all so unnecessary. He could have done and said the same things if he had said and done them in a different way.'

As House had foreseen, the effort of President Wilson to begin peace negotiations received scant attention in Allied countries as well as in Germany. The latter Power desired a conference in order to negotiate upon the basis of the military situation, which was all in her favor. A public announcement of her war aims, proving the extent of her ambitions, would merely stiffen the Allies in their determination to fight until the military situation became more favorable to them. Thus the German reply to the President, while polite, was

quite indefinite. They stated that a direct exchange of views appeared to them the most suitable means of arriving at peace, and they merely repeated their suggestion of a conference without any exposal of specific terms. Ambassador Gerard felt that their purpose in initiating a conference was to split the Allies.

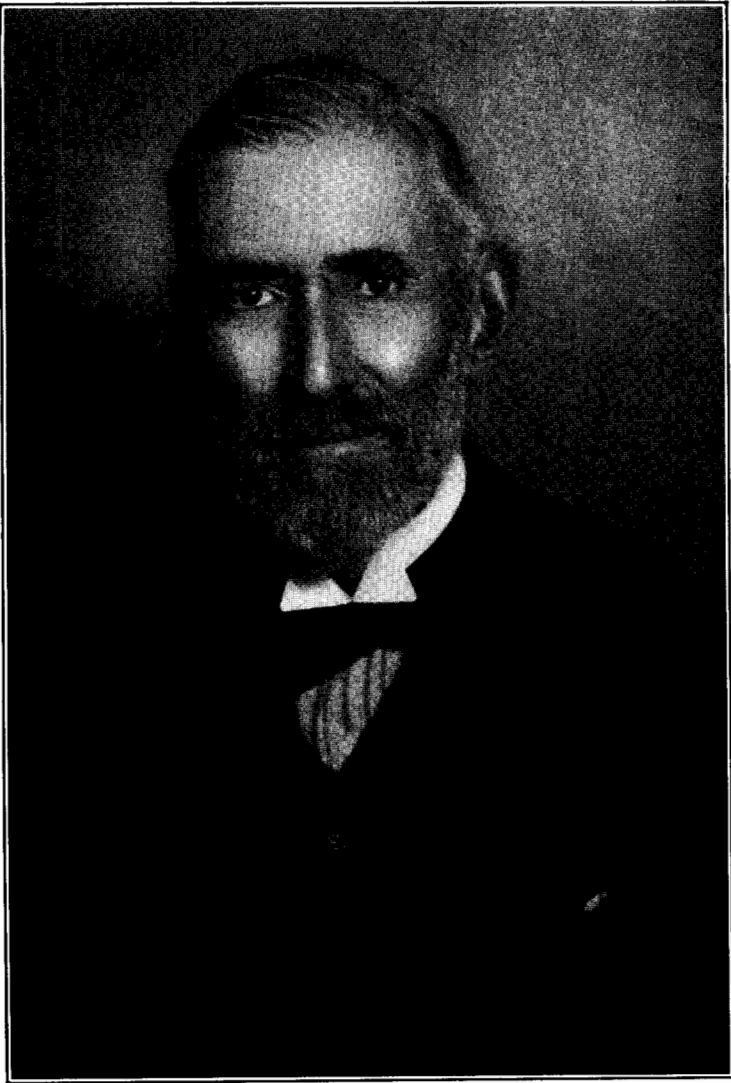
'Germany wants a peace conference [he wrote to House on January 9] in order to make a separate peace, on good terms to them, with France and Russia. Then she hopes to finish England by submarines, then later take the scalps of Japan, Russia, and France separately. The Allies ought to remember what Ben Franklin said about hanging together or separately. I get the above scheme from *very good authority*.'

The Allies refused negotiations on the ground that a durable peace presupposed a satisfactory settlement of the conflict and that at the moment it was hopeless to expect from the Central Powers the reparation, restitution, and guaranties necessary to such a peace. They challenged Wilson's analogy between the war aims of the two groups, insisting that the attitude of the Central Powers was a menace to humanity and civilization. They met Wilson's request for a statement of peace terms by an uncompromising declaration which won the approval of American opinion on the Atlantic coast, but which seemed to end the possibility of negotiations.

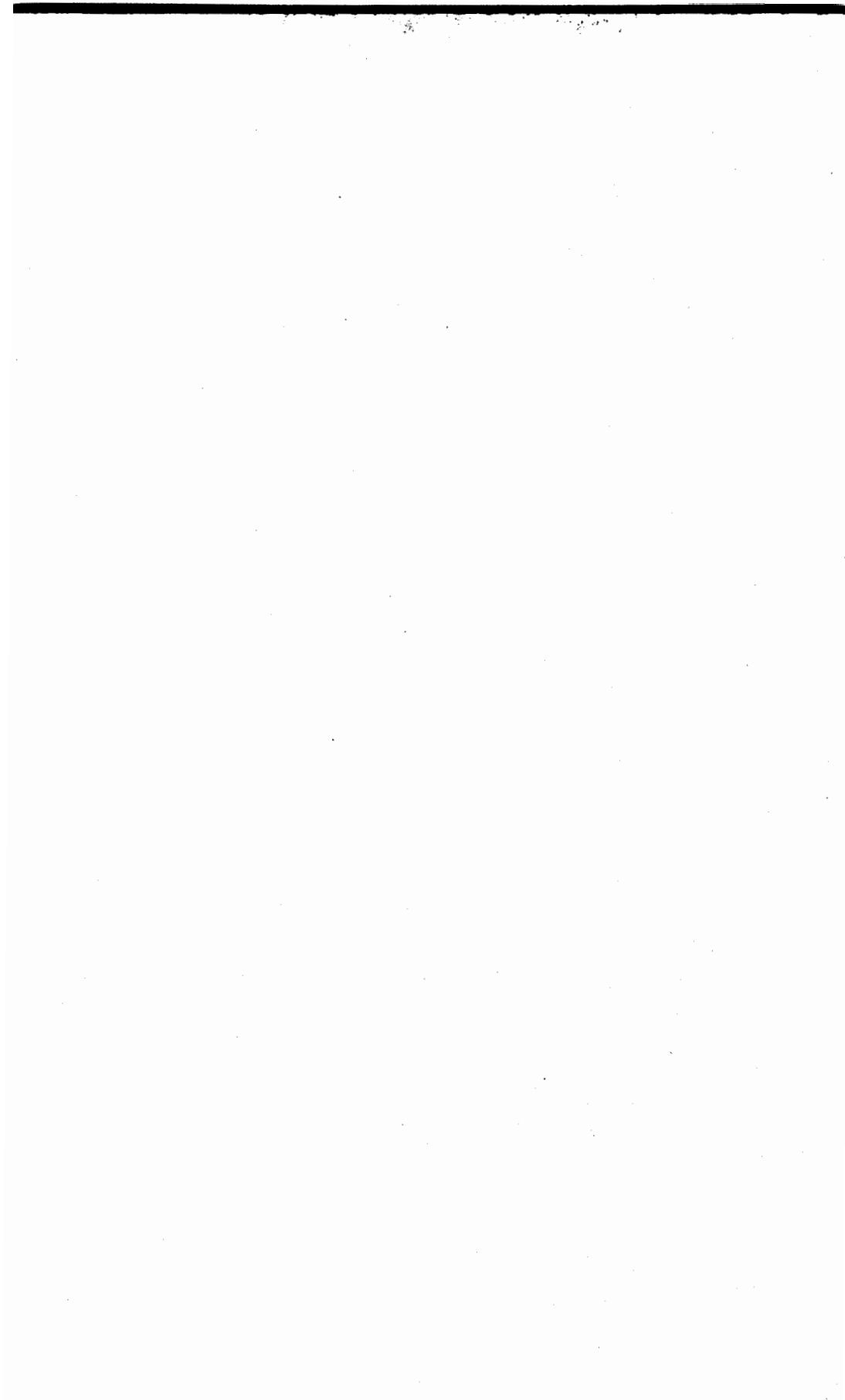
IV

Thus Wilson's attempt served neither to remove the danger of a resumption of German submarine warfare, nor to improve our relations with the belligerents.

'The dominant tone [wrote Page to House] in public and private comment on the President's suggestion is surprise



To E. M. House
from his friend
Hazel Plumbell
1925



and sorrowful consternation and all public comment so far is visibly restrained. . . . The President's suggestion itself would have provoked little or no criticism if it had been made at another time. But his remarks accompanying his suggestion are interpreted as placing the Allies and the Central Powers on the same level. . . . A luncheon guest at the Palace yesterday informs me that the King wept while he expressed his surprise and depression.'

Even so sincere an admirer of Wilson as Plunkett could not conceal his regret that Wilson had made his suggestion at such a time and in such a way.

'December 22, 1916: Sir Horace Plunkett was my first visitor this morning [recorded Colonel House]. He is terribly exercised over the President's note. He is sorry that he sent it and regrets the verbiage. He called attention to the fact that it contained the same old refrain. He had made memoranda of sentences taken from the President's speeches during the campaign, notably the one in Cincinnati, and started to read them. I begged him not to do so, saying I could repeat them backward. I asked him to write out his views and send them to me, so I might transmit them to the President if I thought advisable. . . .'

On December 27, Lord Bryce wrote to Colonel House, emphasizing the unfortunate effect of Wilson's phrase, which seemed to the British to place them and the French on a par with the Germans. No reasonable man, Bryce added, supposed that the President had been influenced by the Germans or had any object in view beyond what he stated; but his words had certainly been taken to suggest that both sides were equally innocent or equally culpable.

Bryce then proceeded to give five reasons why the general feeling was against opening negotiations with the German

and Austrian Governments, the feeling, he said, not of jingoism, but of peace-lovers like himself. There was every reason to believe that Germany, Austria, and Turkey would not offer any acceptable terms. If that was an error, then let them state their basis for negotiation. In the second place, there was every reason to believe that they would not accept any terms the Allies could possibly offer. In the third place, it was easy for Germany to state terms because she dominated Austria and Turkey, but very difficult for the Allies because so many independent Powers were concerned, with many different views. Bryce admitted that the terms which each Power would lay down must depend largely on how it viewed the prospects of success.

In the fourth place, the British utterly distrusted the German Government's good faith and believed that she was merely trying to gain time. Finally, he was certain that Americans failed to realize the indignation and horror that had been aroused by German war methods and their disregard of international right and common justice, as shown by the Belgian deportations and the Armenian massacres. Men asked, he said, 'How can we make peace with such a Government, until we have defeated it? It will be a standing danger to all its neighbours until it has been defeated and taught that lawlessness and savagery don't pay.'

House did not thoroughly agree with this attitude. He realized the existence of selfish motives in Allied war aims and the desire to destroy Germany politically, which actuated certain Allied politicians. But the sincerity of Allied peoples as a whole could not be doubted. They were convinced of Germany's complete responsibility for the war and of their own moderation of purpose. Doubts cast upon their sincerity could only irritate, without improving the situation.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, December 20, 1916

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... Wiseman says that all the belligerents resent the tone of our press, even those papers that are pro-Ally. He quoted the *World* as an example. He says his Government understand and appreciate our attitude, but they find it difficult to make their people understand it.

No matter who brought on the war or what each Government knows the cause to be for which they were fighting, the people, he said, of every belligerent nation had worked themselves up to an exalted enthusiasm of patriotic fervor and they resent any suggestion that they have selfish motives and are not fighting solely for a principle.

I think we ought to keep this constantly in our thoughts and not try to argue with them as if they were in an ordinary frame of mind.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. I have just seen Sir Horace Plunkett, and he confirmed Sir William Wiseman's statement.

Thus, at the moment when the magnitude of the war threatened to exhaust the material strength of both sides, each of the fighting groups was more set than ever in the will to carry the struggle through to a complete decision. The German General Staff warned the Government that it was approaching the end of its resources, but it promised a quick victory through the ruthless submarine campaign. The French were worn out by the battles of Verdun and the Somme, and more and more dependent upon British help; so far as the British were concerned, Grey had some weeks before written an official memorandum in which he spoke of the need of telling the Allies, 'as they ought to be told now, that

our support in shipping and finance, one or both, will have to be curtailed in a few months.'¹

Yet no matter how much the French and British felt the pinch of the struggle, they were determined to fight on and were certain of ultimate victory. 'The people themselves,' wrote House, 'do not know the true state of affairs and the Governments are not so much to blame for not informing them, for it is essential that their courage and enthusiasm should be kept at white heat. The people in each country are sure that victory is within sight.'

But if the war was to continue, the participation of the United States could only be regarded as a matter of time. For it was obvious that those in control of Germany, the harder they were pressed, would be more inclined to renew the submarine campaign, and such action almost automatically would bring us in. So plain did this seem to most of those who appreciated the peril of the crisis, that on December 21, Mr. Lansing stated publicly that we were 'on the verge of war.' Surely it was high time to make preparation — military preparation which might render our participation effective, diplomatic preparation which might clarify our purpose in fighting.

¹ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years* (Frederick A. Stokes Company), II, 131.

CHAPTER XIV

LAST HOPES OF PEACE

In the light of after events, it is clear that Germany missed a great opportunity for peace.

Viscount Grey of Fallodon, 'Twenty-Five Years'

I

IT is interesting to note that President Wilson's determination to preserve the neutrality of the United States was apparently strongest during the weeks that immediately preceded our break with Germany. It was this determination that led to his note of December, and he was not shaken by the failure of his effort to begin negotiations nor by the imminent danger that Germany would resume the submarine campaign.

Wilson's pacifism had been intensified by the events of the year. Previous to 1916, his sympathies, although carefully concealed, were strongly with the Allies, and he agreed with House that the welfare of the world depended upon the defeat of Germany. But the refusal of the Allies to accept his proffered intervention aroused his suspicions of their motives and led him to fear that, if we brought them military assistance, it would be used merely to further European nationalist aspirations. He distrusted intensely the real purposes of all the belligerent Governments, whatever their avowed war aims. He was equally affected by the course of the electoral campaign, which convinced him that he owed his reelection largely to the votes of those who counted upon him to keep them out of war. He regarded the mandate of peace as compelling.

On January 4, 1917, House recorded the gist of a conversation in which he and Wilson discussed the steps that would

be necessary if Germany declared an unrestricted submarine campaign.

'I took the occasion [wrote the Colonel] to express the feeling that we should not be so totally unprepared in the event of war. . . .

'The President replied, "There will be no war. This country does not intend to become involved in this war. We are the only one of the great white nations that is free from war to-day, and it would be a crime against civilization for us to go in."

'The President may change this view [added House], for, as I have said before, he changes his views often.'

The advisers of President Wilson regarded the situation in a rather more practical light. Granted that the majority of the citizens desired fervently to remain at peace, a crisis might arise without warning which would render the Government impotent to maintain peace. Everything depended, not on what we wished, but on what Germany decided. For a renewal of the submarine campaign inevitably would compel a break. Those close to the President were troubled that there was not a more definite and active preparation for the crisis, in both a military and a diplomatic sense.

'We are on the verge of war [wrote House in November], and not a move is being taken in the direction of immediate preparation. . . .

'*December 14, 1916:* I had an opportunity of talking to Secretary Daniels at the Cabinet dinner. I obtained enough from him to know that my worst fears as to our unpreparedness were confirmed. . . .

'I am convinced that the President's place in history is dependent to a large degree upon luck. If we should get into a serious war and it should turn out disastrously, he would be

one of the most discredited Presidents we have had. . . . We have no large guns. If we had them, we have no trained men who would understand how to handle them. We have no air service, nor men to exploit it; and so it is down the list.

'I believe the President will pull through without anything happening, but I could not sleep at night if I had this responsibility upon my shoulders. . . .

'*December 23, 1916:* I have been in constant communication [with Washington] regarding foreign affairs. The State Department is worried sick over the President's *laissez-faire* policy. . . . I have promised to go [to Washington] next week, but I have no stomach for it. It is practically impossible to get the President to have a general consultation. I see him and then I see Lansing; and the result is, we get nowhere. What is needed is consultation between the three of us, and a definite programme worked out and followed as consistently as circumstances will permit. . . .

'*January 2, 1917:* — is much disturbed over conditions in Washington, especially as to the President's frame of mind. He thinks he is for peace almost at any price. He is concerned, too, at the lack of a positive programme. . . .

'*January 4, 1917:* X came and spent three quarters of an hour. He was terribly depressed. He thought the President had lost all interest and all "punch"; that things were drifting in an aimless sort of way. . . .'

In the hope of working toward a definite programme, Colonel House made a suggestion to the President which had notable consequences. On December 27, he wrote proposing that Wilson set forth clearly the main lines upon which a stable peace might be drawn and which the United States would take part in ensuring. It would be a development of his declaration of May 27, 1916.

Such a presentation of a future international organization could be made in terms so general that it would not carry the

offensive appearance of an offer of mediation. Yet, if the United States remained neutral, it would provide a basis upon which the belligerents might rely if they desired American mediation at any time. On the other hand, if the United States entered the war against Germany, it would serve to warn the Allies that America was not fighting for their nationalist war aims, but for the security and tranquillity of the world.

The suggestion was received without comment by the President, but he took it under consideration and discussed it with House at the first opportunity.

'January 3, 1917: The President wished to know [wrote House] what I thought of his stating in some way what, in his opinion, the general terms of the settlement should be, making the keystone of the settlement arch the future security of the world against wars, and letting territorial adjustments be subordinate to the main purpose. I was enthusiastic, since it was the exact proposal I outlined to Bernstorff and wrote of to the President in my letter of December 27. . . . The war and its consequences have become too great for any ordinary settlement, and the terms upon which it should be closed should be the fairest and best that the human mind can devise.

'We went into a long discussion as to what terms he might properly lay down and how it could be done. I thought he could outline the terms in an address to Congress if he wished to make it impressive. If he desired not to attract marked attention at first, then it would be better to make it in an address before some society. He thought he might do it before the Senate, and that was the tentative arrangement when we finished our discussion.

'We thought that the main principle he should lay down was the right of nations to determine under what government they should continue to live. This, of course, involves

a wide range. We thought that, since Germany and Russia had agreed to free Poland, that should be put in. We naturally agreed upon Belgium and Serbia being restored. Alsace and Lorraine we were not quite certain of, but we agreed that Turkey [in Europe] should cease to exist. I urged in addition that something be put in regarding the right of Russia to have a warm seaport. If this were not done, it would leave a sore which in time would bring about another war.

‘The question was raised as to what would happen to our Ambassador at Constantinople when this speech was made, whether he would be promptly executed or be permitted to flee the country. The question of the American colleges in Turkey was also thought of. It is my purpose when I return to New York to study this matter more closely and outline in some detail a plan which I think the President could follow, and bring it to him when I return next week.¹

‘I encouraged him in the thought of doing this great and dramatic thing. I said, “You are now playing with what the poker players term the blue chips and there is no use sitting by and letting great events swamp you. It is better to take matters into your own hands and play the cards yourself.”

‘We thought if he made his speech before the Senate, the occasion could be arranged in answer to a request from the Senate for information as to what America would demand if she consents to join a league to enforce peace. Whatever the President said in this way would be largely our own concern and could not be construed as meddling with the affairs of the belligerents. While it actually would be a proposal of peace terms, yet apparently it would be a statement of

¹ To avoid blurring the main principle of the address, Wilson decided not to include any statement of a desirable territorial settlement; he mentioned merely the necessity of a united independent Poland. Exactly a year later, he elaborated the chief items of this conversation with House into the Fourteen Points.

the terms upon which we would be willing to join in a league to enforce peace.

'*January 11, 1917:* We left for Washington this morning, and, strangely enough, the train was on time. . . . Almost as soon as we arrived, the President and I went into executive session. The President closed his study door so as not to be interrupted and we were at it for about two hours, having more time than usual, since the Lansing dinner to the President was not until eight o'clock, while the White House dinner is always at seven. . . .

'He read the address which he had prepared in accordance with our understanding last week. It is a noble document and one which I think will live.

'As usual, he struck the wrong note in one instance, which he seems unable to avoid. He said, "This war was brought on by distrust of one another."¹ I asked him to strike out this sentence, which he did. In another instance he said, "Both sides say they have no desire to humiliate or destroy the other." I asked him to strike out "humiliate," which he did.

'I asked him if he had shown the address to Lansing. He replied that he had shown it to no one, but that he intended to read it to the Secretary and Senator Stone,² before cabling it. He thought Lansing was not in sympathy with his purpose to keep out of war. . . .

'We decided that his address should be delivered before the Senate, and we discussed how best to get the text of it to the peoples of the belligerent nations. The President is not so much concerned about reaching the Governments as he is

¹ Colonel House would doubtless have been willing to concede that mutual distrust was a major cause of the war; but he wished to keep out of the address all controversial questions touching its origin, since the speech was designed to look to the future stability of the world and to emphasize, so far as possible, the general principles which would receive unanimous approval.

² Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

about reaching the people. . . . I suggested that it be cabled to London, Paris, Berlin, and Petrograd, letting Gerard give it to the Central Powers and Sharp to the Entente other than Russia and England, where it would be sent direct. That was tentatively agreed upon, although he rather hesitated on account of the cost. It was also agreed that the Ambassadors should see that the address was published in full in the several belligerent countries. This is important, as one can see by reading the text of the address.'

On the 17th of January, Colonel House received from the President a letter informing him that the speech was finished. He had talked it over with the Secretary of State and the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who, he reported, had acquiesced cordially, although Mr. Stone seemed slightly stunned. The speech had been put into code for cabling to the various Embassies and the President planned, as soon as he heard that it had reached them, to go before the Senate. Senator Stone, who the year before had opposed the President's attitude on the armed merchantmen issue, gave up pressing business at home, Mr. Wilson reported, so that he could help now in every way possible.

II

On January 22, President Wilson read his message to the Senate as had been planned. So effectively did he develop the ideas which he had discussed with House that G. Lowes Dickinson, a leading British critic of liberal persuasion, later described the speech as 'perhaps the most important international document of all history.'¹ Wilson made it plain that no security for the future could be expected from a settlement that left one side or the other crushed and revengeful: 'It must be a peace without victory.' The basis of the peace, he insisted, should be the right of each individual

¹ *The Choice Before Us*, 270.

nation to decide its destiny for itself without interference from a stronger alien foe.

'I am proposing, as it were [said the President], that the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world: that no nation should seek to extend its polity over any other nation or people, but that every people should be left free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful.'

The old system of European alliances, from which had sprung the World War, was clearly inadequate for the maintenance of such principles; instead of it President Wilson insisted that there must be a general concert of Powers:

'There is no entangling alliance in a concert of power. When all unite to act in the same sense and with the same purpose, all act in the common interest and are free to live their own lives under a common protection.'

Such were, indeed, the principles which the nations of the world agreed to accept when they ended the war and when, two years after this speech, they drafted the Covenant of the League of Nations.

The effect of the President's address upon liberal statesmen and writers, both in America and Europe, was immediate and gratifying. Hall Caine wrote: 'Let President Wilson take heart from the first reception of his remarkable speech. The best opinion here is one of deep feeling and profound admiration.' Others soon discovered that what Wilson expressed, many people had already been thinking and waiting for some one to say.

On January 24, Lord Bryce wrote to House, referring to the President's speech as 'most impressive.' The British warmly appreciated its spirit, he said, and would like to see

the attainment of the conditions which he laid down as pre-conditions to a league of peace. But he failed to see how these were to be attained with the existing German Government, 'a Government which goes on showing its utter disregard of justice and humanity, by its slave-raiding and other cruelties in Belgium, and by its entire contempt for the faith of treaties and other international obligations and treaties.'

He again insisted that there was no peace movement in Great Britain, but that there would be, except for the conduct of the German Government. If there were a chance that Germany would yield up Lorraine, and Austria the Trentino, and the Turks Armenia, he would be glad to know of it. These, he felt, were the concessions essential to stability and security in Europe.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *January 23, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The echoes of the speech sound increasingly good. The *Manchester Guardian*, so far, has the best comment and warns the British Government in no uncertain terms.

Hoover was with me again to-day, and I extracted this suggestion from him which seems worth consideration. It is that the next move should be to ask each of the belligerent Governments whether they agree to the principles laid down in your speech. If not, to what do they object? If they agree, then it is well within your province to ask them to meet in conference.

Sir William Wiseman has not returned from Washington, as he thought it best to remain there to-day in order to get the full opinion of the Allied group.

Whitehouse¹ is tremendously pleased.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

¹ British Liberal Member of Parliament.

The President wrote to House the next day, expressing interest in Wiseman's report, but declaring that he was chiefly concerned to discover what was in the mind of the German Government. There was no trace of undue elation at the prominent rôle which he was assuming nor an indication of any desire but that of serving the cause of peace. He closed, with renewed thanks for the encouragement and support that House had given him and a confession that at times in spite of himself he felt very lonely and very low in his mind.

Wilson's despondency was largely justified. Although American and British liberals applauded the principles he advanced and hailed his speech as a new charter of international relations, official sentiment, restrained though it was, continued undeniably hostile. They did not quarrel with his principles, but with his application of them. The Allied press dragged from his speech the unfortunate phrase, 'peace without victory' — unfortunate because such a phrase as 'peace of reconciliation' would have been more effective in conveying the President's thought — and insisted that it proved his complete failure to appreciate the factors that underlay the European situation. Smarting with the wounds of actual combat, they felt they were dying for the ideals about which Wilson merely talked.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, January 25, 1917.

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... Wiseman brought a depressing story from Washington. He said that on the surface and officially your address was accepted with cordiality, but that underneath there was a deep feeling of resentment. The underlying feeling was that you were making a proposal to enforce arbitration in the future while the Allies were giving up both blood and treasure now for the same purpose. If Germany had arbitrated as

Grey demanded, this war could not have happened. Germany refused, and the Allies are doing exactly what you suggest should be done in the future; that since they are doing now what you suggest for the future, we should have more sympathy in their present undertaking. They consider it inconsistent for us to want to let Germany go free from punishment for breaking the very rules we wish to lay down for the future.

He says this is the consensus of the Allied view at Washington.

Wiseman's individual view is that in pressing the Allies too hard for peace, at this time, you will be doing the cause of democracy harm. He asserts that every belligerent Government is now in the hands of the reactionaries and must necessarily be in their hands when the war ends. He believes if we are not careful we will find that these forces in the belligerent Governments will all come together when peace is made, and it is not at all unlikely that their concentrated hate for democracy will be centred upon this country.

Peace, he says, must come first, and then a plan to enforce arbitration afterwards. He thinks it is possible that after peace is signed, and before the arbitration agreement is made, the reactionary forces might refuse to go into any league for future peace and make some pretext to turn upon us in order to save autocracy.

This seems to me a remote contingency, but, nevertheless, if I were you I would speed up the army and navy plans as a matter of precaution.

We are in deep and troubled waters, but I have an abiding faith in the ultimate good that will come from your noble efforts.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

III

Wilson's speech of January 22 was not merely a programme for the organization of permanent peace. It also provided an opportunity for Germany to announce to her people and the world that, in view of the security which Wilsonian principles seemed to offer, she could afford to renounce the territorial guaranties which she had hitherto demanded, and which appeared to her enemies as merely a covering excuse for aggressive annexations. Her acceptance of the basis for peace suggested by the President would prove, as nothing else could, the sincerity of her insistence that the war she waged was one of defence.

To understand the opportunity thus offered Germany, we must go back to the situation resulting in December from Wilson's note inviting the belligerents to state their terms. No one knew better than Bernstorff how tenuous was the thread which still maintained ostensibly friendly relations between Germany and the United States. Although he was not fully informed by his own Government, he realized that the rulers in Berlin were considering the renewal of the submarine campaign and that such a decision would inevitably precipitate a break. Events were likely to move swiftly and the sole means of forestalling the rupture would be the actual inauguration of peace negotiations. He also realized that there was no chance of negotiating unless Germany stated specifically the peace terms she had in mind. If he could secure such a statement and the terms proved not unreasonable, Colonel House might take the matter up with the British. In the meantime President Wilson might issue his programme for the organization of a peace settlement which would secure Germany from the political and economic annihilation which she feared.

Colonel House was not optimistic, for, as he constantly wrote to Wilson, German diplomacy was unreliable and the Germans themselves 'slippery customers.' Nevertheless, he

knew that Bernstorff was pulling every wire available to avert the recommencement of ruthless submarine warfare, and he himself was on the outlook for every chance, however slight, that might lead to the ending of the war on a reasonable basis.

'December 27, 1916: The German Ambassador called this morning [wrote House]. He is not pleased with Germany's answer to the President's note. He wishes to advise his Government that the only thing to do now is to give terms. He does not believe, however, they would make them public. He thought they would not be willing to send them through the State Department, because there are so many leaks from there.

'It was arranged, therefore, if the President thought well of the plan, that he [Bernstorff] should cable his Government suggesting they give terms through him, to go no further than the President and myself. I suggested to Bernstorff the advisability of having his Government take a stand on the high ground of permanent peace. I thought they would be in an unassailable position if they could say to the world that, no matter how the war began or what the interests of the different belligerents were in the beginning, it had now gotten into such a frightful state that all should unite upon a satisfactory plan to prevent such another war in the future. That the question of territory was unimportant compared to this one central fact.

'Bernstorff agreed to do this.'

During the following weeks the German Ambassador wrestled with his Government, apparently in all sincerity, to secure the specific terms which might lead to the end of the war, and also German acceptance of the more general principles of international organization which Wilson was to outline in his speech to the Senate. Bernstorff kept in close

touch with House, who, whatever his suspicions, saw the value of committing Germany to a definite statement of terms.

Conditions in Austria and Hungary seemed more propitious for the beginning of peace negotiations. The death of the old Kaiser, Francis Joseph, had brought to the throne Carl, who was suspected of resenting German control of Austria-Hungary, and whose wife Zita, herself a Bourbon, was known to entertain friendly sentiments toward France. Ambassador Gerard reported war-weariness among the Hungarians, as well as bitter anti-American feelings among the Germans.

Ambassador Gerard to Colonel House

BERLIN, January 16, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL:

. . . My wife, just returned from a week's visit to her sister in Hungary, reports a great desire for peace, and that persons who, a year ago, said that the President could have nothing to do with peace or negotiations, now say he is the only possible mediator. *This comes from high Government circles there.* Sigray, her brother-in-law, was cup-bearer at the coronation feast, a sort of glorified butler, and poured out the wine.

The historic crown of St. Stephen was much too large for the King, as you will see from the enclosed photograph — but the little Crown Prince made a great hit with the populace.

At Solf's the other night a Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin (not the reigning Grand Duke) came up and tackled me in a loud voice about the export of American arms and munitions which he said was 'stamped on the German heart' and 'would never be forgotten.' He wore the order of the Black Eagle, the order of the Seraphim, and the order of the Elephant, and bellowed like a milkman! His voice and the dis-

played menagerie made him quite impressive. It is great practice for keeping the temper here. . . .

Yours ever

J. W. G.

Bernstorff's plan of securing Germany's terms which might be secretly transmitted to the Allies through House, and Wilson's speech of January 22 demanding an organized peace of security, offered to Berlin a chance of salvation. It was not yet too late to preserve her political and economic position in Europe, although she must necessarily renounce her militarist masters and aggressive designs. 'How does it all look now?' writes Grey in his memoirs. 'In the light of after-events, it is clear that Germany missed a great opportunity of peace. If she had accepted the Wilson policy, and was ready to agree to the Conference, the Allies could not have refused. They were dependent on American supplies; they could not have risked the ill-will of the Government of the United States, still less a *rapprochement* between the United States and Germany. Germans have only to reflect upon the peace they might have had in 1916 as compared with the Peace of 1919.'¹

But Berlin was blind to the opportunity. The military rulers of Germany knew that to secure peace, their own downfall would be essential. They knew that the terms they had in mind were such that Wilson would never sponsor them, and they refused to sacrifice themselves by changing the terms, even if it meant the saving of their country. It was obvious, after the failure of the peace notes of December and the firmness of the Allied response to Wilson's appeal for a statement of terms, that there was no hope of gaining their ends through negotiations. Hence the decision to renew the submarine blockade. The Admiralty and the General Staff promised to isolate England thereby, crush France,

¹ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years* (Frederick A. Stokes Company), II, 135.

and end the war victoriously. The Kaiser and the Chancellor yielded.

Ambassador von Bernstorff suspected the trend of events in Berlin, but he was not informed of the actual decision until the middle of January. For three weeks he continued to press his Government for specific terms, daily promised them to House, and urged upon him Germany's willingness to accept Wilson's principles. The Colonel, even while encouraging Bernstorff's efforts, found his suspicions of German intentions developing, especially as the Ambassador proved unable to extract definite pledges from his Government.

'Captain Guy Gaunt was my most interesting visitor [House recorded in the last week of January]. . . . The way I diagnosed the situation' to him was this: The Kaiser, the Chancellor, and Germany generally desire peace. Von Hindenburg and Ludendorff, who control Germany, believe that peace can be secured quicker by the sword than through negotiations. The Chancellor and the Kaiser will therefore not be able to offer such terms as the Allies can afford to accept. He [Gaunt] tells me the British Intelligence Service is marvellously good. They have reports of everything going on in Berlin, and oftentimes they get copies of letters and documents of great value. He says in one letter von Bernstorff gives his estimate of me and claims that he "has House in his pocket." Gaunt promised to show me a copy of this letter. I doubt whether Bernstorff said this.'¹

¹ What Bernstorff wrote, on one occasion at least, was: 'Of course, so far as Mr. House is concerned, I could hold him off with considerable ease.' — *Official German Documents, relating to the World War*, 981.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, January 20, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I am enclosing you a copy of a letter from Bernstorff, which came this morning. They are slippery customers and it is difficult to pin them down to anything definite. With the English, one knows where one is. They may be stubborn and they may be stupid, but they are reliable.

The Germans are trying to manœuvre themselves into a certain position, and just what is in the back of their minds is a matter for speculation. . . .

It is possible that they are manœuvring for position in regard to the resumption of their unbridled submarine warfare. They would like to put the Allies wholly in the wrong and justify Germany in the eyes of the neutrals in resorting to extreme measures. . . .

If we can tie up Germany in a conference, so that she cannot resume her unbridled submarine warfare, it will be a great point gained; and if a conference is once started, it can never break up without peace.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

On January 19, Bernstorff was informed of Berlin's decision. He did his utmost to alter it. Again and again he telegraphed his Government, begging for a postponement of the submarine blockade, or for a specific statement of German peace terms that might lead to negotiations; but in vain. The surrender of the Kaiser and Bethmann to Holtzendorff and Hindenburg had ruined his mission, which was always to keep the United States out of the war and to secure peace through Wilson.

The day following that on which he received news of the German decision, Bernstorff wrote to House, obviously in a dejected mood and intimating strongly that there was little

use in further conversations. House warned him of the danger of a renewal of submarine activities, a warning which was quite unnecessary, for Bernstorff himself had frequently used almost identical expressions in his despatches to Berlin. Following his custom, Bernstorff shifted the entire blame upon England's 'campaign of starvation,' regardless of the fact that Germany had refused to forego the use of the submarine even if England gave up the food blockade.

Count von Bernstorff to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, January 20, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

Since telephoning to you yesterday I have changed my mind on second thought and do not think it necessary to trouble you Monday morning with a visit. All I have to say, I told you over the phone, and I repeat it now, viz. that I am afraid the situation in Berlin is getting out of our hands. The exorbitant demands of our enemies, and the insolent language of their note to the President seem to have infuriated public opinion in Germany to such an extent, that the result may be anything but favorable to our peace plans. For this reason I had hoped that some step, statement or note might be forthcoming right away, so that the whole world and especially our people would know that President Wilson's movement for peace is still going on. In Berlin they seem to believe that the answer of our enemies to the President has finished the whole peace movement for a long time to come, and I am, therefore, afraid that my Government may be forced to act accordingly in a very short time.

This morning I received your letter of the 19th instant with many thanks. I am afraid that it will be very difficult to get any more peace terms from Berlin at this time for the reasons I mentioned above. However, I am very ready to try and to do my best in the matter. . . .

As far as I can see, every question leads us to the same

problem, viz. which methods my Government will be obliged by public opinion to use against the English starvation policy — a policy, by which all neutral countries in Europe are now suffering nearly as much as Germany.

Yours very sincerely

J. BERNSTORFF

P.S. In signing this letter, I am reminded of the fact that all our troubles come from the same source, namely, that England has been permitted to terrorize the neutral nations. By *illegal* methods England destroyed the legal trade of the neutral countries among themselves.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, January 26, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Bernstorff has just left. He said the military have complete control in Germany, with von Hindenburg and Ludendorff at the head. Ludendorff, as you know, is Hindenburg's Chief of Staff.

In reply to a direct question as to the Kaiser's influence and power, he said he was under the impression that the Kaiser designedly left things in the hands of Hindenburg. The inference was that, whatever mistakes were made and whatever settlement came about, it would be Hindenburg's mistakes and settlements and not the Kaiser's. . . .

I called his attention to the danger that lay in postponing peace and of the probability of their coming in conflict with us on account of their submarine activities. He admitted this as a real danger, for he said that the submarine warfare would begin with renewed vigor and determination as soon as the spring campaign opened and all signs of immediate peace had disappeared. He thought if the spring campaign began, there could be no peace until the fighting ended in the autumn. To this I replied that the Allies would not make

peace with Germany in the autumn if the war continued that long, for they would want to carry it over another winter, hoping their blockade would be effective.

I did this to discourage the idea that peace could come in the autumn if it did not come now.

I told him that Germany must give you something definite to work on, and immediately. I suggested that they state that they would be willing completely to evacuate both Belgium and France and that they would agree to *mutual* 'restoration, reparation, and indemnity.' He rather shied at this last, although in a former conversation he suggested it himself.

I told him you wished something to use with the people of the Allied countries, so that public sentiment might force the Governments to discuss peace. . . .

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

IV

Five days later, the German Ambassador threw off the mask which he had been wearing for a fortnight, clearly with rather uneasy grace.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *January 30, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Bernstorff has just called me up to say that he is sending over by messenger to-morrow a very important letter. I asked him if it was an answer [to the American demand for German peace terms]. He replied, 'a partial one.'

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Bernstorff's letter deserves perusal, for it would be difficult to discover a document more thoroughly impregnated with

the ironical. It is written on the same day that the Ambassador announced to Mr. Lansing the withdrawal of Germany's submarine pledge, an announcement which Bernstorff knew must lead to an immediate break. At the moment that the Berlin Government took the step which meant war with the United States, it asserted its friendship for America and begged the President to continue his efforts for a peace which would, according to the terms stated, have been a German triumph. What a contrast between those terms set forth with such arrogance and the conditions finally laid down in the Treaty of Versailles! What madness for the rulers of Germany to drive Wilson into war, thus ensuring their own defeat, at the moment when he was most eager to work for a peace that meant stalemate!

The main text of Bernstorff's letter was, of course, telegraphed from Berlin and merely passed on to House by the Ambassador.

Ambassador von Bernstorff to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, January 31, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have received a telegram from Berlin, according to which I am to express to the President the thanks of the Imperial Government for his communication made through you. The Imperial Government has complete confidence in the President and hopes that he will reciprocate such confidence. As proof I am to inform you in confidence that the Imperial Government will be very glad to accept the services kindly offered by the President for the purpose of bringing about a peace conference between the belligerents. My Government, however, is not prepared to publish any peace terms at present, because our enemies have published such terms which aim at the dishonor and destruction of Germany and her allies. My Government considers that as long as our enemies openly proclaim such terms, it would show weak-

ness, which does not exist, on our part, if we publish our terms and we would in so doing only prolong the war. However, to show President Wilson our confidence, my Government through me desires to inform him *personally* of the terms under which we would have been prepared to enter into negotiations, if our enemies had accepted our offer of December 12th.

'Restitution of the part of Upper Alsace occupied by the French.

'Gaining of a frontier which would protect Germany and Poland economically and strategically against Russia.

'Restitution of Colonies in form of an agreement which would give Germany Colonies adequate to her population and economic interest.

'Restitution of those parts of France occupied by Germany under reservation of strategical and economic changes of the frontier and financial compensations.

'Restoration of Belgium under special guaranty for the safety of Germany which would have to be decided on by negotiations with Belgium.

'Economic and financial mutual compensation on the basis of the exchange of territories conquered and to be restituted at the conclusion of peace.

'Compensation for the German business concerns and private persons who suffered by the war. Abandonment of all economic agreements and measures which would form an obstacle to normal commerce and intercourse after the conclusion of peace, and instead of such agreements reasonable treaties of commerce.

'The freedom of the seas.'

The peace terms of our allies run on the same lines.

My Government further agrees, after the war has been terminated, to enter into the proposed second international conference on the basis of the President's message to the Senate.

My Government would have been glad to postpone the submarine blockade, if they had been able to do so. This, however, was quite impossible on account of the preparations, which could not be cancelled. My Government believes that the submarine blockade will terminate the war very quickly. In the meantime my Government will do everything possible to safeguard American interests and begs the President to continue his efforts to bring about peace, and my Government will terminate the submarine blockade as soon as it is evident that the efforts of the President will lead to a peace acceptable to Germany. . . .

Yours very sincerely

J. BERNSTORFF

P.S. I could not get the translation of the official answer to the President's message ready in time to send it to you. I was in such a hurry to give you the above most important news, namely, that the blockade will be terminated if a conference can be brought about on reasonable terms.

The rulers of Germany were under no illusions. Bethmann later stated to the committee of the German General Assembly: 'The U-boat war meant rupture and ultimately war with America.' Bernstorff, in his memoirs, says: 'The simultaneous declaration of the unrestricted U-boat war gave the death-blow to all hopes of maintaining peace.'

It has been often asserted in various German circles that the declaration of the ruthless submarine campaign was not the dynamic but merely the pretext for the rupture between the United States and Germany; that the power of American financial interests would in any case have brought America into the war; that Wilson himself was thoroughly impregnated with pro-Ally feeling. The assertion betrays a wealth of ignorance. Wilson was never more pacifically minded than at the moment of the German declaration, never more clear

that the aspirations of the Allies were as selfish as those of Germany. The only thing that could convince him that he was wrong and could make him anti-German, was the action taken by Berlin.

Upon Colonel House, the German Ambassador's letter produced an effect that was immediate and definite.

'It is absurd to call the letter [he recorded] an answer to our request for terms. Germany has evidently long ago determined upon her U-boat warfare, and the peace proposals which she put out last month were probably gotten up for home consumption and to better Germany's position in the eyes of neutrals. She desires some justification for her submarine warfare and thought she could get it by declaring her willingness to make peace.'

The Colonel recognized without any mental effort that the German declaration meant war. He spent a busy afternoon and evening, for the word had sifted through to New York. People said: 'It has come at last.' Would there be riots, explosions of munitions plants, derailments? — the practical manifestation of all those German intrigues which every one had talked about for two years? What attempt would be made by the interned German ships?

'As the afternoon grew late [wrote House], the excitement became intense, for the different press agencies had begun to receive the news. Wiseman, Gaunt, newspapermen, etc., etc., called me up to discuss it. We had a dinner engagement at the Plaza with Frank Trumbull, and the confusion of dressing, of receiving visitors, and of answering telegrams and telephone calls was something beyond endurance.

'Trumbull had for his other guests Mrs. Henry Redmond, Stuyvesant Fish, and an Englishman, Mr. Askwith. I was constantly interrupted by telephone calls. Wiseman had told

me that there was unusual activity in German and Austrian circles; that the Consulate had been open and busy all the night before, and that they were planning to do something with the interned ships. I therefore telephoned Dudley Malone before we went to the Plaza and succeeded in getting him just as he was leaving for a dinner engagement. He broke his engagement and began at once to take such precautions as seemed necessary in regard to the interned ships.

'It was necessary for me to leave the dinner before the entertainment which Trumbull had provided for our pleasure was finished, for I had an engagement with Malone before I left for Washington on the midnight train. . . .

'Dudley Malone called for me at eleven o'clock and we went to the station together. I could see that there was a good deal of suppressed excitement among the Pennsylvania officials who knew of my departure for Washington. A tenseness was already beginning to be felt since the newspapers had gotten out extras foreshadowing the seriousness of the situation.'

House arrived in the capital in time for breakfast at the White House. He spent the morning with Wilson and by half-past eleven Mr. Lansing had finished drafting the formal documents which broke relations between Germany and the United States.

CHAPTER XV

THE END OF NEUTRALITY

But the right is more precious than peace.

Wilson's Address to Congress, April 2, 1917

I

ON January 31, 1917, the same day as that on which Bernstorff disclosed to House Germany's secret terms, he sent to Mr. Lansing a notification, sufficiently clear, although wrapped in a wealth of verbiage, that Germany planned on the following day to resume the 'ruthless' submarine warfare. 'From February 1, 1917, all sea traffic will be stopped with every available weapon and without further notice' in a barred zone surrounding the British Isles and in the Mediterranean; 'neutral ships navigating these blockade zones do so at their own risk'; sailings of regular American passenger steamers might continue on certain conditions; namely, that the steamers followed a lane designated by the Germans, bore certain distinguishing marks (red and white stripes on the hull and a red and white chequered flag), and carried no contraband according to the German contraband list. Under such conditions, one steamer a week might sail in each direction.

The unconscious humor of the stipulations, at least in American eyes, did not rob the notification of its grim significance, for this was the climax of the long controversy between Germany and the United States, the prelude to America's entrance into the World War. Since the spring of 1915, President Wilson had protested against Germany's use of submarines, involving, as it did, the abandonment of the practice of warning and the disregard of the lives of non-combatants. Grudgingly and with many attempted eva-

sions, Germany had agreed to limit the submarine warfare by observing the rules of warning and search. After the sinking of the *Sussex* in the spring of 1916, Berlin promised that merchant ships would not be sunk 'without warning and without saving human lives.' The warmth of anti-Wilson feeling among many sympathizers with the Entente cause was so intense that it obscured the value of the assistance actually rendered by Wilson to that cause through the restrictions he laid upon the use of submarines. To a large extent, he had been serving it at the same time that he protected neutral rights. Because of American protests, Germany held her hand in the submarine war, much to the disgust of extremists in that country.

In Germany this virtual, although technically neutral assistance given by America to the Entente, as well as the mass of munitions which America exported to France and Great Britain, was evidently placed at a high evaluation. At any rate, the German High Command had come to believe that the United States hindered German victory more effectively as a neutral, by blocking unrestricted submarine warfare, than it would as an active belligerent; better that the United States should enter the war than that Germany should longer deprive herself of the one weapon which might isolate England and achieve German victory. Hence the decision to resume freedom of submarine action and to withdraw the pledge that Berlin had given in the previous spring.

That decision was not altogether unexpected. Early in the autumn, definite letters from Berlin had brought the warning that, unless Wilson succeeded in initiating peace negotiations, irresistible pressure would be brought upon the Chancellor to utilize every war weapon of which Germany disposed. Wilson's note of December resulted from his feeling that some step was necessary to avert the danger of a break with Germany on the submarine issue. Even during the weeks that followed, while Bernstorff was profuse in his

promises of securing moderate peace terms from Berlin, Colonel House was skeptical. He knew that the liberal influences in the German Government had suffered defeat, and he began to suspect that the negotiations of December and January were designed to strengthen the morale of the German people and to make the continuance of the struggle on their part appear purely defensive.

Ambassador Bernstorff's letter, accordingly, in which he announced the resumption of the ruthless submarine campaign, while it came as a bitter disappointment, could not have furnished a complete surprise to Colonel House. When he took the night train for Washington, on January 31, answering the President's call, he recognized not only that all hope of American mediation had finally passed, destroyed by the German Government which had seemed to demand it so anxiously, but also that the end of the long period of American neutrality was approaching.

'I went directly to the White House [he recorded] and had breakfast alone. Soon after breakfast the President appeared, and we were together continuously until two o'clock. I handed him Bernstorff's letter and he read it aloud. He saw at once how perfectly shallow it was. Bernstorff's protestations were almost a mockery when the substance of the cable from his Government was considered.

'The President said Lansing was preparing a communication to Bernstorff, citing our notes and theirs in the *Sussex* case, and their promise of May 4. This was being prepared for the purpose of giving Bernstorff his passports if it was thought advisable.'

To a greater extent than House, it would appear, Wilson had placed confidence in the hopes which Bernstorff had held out of securing definite peace proposals from Germany that might lead to negotiations. He had realized, in the

abstract, the danger of the step they now announced; but it seemed to him inconceivable that it should come at this moment, when all their talk was of peace. The sudden *volte-face* aroused in him a resentment against the German Government such as had not resulted from any previous German action. He had exaggerated the proximity of success in the matter of bringing the belligerents together, and his disappointment was intensified.

‘The President was sad and depressed [continued the Colonel], and I did not succeed at any time during the day in lifting him into a better frame of mind. He was deeply disappointed in the sudden and unwarranted action of the German Government. . . . The President said he felt as if the world had suddenly reversed itself; that after going from east to west, it had begun to go from west to east, and that he could not get his balance.

‘The question we discussed longest was whether it was better to give Bernstorff his passports immediately or wait until the Germans committed some overt act. When Lansing came, this discussion was renewed, and we all agreed that it was best to give him his passports at once, because by taking that course there was a possibility of bringing the Germans to their senses. If we waited for the overt act, they would believe we had accepted their ultimatum. I had in mind, too, the effect it would have on the Allies. We would not be nearly so advantageously situated if we waited, as if we acted promptly.’

At the capital and all through the country, speculation was intense as to what action Wilson would take. In the private study in the White House there seems to have been no question. The President had warned Germany in definite terms, after the sinking of the *Sussex*, that continuance of the unrestricted use of the submarine meant a rupture of

diplomatic relations; and he was determined to give effect to his threat. Critics of Wilson later argued that the step he now planned ought to have been taken on any one of a dozen occasions in the preceding year and a half. Wilson, however, was determined that the rupture should not come on a confused issue. In each case of submarine sinking since the *Lusitania*, there had been conflicting evidence. But now Germany in cold blood threatened the rights of humanity, and his patience came to an end.

Even now, however, Wilson refused to be convinced that the diplomatic rupture meant war. Perhaps he had in mind the arguments of Mr. Walter Page, who had asserted that merely by sending Bernstorff home, the United States would so impress Germany that she would see the hopelessness of her cause and the war would end.

Colonel House did not agree. He had always believed that a diplomatic break would inevitably lead to war, and he was the more sure of this because the defeat of liberal elements in Berlin signified Germany's unalterable determination to push the submarine blockade to its most effective limits.

'The President was insistent [wrote House] that he would not allow it to lead to war if it could possibly be avoided. He reiterated his belief that it would be a crime for this Government to involve itself in the war to such an extent as to make it impossible to save Europe afterward. He spoke of Germany as "a madman that should be curbed." I asked if he thought it fair to the Allies to ask them to do the curbing without doing our share. He noticeably winced at this, but still held to his determination not to become involved if it were humanly possible to do otherwise.

'We sat listlessly during the morning until Lansing arrived, which was not until half-past eleven o'clock. The President nervously arranged his books and walked up and down the floor. Mrs. Wilson spoke of golf and asked whether

I thought it would look badly if the President went on the links. I thought the American people would feel that he should not do anything so trivial at such a time.

'In great governmental crises of this sort, the public have no conception what is happening on the stage behind the curtain. If the actors and the scenery could be viewed, as a tragedy like this is being prepared, it would be a revelation. When the decision has been made, nothing further can be done until it is time for the curtain to rise. This will be when the President goes before Congress to explain why he is sending the German Ambassador home. Meanwhile we are listlessly killing time. We had finished the discussion within a half-hour and there was nothing further to say. The President at last suggested that we play a game of pool.¹ Toward the end of the second game, Lansing was announced. The President, Lansing, and I then returned to the study.

'Lansing was so nearly of our mind that there was little discussion. He read what he had written and we accepted it. The President showed him the German communication which the German Ambassador had made through me. Lansing took it to have a copy made, and then left.

'The President asked if I thought he ought to call a Cabinet meeting to-day. I thought it was not necessary; that he could call it to-morrow at the usual time, since it had been decided that Bernstorff should not be given his passports until Saturday morning. The President had promised Senator Stone, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, that he would not give Bernstorff his passports without first notifying him, Stone. Stone is in St. Louis, and the President has telegraphed him to come at once to Washington.'

On February 3, President Wilson addressed Congress,

¹ According to a later statement of House, neither he nor the President was an adept.

announcing the break in diplomatic relations with Germany. Disappointed and emotionally roused against the German Government, he nevertheless emphasized the pacific character of the policy he hoped to pursue.

'I refuse to believe that it is the intention of the German authorities to do in fact what they have warned us they will feel at liberty to do. . . . Only actual overt acts on their part can make me believe it even now. . . . We wish to serve no selfish ends. We seek to stand true alike in thought and action to the immemorial principles of our people. . . . These are the bases of peace, not war. God grant we may not be challenged to defend them by acts of wilful injustice on the part of the Government of Germany!'

Convinced though he was that war was inevitable, Colonel House utilized his influence constantly to prevent the growth of belligerent hysteria, and to warn his British friends not to attempt to force Wilson's hand or hurry him. He had returned to New York.

'*February 3, 1917*: Suppressed excitement everywhere. The British contingent had the field. All of them either telephoned or called. Willert of the *London Times* was my most interesting visitor. I advised him, as indeed I did Dilnot of the *London Chronicle* and other correspondents, not to send too enthusiastic despatches to their papers; that while the President would break diplomatic relations with Germany, it did not necessarily mean war. I thought the Allies would be delighted with the news and the President would be popular for ten days or two weeks, but the usual reaction would follow and something would come up again to make them critical. I thought the President had been treated unfairly and that amends should be made.

'I insisted that the United States were unafraid, although

the Allies could not appreciate this feeling on our part. It might be the valor of ignorance, but, nevertheless, it existed, and we could not bring ourselves to feel the gratitude which Great Britain and France thought we should feel for the battles they claimed to be fighting for us as well as themselves.'

During the days that followed, the activities of Colonel House were multiplied. He spent long hours with editors and journalists of all shades of opinion. He drafted plans with secret service agents, in view of possible disturbances or plots. He worked constantly to make the German-Americans feel that the cause of America was their cause, and to persuade them to put their knowledge of Germany at the service of the United States.

'February 5, 1917: Chief Flynn of the Secret Service was my first caller [the Colonel recorded]. I gave him some cablegrams from our Minister at Berne telling of a plot to assassinate the President and giving the name of a German in New York who was concerned in it. Flynn and I went over the situation carefully as to the possible disturbances here which might arise in the event of war with Germany.

'Von Weigand took lunch with me. I wanted to extract further information regarding conditions in Germany. I see these Germans and German-Americans and get what they know or are willing to tell, and try to piece things together, just as one would a picture puzzle. . . .

'February 6, 1917: Ralph Pulitzer called at ten o'clock. I am trying to get the editors and managers of newspapers to keep out all sensational matter, and I am counselling calmness. I am also trying to keep out any disagreeable references to German-Americans. Pulitzer is in sympathy with this movement. . . .

'February 7, 1917: Commissioner Woods called to go over

the general situation and to tell of the plans to meet it. . . . I suggested that the Mayor appoint a committee of safety My idea is to have many German-Americans on the committee.

'February 15, 1917: Chief Flynn came to discuss secret service matters. . . .

'February 16, 1917: Roy Howard of the United Press and Dudley Malone came to lunch. After lunch I told Howard of my activities toward keeping the German-Americans quiet and he agreed to coöperate. I put him in touch with the Commissioner of Police and the Mayor. When the movement is started here, he is to notify, through the United Press, mayors of all the cities in the United States to form similar organizations.

'Herman Ridder of the *Staats-Zeitung* came to tell me of the loyalty of the German-Americans. I approved the plan which he outlined of getting them together in committees to offer their services to the Mayor. I could give his plan my most cordial support, since it was my own which had come to Ridder indirectly through the Mayor and Woods. I congratulated him upon the patriotism of the German-Americans and did what I could to stimulate that feeling.

'March 9, 1917: Phillips saw something of my intense activities while here and wondered how I lived through the day. I told him it was because I slept well at night and did not worry about anything, no matter how serious it might be. If I did not have this faculty, I could not last a week during these fateful days. . . .

'March 10, 1917: I had a long and interesting telephone conversation with Frank Polk about current affairs. It will be remembered that about half my activities have but little record here in the way of documentary evidence, since they are largely done by telephone and by personal conference. For instance, the State Department communicates with me practically every day and sometimes oftener. . . .

'*March 16, 1917:* Paul Warburg was my first caller. He is very fair-minded, although pro-German in his sympathies. He knows that at the present moment it is to this country's advantage to coöperate with the Allies. . . .

'*March 25, 1917:* Although Sunday, this has been one of my busiest days. It began at ten o'clock with the pacifists, including Amos Pinchot, Paul Kellogg, and Miss Lillian Wald. I think I satisfied them that the President knew more about the situation than they did, and was quite as anxious to keep out of war. . . .

'*March 30, 1917:*— was my first caller. He came . . . , so he said, to have me "brush the cobwebs out of his brain." This process seems more satisfactory to him than to me.'

II

Even after definite assurances of the diplomatic rupture, Count von Bernstorff continued his active efforts to prevent war between the United States and Germany, and renewed his endeavors to stop the submarine blockade planned by his Government.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *February 10, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The Dutch Minister called this morning. He said one reason your call to the neutrals had no response was because the neutrals had been trying to get you for two years to coöperate with them and that you had refused until a crisis arose.

He thinks if you would call a neutral conference at Washington, with the suggestion that the Ministers act as representatives, you could get the neutrals to join the United States in formulating a plan of action directed against violation of sea rights.

I have a notion that this plan was suggested to him by

Bernstorff, than whom he has no closer friend among the diplomatic corps.

Knowing that van Rappard [the Dutch Minister] would take whatever I told him back to Bernstorff, I used the opportunity to advantage. I gave him some idea of the potential force of this country from a military, financial, and industrial viewpoint, and told him that if we were pushed into war, the efforts of even England would be insignificant in comparison to what we could and would do. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On February 15, Bernstorff and his staff sailed from New York. His departure was marked by an absence of animosity which, in view of the stories circulated about the activities of the German Embassy in conspiracies and propaganda, might seem surprising. House was convinced that Bernstorff himself had taken good care to know nothing of the intrigues of von Papen and Boy-Ed, and he was certain of the Ambassador's good faith and zeal in attempting to prevent the resumption of the U-boat warfare, a certainty which was later justified by the publication of Bernstorff's despatches to his Government. Until Germany withdrew her *Sussex* pledge, House had advocated keeping Bernstorff at Washington, for he saw in him an instrument by which the extremists in Berlin might be kept in check. On his side, the German Ambassador left with the kindest feelings for the Colonel.

'Dudley Malone telephoned this morning [recorded House on February 15] telling of Bernstorff's departure. He said both Bernstorff and the Countess were inexpressibly sad. The Ambassador's message to me was, "Give him my love and tell him he is the best friend I have in America. He

has saved me many times, and but for him it would have been impossible for me to have remained as long as I have." There is something pathetic about this message, for, as a matter of fact, while I have done much for Bernstorff, it has been done merely in line with my duty, as I saw it. . . .'

Wilson's desire to avoid actual war did not lead him to waver in his resolve to permit no compromise with Germany so long as she maintained the submarine warfare. Word came to House on February 11 that the Swiss Minister, who had taken over the care of German interests in the United States, was proposing negotiations designed to reestablish diplomatic relations. Officials of the State Department were evidently afraid that Wilson might weaken. The President's jaw was set, however, and he assured House that he need fear no temporizing.

'Frank Polk telephoned from Washington [recorded the Colonel, on February 12] to tell of the President's reply to the German overtures made through the Swiss Government. Polk telephoned last night to ask me to write the President concerning this. I did so, in time for him to receive it this morning. . . .

'*February 13, 1917*: The President's letter, received this morning, assured me that there was no cause for uneasiness about the Swiss-German move; that it would not work. He insists they must renew and carry out the pledge of last April if they want to talk to him now, or else propose peace on terms they know we can act upon.'

Public opinion had greeted the dismissal of von Bernstorff with unmistakable approval, and, on the Atlantic seaboard certainly, the assumption was general that war with Germany was almost sure to follow. From various quarters, however, opposing currents trickled into House's study.

'Durant, head of the General Motors Company, called to express the hope that the President would keep us out of war. He has just returned from the Far West and insists that he met only one man between New York and California who wanted war. He believes we are sitting on a volcano and that war might cause an eruption. I did not quite follow his argument, nor did I agree with it. He was surprised to learn of my peace activities, which began before the war and which have continued without cessation until our break with Germany.'

The chance of peace negotiations through Austria still left a loophole which both Wilson and House wished to explore. Count Tarnowski, the new Austrian Ambassador, arrived in Washington almost simultaneously with the announcement of the German submarine decision, and shortly afterwards came Ambassador Penfield's secretary from Vienna with news of a popular desire for peace in Austria-Hungary.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, February 8, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... Cardeza, Penfield's secretary, has just landed. He gives me an intelligent résumé of conditions in Austria.

There is a general demand for peace. The Austrians and Hungarians are at swords' points, and the Government does not dare call Parliament together. Many of its members are in jail. There is great antagonism between the Germans and Austrians, but Germans largely officer the Austrian troops.

Food conditions are bad, but he thinks it is possible to go through another winter. There is a shortage of metals, which is perhaps their most serious problem. . . . There is little ill feeling against America.

Your affectionate

E. M. HOUSE

'Much to my surprise [noted House, at the moment that Wilson decided to send Bernstorff home], Lansing agreed with the President and me that, if we could possibly retain the Austrian Ambassador, we should do so. I advised the President to begin at once with Tarnowski and see whether we could not make peace proposals through the Austrians. I believe we have made a mistake in confining ourselves so wholly to the English and the Germans, for they are the real belligerents and the most stubborn of them all. This conflict comes down so largely to a question of supremacy between these two nations, that neither one will likely listen to a reasonable peace unless their allies force them to it.'

On returning to New York, Colonel House gathered that the liberal element in British circles, as represented by Sir William Wiseman, was of the opinion that the attempt to work through Austria was worth while.¹

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, February 2, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I talked with Wiseman this morning and found that his mind was the same as yours, Lansing's, and mine. He took it for granted that you would send Bernstorff home, but expressed the hope that some way would be found to keep Tarnowski. He believes it might be possible to continue peace negotiations through him, and in a much more favorable way than through the German Government, for whom the Allies have such an abiding distrust. . . .

¹ At this moment the brother-in-law of the Emperor Carl, Prince Sixtus of Bourbon, an officer in the Belgian army, was engaged in secret negotiations which the French and British hoped might lead to a separate peace with Austria. Sixtus was encouraged by Cambon of the French Foreign Office and by Lloyd George. See Manteyer, *The Austrian Peace Offer*, with corroborative documents.

The sending of Bernstorff home may, after all, prove to be to the general advantage. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'February 4, 1917: Frank Polk telephoned early this morning to tell of conditions at Washington, particularly regarding Tarnowski. They are following our suggestion as best they can, and are endeavoring to segregate him from von Bernstorff and not break off relations with Austria.'

It was necessary, however, to make certain that Austria would disassociate herself from Germany's ruthless submarine campaign, and House evidently felt that this was doubtful in the extreme. 'If Austria holds to Germany's new submarine policy,' he wrote Wilson on February 7, 'if I were you, I would send the whole lot home with the Germans.'

No word came as to the Austrian attitude, and on February 18 a note was sent to Vienna, asking for a definite statement of the Austrian position regarding submarine warfare and whether the assurances that had been given at the time of the sinking of the *Persia* and *Ancona* were to be regarded as still in force. The reply, delivered on March 6, was evasive. The Hapsburg Government maintained the assurances given at the time of the *Ancona* incident, but also insisted that neutrals sailing on ships of belligerent States in the barred zone did so at their own risk. In these circumstances it was decided that Count Tarnowski should not be permitted to present his credentials, and that diplomatic relations with Austria must be broken. Not until the following December was war declared, but all hope of working through Austria toward a general peace was immediately given up.

III

Wilson was waiting for what he called the 'overt act' before he took further steps against Germany, but the possibility of avoiding hostilities daily diminished.

'The President's assertion to me some weeks ago [recorded House, on February 12] that this country would not go to war, seems likely to be unverified, for we are drifting into it as rapidly as I expected.'

Critics of the President complained then and later that he permitted the country to drift, instead of himself leading it. The answer to the complaint is that, during this period of eight weeks following the dismissal of Bernstorff, public opinion crystallized in the conviction that war was necessary. A hasty declaration, any attempt of Wilson to hurry the country into hostilities, would have weakened the impression that he had done everything in his power to keep the peace and accepted war only as a last resort to protect American honor and security. It was this impression which led the most pacifist regions to fill their military quotas with enthusiasm and saved the country from the conscientious objector.

Misguided German diplomacy did its utmost to strengthen the growing feeling in the United States that war with Germany could not be avoided. On February 26, Colonel House was called to the telephone by Frank Polk and informed that the British Naval Intelligence had received and deciphered a sensational telegram from the German Foreign Office to von Eckhardt, the German Minister in Mexico City. Signed by Zimmermann himself and dated January 16, the telegram announced the imminence of unrestricted submarine warfare, and instructed the German Minister, in case of war with the United States, to attempt to arrange a German-Mexican alliance, on the understanding that Mexico

would be assisted to reconquer New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. Zimmermann further suggested that Carranza should approach Japan.

Mr. Polk fully realized that the publication of this telegram would blow American resentment to a white heat; it would strengthen enormously popular support of the President in any action he might take against Germany in defence of American rights on the sea. The same thought may have led the British to pass the deciphered telegram on to Washington. Wilson himself was disturbed and in doubt as to whether the publication of the telegram would not bring on a crisis he could not control. House urged immediate publication.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *February 27, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am not surprised to read the despatch concerning the German proposal to Mexico. I have been satisfied for a long time that they have laid plans to stir up all the trouble they could, in order to occupy our attention in case of hostilities.

I hope you will publish the despatch to-morrow. It will make a profound impression both on Congress and on the country. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The effect of publication was exactly what had been anticipated. Many persons naturally raised doubts as to the authenticity of the telegram; but Lansing formally assured Congress, and Zimmermann himself confessed, that it was genuine. Speculation was uncontrolled as to how it had been intercepted: it was rumored that the messenger had been caught by American guardsmen on the Mexican border; that a copy had been taken from von Bernstorff at Halifax; that

it was in a mysterious box seized by the British on the ship which Bernstorff sailed on.

Apparently the Germans themselves did not know how the message was caught; and few persons suspected that it was not the American State Department, but the British Admiralty which secured the despatch and gave it to the American Embassy in London. The secret of the capture of the incriminating message was carefully kept, even between the Allies, and no indiscreet pride of accomplishment filtered forth to indicate how it had been intercepted.

‘Hoaller, of the British Embassy [Colonel House recorded on March 9], called by appointment to discuss the Mexican situation. . . . He asked me in the most naïve way how it was that we had obtained the Zimmermann note. I replied, “I think you know.” He assured me that he had not the remotest idea, that perhaps the Ambassador knew and had not told him. He expressed the intention of taking the Ambassador to task for his reticence. I happen to suspect that Hoaller helped unearth it all. . . . “Blinker” Hall, head of the British Naval Intelligence Bureau, was the man who secured, deciphered, and gave it to us.’

Admiral Hall, as Chief of the Naval Intelligence, had since the early days of the war displayed a genius for the interception and elucidation of German secrets. He threw his nets very wide and, what was more important, never allowed the Germans even to suspect that they were spread. In the present instance he picked up the telegram in Mexico City, despite von Eckhardt’s assertion that telegrams were never out of the steel safe or the hands of the one man who deciphered them, and were read to the Minister at night ‘in a low voice.’ It was not the last of the exploits of Hall, who until the end of the war knew more of the secrets of the German Foreign Office than the German spies themselves.

Certain it is that he played a part in convincing America that war with Germany was inevitable.

Colonel House to Sir William Reginald Hall

NEW YORK, September 22, 1917

DEAR ADMIRAL HALL:

I want to congratulate you and felicitate you over the great work you have been doing.

I believe you were largely responsible for the overthrow of the recent German Ministry — certainly Zimmermann's downfall was brought about by the *exposé* of his note to the German Ambassador in Mexico.

I cannot think at the moment of any man who has done more useful service in this war than you, and I salute you.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Less spectacular, but of great practical moment, was the blockade of American shipping that resulted from the new submarine warfare. In view of German threats, shippers and shipping companies decided to play safe and keep their vessels in port. The American Line was told by the State Department that the rights of American vessels to 'traverse all parts of the high seas are the same now as they were prior to the issuance of the German declaration, and that a neutral merchant vessel may, if its owners believe that it is liable to be unlawfully attacked, take any measures to prevent or resist such attacks.' But on February 7, it was announced that the Government would provide no convoys. The congestion of American shipping constantly increased; and while the evil was, as Wilson pointed out, one of apprehension rather than of fact, it involved a humiliation and a material sacrifice which soon became intolerable.

On February 26, the President appeared before Congress, asking for powers enabling him to arm merchant ships

and to take other necessary measures for the protection of American citizens and property on the high seas. His demand meant a state of 'armed neutrality' hardly distinguishable from war. Wilson emphasized the fact that, despite four weeks' experience of ruthless submarine warfare, the 'overt act' had not yet been committed. But 'it would be foolish to deny that the situation is fraught with the gravest possibilities and dangers. No thoughtful man can fail to see that the necessity for definite action may come at any time if we are in fact, and not in word merely, to defend our elementary rights as a neutral nation. It would be most imprudent to be unprepared.' The President closed with an insistence upon the rights of humanity, 'without which there is no civilization. . . . We are speaking of no selfish material rights, but of rights which our hearts support and whose foundation is that righteous passion for justice upon which all law, all structures alike of family, of state, and of mankind must rest, as upon the ultimate base of our existence and our liberty.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, February 26, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I believe your speech before Congress to-day will meet the approval of practically every American. The last two paragraphs are as fine as anything in the English language.

Henry White told me last night that Bernstorff said to him before he left that in sending him home you have done the only thing that could be done in the circumstances. He said that Bernstorff deeply regretted the action of his Government, believing that peace would have soon come through your efforts if they had not been interrupted.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

In answer to Wilson's appeal, the House of Representatives introduced a bill to carry out his request for power to arm merchant vessels, passing it on March 1 by a vote of 403 to 13. On February 27, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported the measure enthusiastically, despite the bitter opposition of its Chairman, Senator Stone of Missouri, who had for two years fought every measure that seemed to endanger peaceful relations with Germany. Under his leadership and that of Senator La Follette, a filibuster was organized which threatened to kill the bill, for the session would automatically close on March 4.

Colonel House came over from New York on March 3, for the inauguration and to watch the crisis in the Senate.

'We drove immediately to the White House [he wrote]. After having tea with the President and Mrs. Wilson, the President and I went to his study, where he read me his Inaugural Address. There was much to commend and nothing to criticize, since it was a replica of his Senate Address of January 22.

'We were much concerned about the action of the Senate regarding the bill to permit the arming of merchantmen, and little else was talked of. There were some other house guests, consisting almost wholly of relatives. . . .

'*March 4, 1917:* The day is dark and gloomy, with high winds and floods of rain. The President and Mrs. Wilson started for the Capitol at 10.30. This was necessary in order that the President might sign the bills as they came in from Congress, and be ready to take the oath of office at twelve o'clock. They asked me to go with them, but I thought it best not to do so. . . .'

Throughout the long session of March 3 and until noon of March 4, the debate in the Senate had continued to rage over the bill for the arming of merchantmen; whenever a fresh

attempt was made to reach a vote, the group of twelve filibusterers blocked it inexorably. All that the overwhelming majority could accomplish was to draft a manifesto, signed by seventy-five Senators, indicating their approval of Wilson's demand: 'We desire the statement entered in the record,' it ran, 'to establish the fact that the Senate favors the legislation and would pass it if a vote could be secured.'

'When the President returned [Colonel House noted], he showed much excitement and was bitter in his denunciation of the small band of Senators who undertook to use the arbitrary rules of the Senate to defeat the wishes of the majority regarding the arming of merchantmen. I suggested that he say to the public what he was saying to me, and to say it immediately. His answer was that he could not put it in his Inaugural Address, because it would spoil the texture of it, but he would put it out in a few days. I urged him to do it now, giving it to the newspapers to-morrow morning, in order to strike while the iron was hot. He wondered whether he could do it so quickly, but said he would try.

'He shut himself in practically all the afternoon, and later produced the statement to be given out for publication in to-morrow morning's papers. He called in McAdoo, Burleson, and Tumulty after dinner to discuss it. They were unanimously in favor of the plan.'

Wilson's statement was issued a few hours after the Congress adjourned, and proved to be of infinite value. It crystallized the opinion which had been insulted by the tactics of the filibusterers, and which demanded definite action after so many delays. More than that, it put the President in the light of a leader and helped to efface the memory of what so many people regarded as listlessness or cowardliness in the face of German affronts. Of more value still, perhaps, it revealed the strong underlying passion in

the nature of this man who had so frequently been pictured as without emotions. 'A little group of wilful men,' he declared, 'representing no opinion but their own, have rendered the great Government of the United States helpless and contemptible.' The wave of protest which swept the country endorsed the President's indictment and encouraged him to proceed with the arming of ships as might be necessary, of his own executive authority. On March 12, Secretary Lansing announced that the Government had determined 'to place upon all American merchant ships sailing through the barred areas an armed guard for the protection of the vessels and the lives of the persons on board.'

IV

The country was, in truth, waiting for the President to lead. On the very day following his address to Congress, in which he declared that the overt act had not yet occurred, a submarine sank the Cunard liner *Laconia* without warning. Twelve persons perished, of whom two, both women, were American citizens. A fortnight later, on March 12, the American steamer *Algonquin*, carrying foodstuffs from New York to London, was sunk without warning, although the crew made safe their escape, and, after twenty-seven hours in open boats, reached the Scilly Isles. A week later, on Monday, March 19, word came that within twenty-four hours three American ships had been sunk by submarines, and that in the case of one, the *Vigilancia*, fifteen members of the crew had been lost.

Wilson's delay in taking more decisive action than that implied by 'armed neutrality' aroused bitter comment abroad and uneasiness at home. As House had prophesied, the dismissal of Bernstorff sent American stock high for the moment in Allied countries, but it began to fall rapidly when the diplomatic rupture did not lead immediately to war.

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Ambassador W. H. Page to Colonel House

[Telegram]

LONDON, March 9, 1917

I find that continued delay in sending out American ships, especially American liners, is producing an increasingly unfavorable impression. . . . Delay is taken to mean the submission of our Government to the German blockade. . . . There is a tendency, even in high Government circles, to regard the reasons for delay which are published here as technicalities which a national crisis should sweep aside. British opinion couples the delay of our ships with the sinking of the *Laconia* and the Zimmermann telegram, and seems to be reaching the conclusion that our Government will not be able to take positive action under any provocation. The feeling which the newspaper despatches from the United States produce on the British mind, is that our Government is holding back our people until the blockade of our ships, the Zimmermann telegram, and the *Laconia* shall be forgotten and until the British navy shall overcome the German submarines. There is danger that this feeling harden into a conviction and interfere with any influence that we might otherwise have when peace comes.

So friendly a man as Viscount Grey of Fallodon writes me privately from his retirement: 'I do not see how the United States can sit still while neutral shipping is swept off the sea. If no action is taken, it will be like a great blot in history or a failure that must grievously depress the future history of America.'

PAGE

House was not seriously troubled by Mr. Page's implied argument, that what the British thought ought to be regarded as a decisive factor. He believed that the United States must decide the question of peace or war in accordance with American interests and conscience rather than to satisfy

foreign opinion, and he was certain that Wilson would not fail in the crisis. 'I have never thought we could please the Allies,' he replied, 'unless a change in their fortunes comes about.' Official Washington, however, both State Department and Cabinet, were disturbed by Wilson's apparent unwillingness to take decisive steps, and they looked to House as the only man who could be expected to hurry the President. So far as a declaration of war was concerned, the Colonel was willing to wait; but he believed with his whole heart that no time should be lost in beginning active preparation.

'Billy Phillips came from Washington [wrote House on March 9] to deliver some messages from the Secretary and Frank Polk. Fortunately, the main things the Secretary wanted, the President had already done a few hours ago; that is, he gave the order for the arming of merchantmen and called Congress in special session. . . .

'*March 19, 1917*: — called me twice from Washington. He is disturbed at the President's inertia, and he and Lansing wish me to come to Washington to see if I cannot stir him into action. Both . . . wish Congress called immediately. I doubt whether this is wise. The President has authority now to do what is necessary to prepare the country before a declaration of war, and it is to our advantage to make some preparation before hostilities begin. Our coastwise shipping might find itself in a bad way if war were declared suddenly.

'*March 20, 1917*: X was my first caller. He is disturbed because there is not more activity in Washington and because the President has no well-defined policy of action. He believes there will be an unfavorable reaction against the President unless he formulates a plan and announces it, at least to his closest advisers, and follows it vigorously. . . .'

Wilson was evidently persuaded of the need to call Congress

at once; but, although he wanted the opinion of the Cabinet, he showed no inclination to share his with them.

'*March 22, 1917*: Gregory told of the last Cabinet meeting [March 20]. He thinks the President had no idea of calling Congress together earlier than the 16th, but was persuaded to call it on the 2d of April because of the unanimous opinion of the Cabinet that he should do so. He said Burleson remarked that the people wished this country to go into the war actively. The President replied that it did not make so much difference what the people wished as what was right. Burleson answered that, if he were President and a situation like this arose, he would want the opinion of the people back of him.

'The President gave no intimation to the Cabinet as to what he intended to do, but early next morning he called Congress for April 2. When Gregory telephoned yesterday at ten o'clock, to tell me he would be in New York to-day, he did not then know that the President had made the call.

'— came in the afternoon to talk over departmental matters and to tell of the situation in Washington. He says there was something akin to panic there in the early part of the week and that there was a feeling in governmental circles that, if the President did not act promptly, a strike would come about in Cabinet and official circles. He states that Secretary Baker is now belligerent, but the condition of army affairs has not been bettered materially in the past few months. He believes if war is declared, there will be great weakness shown in the War Department as well as in the Navy, and the President will come in for an avalanche of criticism. . . .'

Mr. Wilson continued to keep his own counsel, and House, despite his conviction that he must soon take active steps, refused to hurry him, confident that before the crisis fully

developed the call to Washington would come. On March 24, Mr. Lansing sought out the President's adviser in desperation.

'Lansing has no idea [wrote House] what the President has in mind to say in his address to Congress when it convenes. He saw the President yesterday and tried in several ways to get some line upon his thought, but failed. He wishes me to write the President and tell him what I think should be done, believing my advice will be along the lines of his, Lansing's, views. He is as anxious as I am that the President should take the reins in his own hands and not allow Congress to run away with the situation.'

Wilson was evidently determined that our entrance into the war should be based upon reasoned judgment and not upon hasty emotion; 'we must put excited feeling away,' he said a few days later. Whereas House was willing to delay in order to give time for naval and military preparation, Wilson needed it to assure himself that there was in truth no escape from war. The step he was about to embark upon was a violation of all that had hitherto seemed most sacred to his political faith. The undercurrent of emotion by which he was often assailed urged him to fight; he resolutely strove to set it one side, and to listen only to his Calvinist conscience. The struggle must have been sharp. Washington and the world waited.

House was sure of the President's final decision. On March 21 he wrote to Page:

'As far as we are concerned, we are in the war now, even though a formal declaration may not occur until after Congress meets, April 2. All the departments are preparing as rapidly as possible, but, even so, it will take time to get in a position where the Germans cannot destroy our coastwise

shipping in the event they have submarines lurking near our coasts.'

Much of the influence which the Colonel exercised over President Wilson resulted from his invariable refusal to become excited or to press arguments upon him. When he finally decided that the time had come for him to discuss matters with Wilson, his announcement contained no reference to the riddle that was driving the capital mad, and it might be described as unostentatious.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *March 25, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

If it is convenient to you I will come down on Tuesday, for there are some things I would like to talk over with you. . . .

Will you not telegraph me upon receipt of this, whether it is convenient for me to come or whether you would prefer another time?

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The Colonel did not wait for a reply. On the following day he had a long interview with Howard Coffin, of the Council of National Defence, which disturbed him greatly. The interview, he recorded,

'definitely determined me to go to Washington to-morrow, to talk things out with the President. I am also anxious to talk with him concerning his message to Congress, which in some ways will be the most important one he has yet delivered.' . . .

House found the President at last decided that there was no escape from war. He had fought with himself night after

night, in the hope of seeing some other way out. 'What else can I do?' said Wilson. 'Is there anything else I can do?'

'*March 27, 1917:* I took the 11.08 for Washington [recorded House]. I had a quiet and restful trip. Frank Polk met me at the station and took me to the White House. The President was waiting for me. He had just finished with the Cabinet meeting, which he now holds in the afternoon. He was not well and complained of a headache. We went to his study and discussed matters, particularly his forthcoming message.

'The President asked whether I thought he should ask Congress to declare war, or whether he should say that a state of war exists and ask them for the necessary means to carry it on. I advised the latter. I was afraid of an acrimonious debate if he puts it up to Congress to declare war.'

Evidently Colonel House felt that it was important that the President should meet the crisis in a frame of mind at once humble and determined. He set himself the delicate task, first, to make the President feel the necessity of special effort on his part, and then that by such effort the task might be accomplished successfully.

'I told him a crisis had come in his Administration different from anything he had yet encountered, and I was anxious that he should meet it in a creditable way so that his influence would not be lessened when he came to do the great work which would necessarily follow the war. I said it was not as difficult a situation as many he had already successfully met, but that it was one for which he was not well fitted. He admitted this and said he did not believe he was fitted for the Presidency under such conditions. I thought he was too refined, too civilized, too intellectual, too cultivated not to see the incongruity and absurdity of war.

It needs a man of coarser fibre and one less a philosopher than the President, to conduct a brutal, vigorous, and successful war.'

Having pictured Wilson's disabilities to his face, with a tact which saved the President's temper and a frankness that would have surprised those who insisted that he could listen to nothing but adulation, the Colonel proceeded to enhearten him by indicating the advantages of his position and by reviewing the previous domestic success of his Administration.

'I made him feel, as Mrs. Wilson told me later, that he was not up against so difficult a proposition as he had imagined. In my argument I said that everything that he had to meet in this emergency had been thought out time and time again in other countries, and all we had to do was to take experience as our guide and not worry over the manner of doing it. I thought it not so difficult as taking a more or less ignorant, disorganized party in Congress and forcing it to pass the Federal Reserve Act, the Tariff Act, the Panama Tolls Act, and such other legislation as he had gotten through.

'I felt that he had taken a gamble that there would be no war, and had lost; and the country would hold it to his discredit unless he prosecuted the war successfully. . . . He listened with a kindly and sympathetic attention, and, while he argued with me upon many of the points, he did it dispassionately.'

On the following day, Wilson took up with House the substance of the message to Congress on April 2, in which he was to ask them to declare the existence of a state of war. It is interesting to note that only five days before giving this, the greatest speech of his career, the President had done no more than jot down the topics he meant to treat. Actual phraseology he left to the last minute.

'Since last night he had made a memorandum of the subjects he thought proper to incorporate and which I approved. . . . He will differentiate between the German people and those who have led them into this disaster. . . . I advised the British Government to do this, but they never acted upon it, and I hope it is to be done now. My purpose was, and is, to break down the German Government by building a fire back of it within Germany. . . .¹ This is the main note I have urged him to strike; that is, this is a war for democracy and it is a war for the German people as well as for other nations.'

House was beset by naturally curious members of the Cabinet, who were anxious to know how far their own desires would be satisfied by Wilson's policy.

'The President played golf this morning [Colonel House noted on March 28], and McAdoo was my first caller. He remained practically all morning and until I told him I had to leave in order to see the President, who had returned and was waiting in his study. McAdoo wants war — war to the hilt. He said his appetite for it was so strong that he would like to quit the Cabinet, raise a regiment, and go to the front. All three of his sons have enlisted. We talked of how to finance the war and the kind of revenue bill we should have in order to meet expenses. . . .'

v

The few days which elapsed before the delivery of Wilson's historic war message House spent in New York, largely

¹ House suggested this as far back as the first *Lusitania* crisis. House to Wilson, June 3, 1915, from London: 'In the event of war with Germany, I would suggest an address to Congress laying the blame of this fearful conflict upon the Kaiser and his military *entourage*, and I would exonerate the great body of German citizenship, stating that we were fighting for their deliverance as well as the deliverance of Europe. This should have a fine effect upon German-Americans.'

engaged in culling from his host of friends indications of public opinion from all parts of the country. These were not invariably of a belligerent nature.

'*March 31, 1917:* Edward G. Lowry came to tell the result of his observations in a two-weeks trip through Kansas and Missouri. He believes the people do not wish war, but that they will follow the President. He said in Missouri they do not seem to know what it is all about. This is the pathos of the thing, and what is true there is true largely all over the world. . . .'

On April 1, House again took the night train for Washington.

'I arrived in time for breakfast. The President and Mrs. Wilson were ready to play golf, and I saw him for a moment only. While he was on the links I motored with Frank Polk, and we discussed pending matters. He says neither Lansing nor any member of the Cabinet knows what the President will say in his address to Congress to-day. . . .'

'McAdoo telephoned and asked about the address and how I liked it. I evaded a direct answer by saying that from what the President had told me of it, I thought it would meet every expectation. . . .'

In the afternoon, Wilson and House went into what the latter called executive session.

'The President read the address to me, and I suggested his eliminating a phrase which read something like this: "until the German people have a government we can trust." He was doubtful about this part of the sentence and I had no difficulty in persuading him to eliminate it. It looked too much like inciting revolution. It is needless to say that no

address he has yet made pleases me more than this one. . . . I have tried to get the President, as my letters will show, to demand among nations the same code of honor and morals as between individuals.¹ He handles this part superbly. . . .

'I asked him why he had not shown the Cabinet his address. He replied that, if he had, every man in it would have had some suggestion to make and it would have been picked to pieces if he had heeded their criticism. He said he preferred to keep it to himself and take the responsibility. I feel that he does his Cabinet an injustice. . . . I have noticed recently that he holds a tighter rein over his Cabinet and that he is impatient of any initiative on their part.'

On the evening of April 2, Wilson appeared before Congress to ask that they declare the existence of a state of war between the United States and Germany. Whatever his hesitation had been, now that he gave the signal for action his leadership was hailed with delight. 'Congress,' said press reports, 'roared cheer after cheer in an outburst of patriotic enthusiasm.'

'The present German submarine warfare against commerce [said Wilson] is a warfare against mankind. It is a war against all nations. . . . Each nation must decide for itself how it will meet it. The choice we make for ourselves must be made with a moderation of counsel and a temperateness of judgment befitting our character and our motives as a nation. We must put excited feeling away. Our motive

¹ House to Wilson, November 17, 1916: 'I wish you would lay down the doctrine sometime soon that nations cannot expect peace and satisfactory relations until they are willing to maintain the same sort of honor as individuals practice towards one another.' And March 9, 1917: 'We are back to the Stone Age, where might makes right. It has taken us thousands of years to reach some sort of social order, and until the same obligations are recognized internationally as they are between individuals, there can be no peace or order in the world. . . .' See also Appendix to Chapter X.

will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only the vindication of right, of human right, of which we are only a single champion. . . . There is one choice we cannot make, we are incapable of making: we will not choose the path of submission. . . . With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking and of the grave responsibilities which it involves, but in unhesitating obedience to what I deem my constitutional duty, I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the Government and people of the United States. . . .'

Having made his decision, Wilson began to escape from the agony of uncertainty which had caught him; but not until he finished his speech and realized the strength of opinion that supported his policy, did he completely regain the confidence necessary to firm leadership. On the afternoon of April 1, he told Frank Cobb of the *World* that he had never been so uncertain about anything in his life as that decision.

'The President was apparently calm during the day [recorded House on April 2], but, as a matter of fact, I could see signs of nervousness. Neither of us did anything except kill time until he was called to the Capitol. In the morning he told me he was determined not to speak after three o'clock, believing it would make a bad impression — an impression that he was unduly pressing matters. I thought differently and persuaded him that he should hold himself ready to address Congress whenever that body indicated their readiness to hear him. It turned out that he began to speak at twenty minutes to nine and finished in about thirty-two minutes. I timed him carefully.

'We had early dinner, at half-past six, for word had come

that Congress had been organized and would be ready to receive him at eight o'clock. We talked of everything excepting the matter in hand. There was no one present at dinner other than members of the family who had come to Washington to hear the address, and no one touched upon the coming speech.

'When we returned from the Capitol, the President, Mrs. Wilson, Margaret, and I foregathered in the Oval Room and talked it over as families are prone to do after some eventful occasion. I had handed the President a clipping from *Current Opinion* giving the foreign estimate of him. He read this aloud, and we discussed the article. I thought the President had taken a position as to policies which no other statesman had yet assumed. He seemed surprised to hear me say this, and thought Webster, Lincoln, and Gladstone had announced the same principles. I differed from him. It seemed to me that he did not have a true conception of the path he was blazing. Of the modern statesmen, Mazzini is the one who had a similar outlook, but no other, as far as I know. . . . I could see the President was relieved that the tension was over and the die cast. I knew this would happen.'

In comparing Wilson to Mazzini, House had in mind chiefly the President's ability to voice prophetically the subconscious hopes of the common people, a faculty which formed the basis of Wilson's title to political greatness. There is less justification for the claim to originality. Much that was reminiscent of Webster and Lincoln is indeed apparent in his idea of the war as a crusade. War for the sake of national liberty, for the sake of democracy, for the welfare of mankind, was nothing new in history.

But if Wilson originated little in his address of April 2, he did recall emphatically ideals which in this World War no one yet had effectively expressed. This generation had not heard those ideals preached with the eloquence and above

all with the authority that marked this message, for, as President of the United States of America, Wilson was the most influential man in the world. The issues of the struggle had been confused. As House had bewailed, people did not understand what it was all about. Wilson clarified the issues and at once stood forth as leader.

And he emphasized in clear language the great but ill-defined longing of all peoples — that this was a war to end war. There must be a new international order, based upon liberty, a concert of purpose and action that would henceforth ensure the observance of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power. Wilson's entire policy had been devoted to this cause. It was for this that he had endured the evasions of the Central Powers and the contempt of the Entente. He had held to neutrality, not in any spirit of cowardice, since he personally and the country had nothing to fear, but in the firm conviction that the world needed at least one great Power which thought in terms of peace and justice. America's entrance, he told Cobb, 'would mean that we should lose our heads along with the rest and stop weighing right or wrong. It would mean that a majority of people in this hemisphere would go war-mad, quit thinking and devote their energies to destruction. . . . It means an attempt to reconstruct a peace-time civilization with war standards, and at the end of the war there will be no bystanders with sufficient power to influence the terms. There won't be any peace standards left to work with. There will be only war standards. . . . Once lead this people into war and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance. . . . If there is any alternative, for God's sake, let's take it.'

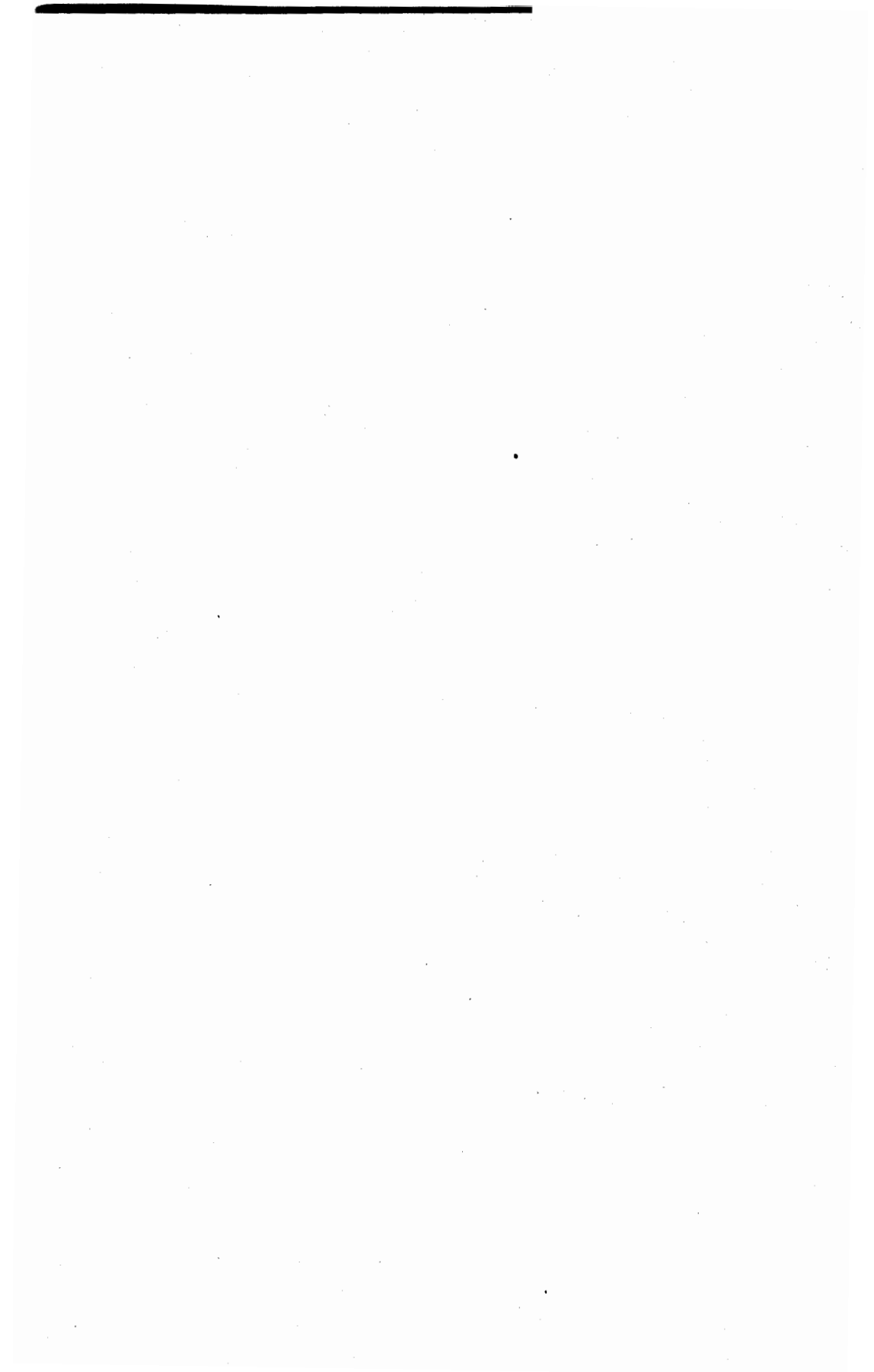
Germany left no alternative. But he departed from the path of neutrality determined that, so far as in him lay the power, he would make the war thus forced upon the country a war to ensure peace. Eighteen months before, Colonel

House had written him, November 10, 1915: 'We must throw the influence of this nation in behalf of a plan by which international obligations must be kept and in behalf of some plan by which the peace of the world can be maintained.'

Wilson accepted the rôle and undertook the task, a far heavier and more complex task than that of defeating Germany on the field of battle.

'It is a fearful thing [he said] to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts — for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.'

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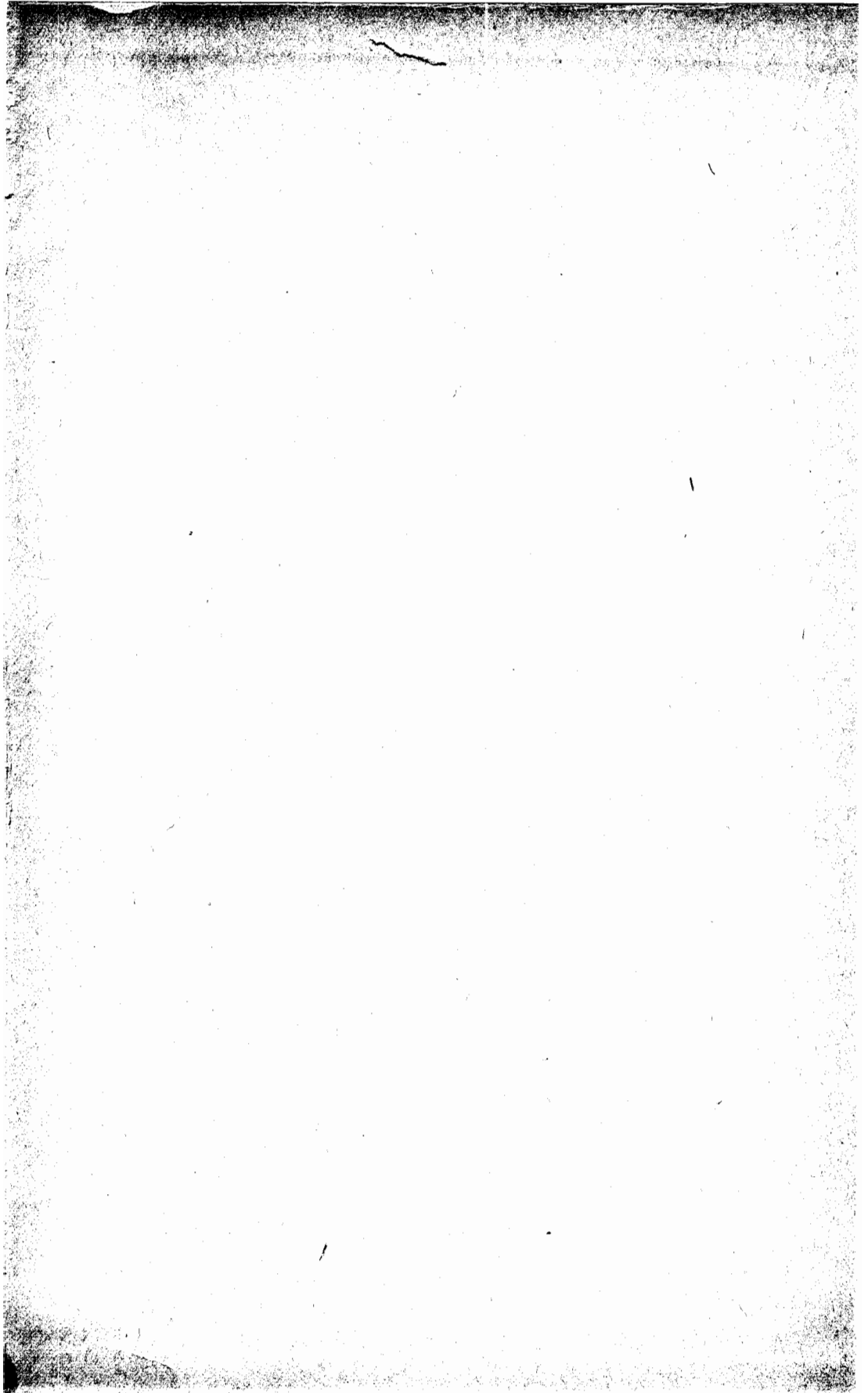
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THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE



INTO THE WORLD WAR

APRIL, 1917 — JUNE, 1918

'The most urgent problem we have to solve is how . . . Governments set at opposite ends of the world can effect the close coöperation which is undoubtedly necessary if the war is to be quickly and successfully ended.'

SIR WILLIAM WISEMAN TO COLONEL HOUSE

SEPTEMBER 26, 1917

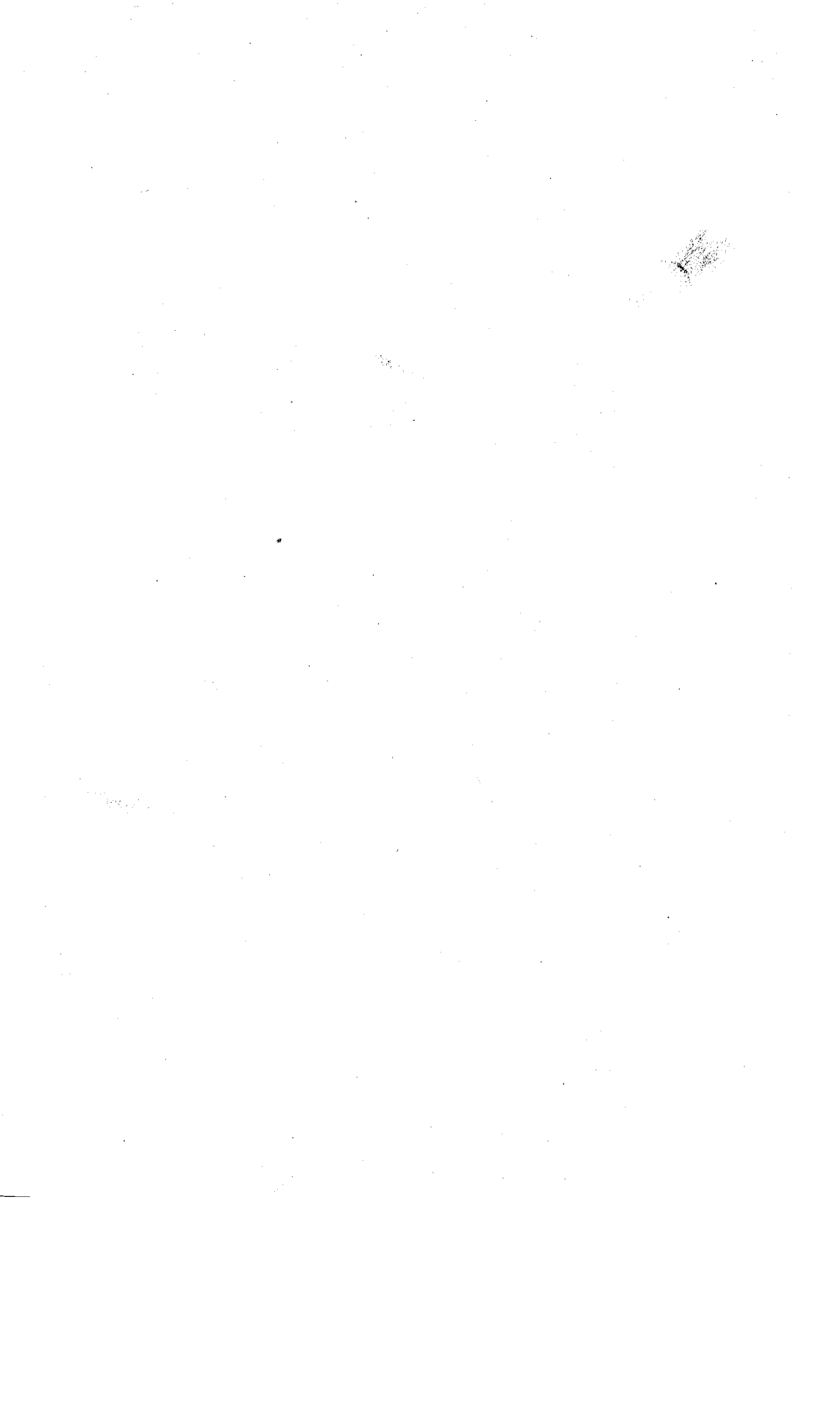
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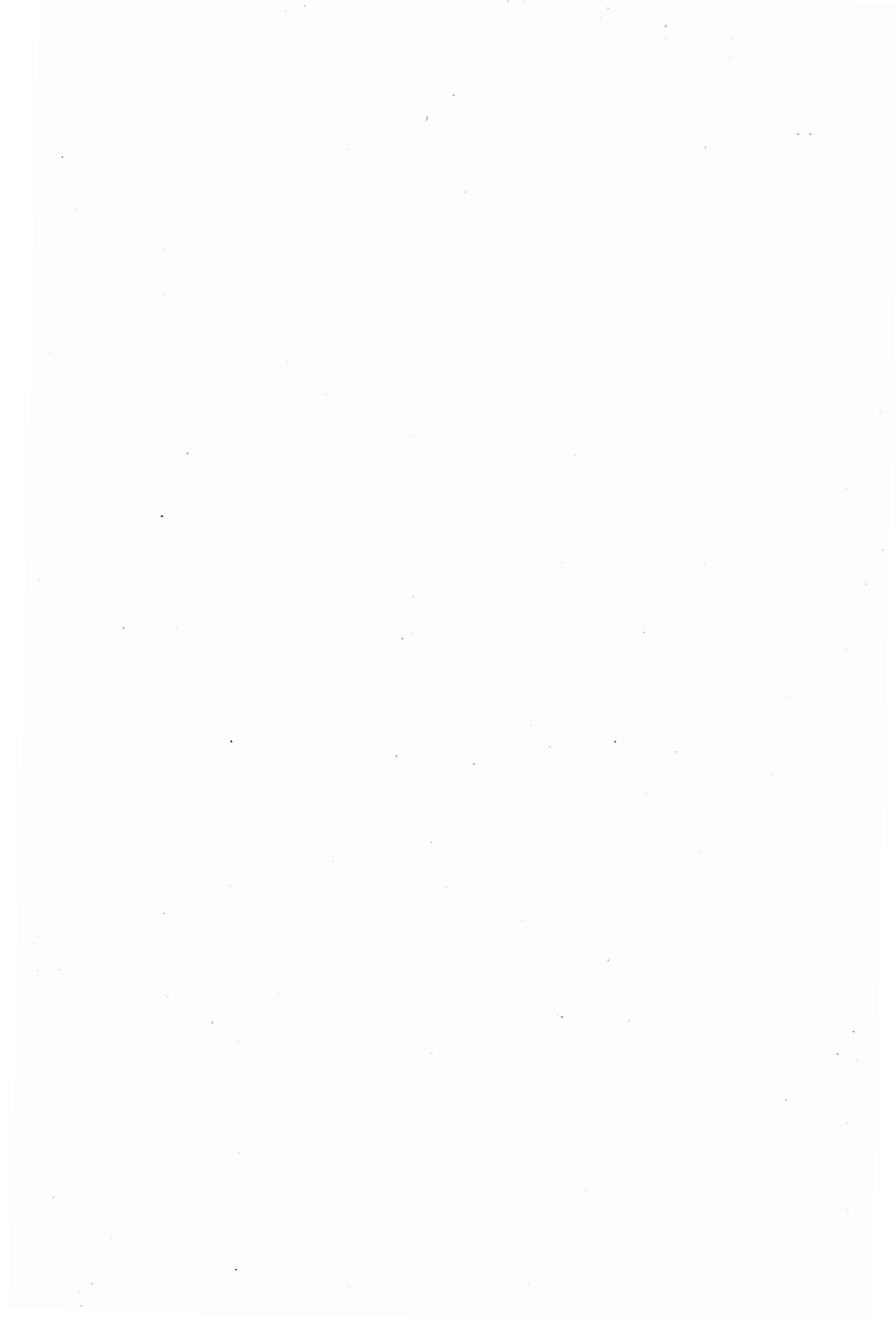
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*President Wilson and Colonel House
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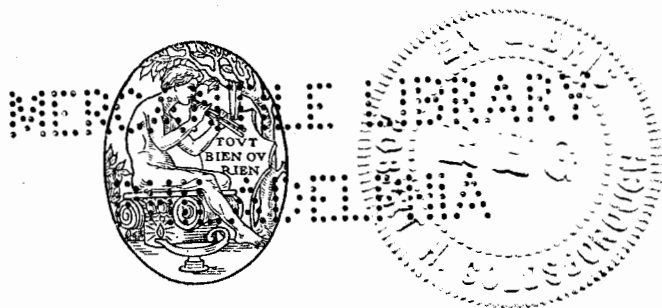
Into the World War

Arranged as a Narrative

BY

CHARLES SEYMOUR

Provost and Sterling Professor of History, Yale University



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PREFACE

THE two concluding volumes of *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* begin with the entrance of the United States into the World War and end with Colonel House's attempt to secure some compromise on the basis of which the Senate might ratify the Versailles Treaty, including the Covenant of the League of Nations. Their central theme is American participation in the war and the Peace Conference, in so far as the papers of Colonel House shed light on the American effort and Wilsonian policies. Readers of the two preceding volumes will remember that Colonel House, although not an officeholder, occupied a special position in relation to Wilson's administration at the time the United States became a belligerent. He had been chosen by the President as his personal representative and sent on three separate missions to the European Governments in 1914 and the two following years. As Wilson's representative he had come in close contact with European leaders during the period of American neutrality.

It was natural that, during the war, President Wilson should look to House for advice on every matter that touched American relations with the Allies and especially on all problems of war aims. He selected him as chief of the organization for preparing the American case at the Peace Conference, appointed him head of the American War Mission to Europe for the coördination of military and industrial efforts, asked him to draft a constitution for a league of nations, and again sent him to Europe as American representative on the Supreme War Council when it arranged the armistice with Germany. At the Peace Conference, House was Commissioner Plenipotentiary, and, because of his intimate personal relations with European statesmen, was constantly

used by the President to conduct the most delicate negotiations. During Wilson's absence from Paris and his illness, the President selected him to take his place on the Supreme Council.

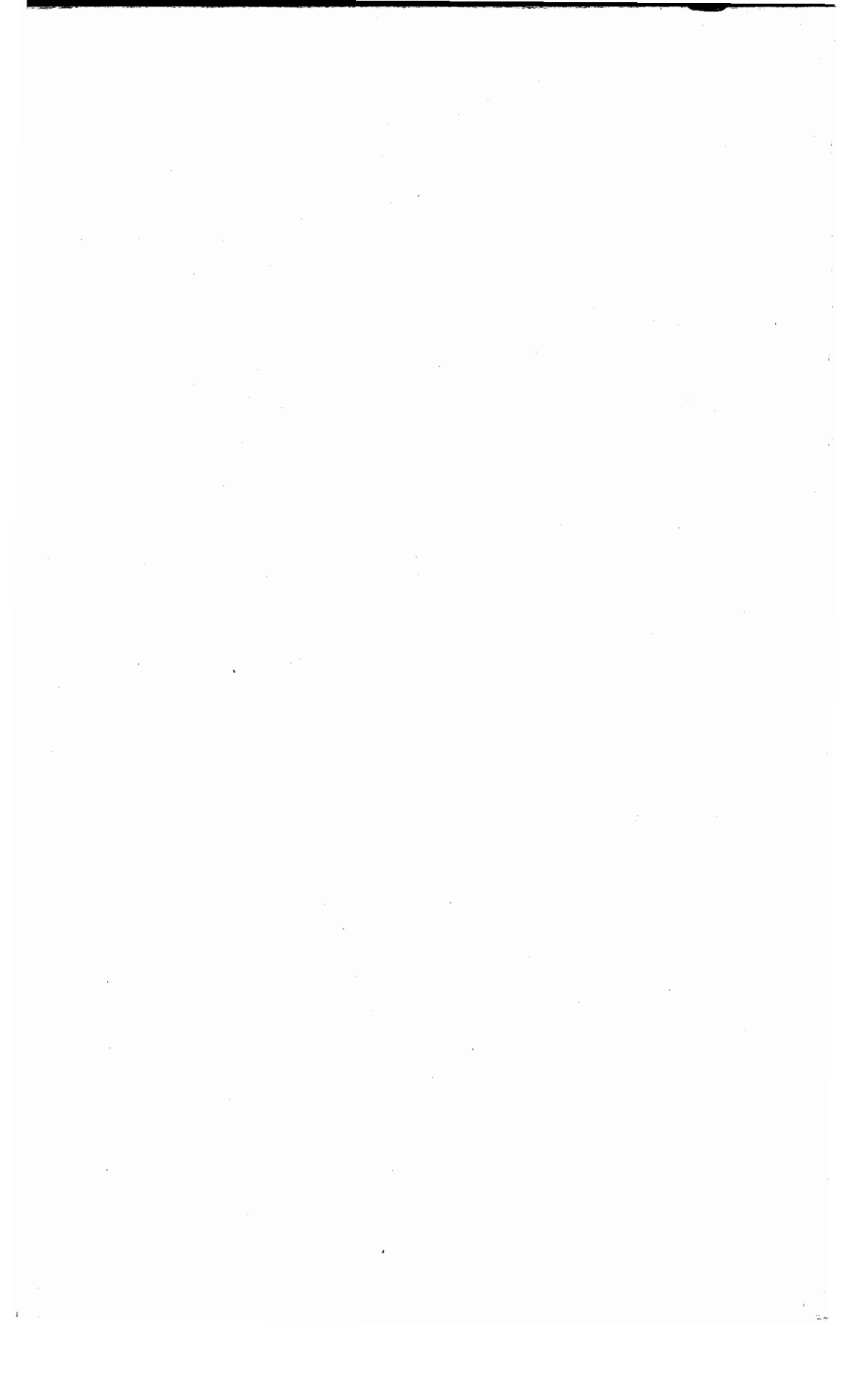
In view of the position held by House and the care with which he and his secretary, Miss Denton, preserved all letters and memoranda, it is obvious that his papers, including the diary which he never failed to keep, provide historical material of the utmost value. The reader of these volumes, however, should be especially on his guard against two misconceptions. The papers here published represent a very small proportion of the large collection which Colonel House deposited in the Library of Yale University. If any attempt had been made to reproduce the substance of the numerous and complicated problems which were brought to House's attention — diplomatic, naval, military, economic — and upon which lengthy memoranda were written, the book would have been extended into a whole library of volumes. Exigencies of space have compelled omission of reference to all but the most significant problems. Even in the case of the most vital subjects the extracts from letters, cables, and diary deal largely in generalities. This is partly due to the fact that neither House nor any single individual could himself have gone deeply into the purely technical matters involved in the complex problems of the war; the function of Colonel House was essentially that of a diplomat, seeing that the right people got together to work out these problems. On the other hand, it has been necessary to omit numerous technical memoranda which, if published, would effectively disprove the assumption that his work was in any sense superficial.

It is equally important for the reader to remember that, despite the range of House's activities, these volumes are not intended to constitute a history of the American effort in the war. They are not, in fact, published as history, but as the

raw material for history. Their purpose is not to convey any definite historical conclusion nor to enforce any historical judgment, but rather to show what Colonel House did and how he came to do it. It is for the historian of the future to determine where he and others were right and where wrong. The papers are presented for what they are worth, unchanged, as they were written. They are presented with emphasis upon House's own point of view, for otherwise they would not be intelligible, but always with the realization that the historian may take another point of view. Furthermore the reader should bear in mind that these volumes concern Colonel House and are not intended to describe the activities of others except where they happened to touch his own. Colonel House is the central figure in the book, not because of any desire to overemphasize the importance of the political rôle he played, but simply because the book is based upon his papers. If all those closely connected with the administration of President Wilson would tell the story of their own activities, following the example of Secretary Lansing and Secretary Houston, the scholars who ultimately write the definitive history of the time would find their task greatly facilitated.

C. S.

YALE UNIVERSITY
August, 1928



NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

EVERY effort has been made to check the accuracy of Colonel House's papers by comparison with those of the statesmen with whom he was in correspondence. Each account of an important conversation recorded in the diary has been laid before those with whom he was in conference wherever they survive, and full opportunity has been given for comment in case of misunderstanding. It has also seemed wise to publish at length the letters and cables of British and French statesmen, whenever they are necessary to an explanation of the nature of House's activities. In these volumes, as in the two preceding, care has been taken to secure complete authority for the publication of every letter and memorandum.

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C. S.

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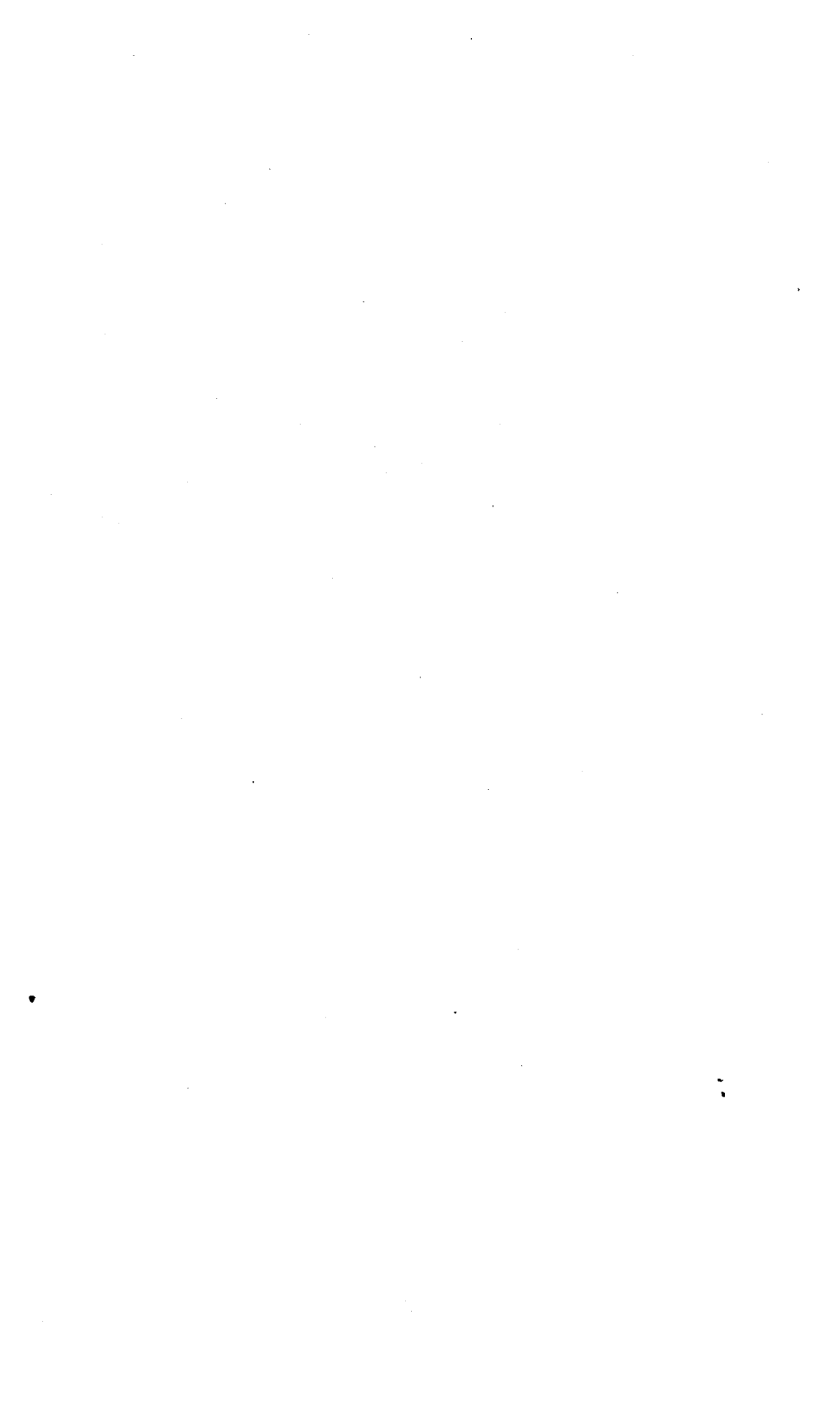
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THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE



THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

APRIL, 1917 — JUNE, 1918

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CHAPTER I INTO THE WORLD WAR

When the President turned from peace to war, he did it with the same resolute purpose. . . .

Colonel House to Lord Bryce, June 10, 1917

I

'THE day has come,' said President Wilson to Congress on April 2, 1917, 'when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.' With these words he launched the United States on what he regarded as a crusade for a new international order; a 'steadfast concert for peace' that should guarantee the 'rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience.' With equal force he revealed his conviction that only through the overthrow of the military masters of Germany could the object be attained. 'We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretense about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples.'

It was a deep gulf that separated the Wilson of January, when he told House that 'there will be no war,' and the Wilson of April, when he asked Congress for a declaration. The bridge was not easy to cross and the new path would

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not have been chosen except that he saw on the other side not so much a military triumph and the chastisement of an enemy as the vision of a new international structure in the creation of which the United States might take the lead. The German leaders themselves, by the inauguration of the ruthless submarine warfare, convinced him that no other course was possible. 'From that time henceforward,' wrote the German Ambassador, 'he regarded the Imperial Government as morally condemned.'¹

President Wilson was determined, once the bridge was crossed, to wage war with the utmost vigor. By temperament and conviction he was likely to be as dogged in his resolve to administer a complete defeat to Germany as he had been slow to resign the policy of neutrality. 'When the President turned from Peace to War,' wrote Colonel House to Lord Bryce, 'he did it with the same resolute purpose that has always guided him.'² This determination was fortified by an increasing realization that hopes of a speedy victory were not likely to be fulfilled. Many months of intense effort would be necessary before the United States could bring active military assistance to the Allies. In the meantime fortune seemed to turn towards Germany.

On the Western Front the carefully laid plans for continuing the Somme offensive were disturbed by a change in the Allied command, resulting in the defeat of General Nivelle on the Chemin des Dames in April. A crisis of war-weariness followed in France. For the remainder of the year French armies, undergoing a moral and material reorganization under General Pétain, were unable to attempt any major offensive. In the East, the Russian revolution of March led to the crumbling of all organization, whether economic or military. The dissolving of the ideal and forms of discipline had its inevitable effects. Behind the lines the spirit of chaos

¹ Bernstorff, *My Three Years in America*, 385.

² House to Bryce, June 10, 1917.

penetrated the economic life of Russia, at the same time that it attacked the army and navy. No longer could the Allies count on help from the colossus of the East which had proved of such avail in 1914 and 1916.

While events on the two main fighting fronts thus rescued Germany from the defeat that seemed to be impending after the Battle of the Somme, she launched the submarine attack upon which her leaders had gambled to achieve positive victory. 'At the time it was a gamble perhaps — but not a wild one.'¹ Great Britain had become the mainstay of the Entente; her troops must take up the offensive during the period that Pétain had to spend in nursing his armies back to vigor; her munitions, her tonnage, her financial credit had become critical factors in a war that would be decided by the side with most reserves. France had borne the brunt of the great German attacks of 1914 and 1916; it was now the turn of the British. Thus there was much to encourage the Germans in their hope that if the submarine could isolate England and destroy her mercantile marine, they would end the war victoriously. And if the success of the intensive submarine campaign after three months was less than had been promised, it was sufficient to bring the British and the Entente as a whole into very real peril.

'The whole war effort of the Allies was soon threatened with disaster' writes the Chairman of the Allied Maritime Transport Executive, 'and all the main European Allies were in imminent danger of starvation. . . . The opening success of the new campaign was staggering. In the first three months 470 ocean-going ships (including all classes of ships the total was 1000) had been sunk. In a single fortnight in April 122 ocean-going vessels were lost. The rate of the British loss in ocean-going tonnage during this fortnight was equivalent to an average round voyage loss of 25

¹ Salter, *Allied Shipping Control*, 121.

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per cent — one out of every four ships leaving the United Kingdom for an overseas voyage was being lost before its return. The continuance of this rate of loss would have brought disaster upon all the Allied campaigns, and might well have involved an unconditional surrender.’¹

Just as vital to Allied success as British tonnage was the maintenance of British credit, which in the two preceding years had, to a large extent, been providing for the purchasing of necessary supplies for the Entente. British gold and credit had paid for the mass of food supplies, munitions, and various manufactured products which the United States exported to the Allied countries; Great Britain not merely financed its own war trade but advanced large credits to France and Italy and the smaller Allies. But the spring of 1917 brought British finance to the verge of collapse. British balances in the United States were at the point of exhaustion. Without immediate financial assistance from the United States Government it seemed certain that trade between America and the Allies would cease, the war needs of the Allies could not be met, and Allied credit would collapse. Mr. Balfour, who in a long career had always been careful to avoid exaggeration, stated definitely that ‘a calamity’ was impending.²

II

Thus the United States entered the war at a moment when the fortunes of the Entente, military, economic, and political, were depressed to an extent that was appreciated by very few in the United States and not many more in Europe. President Wilson’s war speech of April 2 had been received throughout the country with a sort of sober gladness; his long-stretched patience had convinced all but a handful that

¹ Salter, *op. cit.*, 77, 121.

² Mr. Balfour’s reference was to the difficult financial situation.

participation in the war was forced upon us; the Nation was instilled with the desire to contribute everything possible to German defeat. But there was a general impression that Germany was on its last legs, little suspicion that defeat and victory were still being weighed in the balance, hardly a guess that if the effort of America was to count it must be tremendous and immediate.

Even those Americans whose sources of information were numerous and authoritative only gradually came to appreciate how serious the situation was from the Allied point of view. This was not surprising when we consider that the extent of the war was so vast that no one person in Europe had a bird's-eye survey, and it was only as the news of the various sorts of reverses, military and political, drifted in that the character of the Allied problem became clear.

Colonel House's papers, containing a multitude of letters and reports from Europe, reflect the increasing realization of the need of American aid. In February they are colored by the jubilation of the Entente over the dismissal of Bernstorff and the prospect of American participation. A letter from Lord Bryce to House, of February 16, suggested indeed that in the event America entered the war 'a small number' of United States troops should be sent to the front; but Bryce obviously had in mind the moral rather than the military effect and he spoke of the 'already dispirited Germans.' Early in March, however, House recorded a conversation with a friend 'who had recently returned from England and presents a dismal story. . . . It is important because he is one of General Lord French's closest friends and he probably reflects French's opinion.'

House himself, after the diplomatic rupture with Germany but before our formal entrance into the war, was evidently not in favor of a large American expeditionary force. He agreed with Wilson's insistence upon the most complete industrial organization that might be necessary to consolidate

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the full strength of the United States against Germany; but he feared that the attempt to create for ourselves a complete military machine and the desire to figure upon the scene of battle would divert energy from the less spectacular but more essential task of aiding the Allies in the manner they most desired. This was evidently in his mind when he wrote to the President a fortnight before the declaration of a state of war.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *March 19, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Captain Gherardi, our Naval Attaché at Berlin, who returned *via* Paris, tells me that the French Admiralty and officers in the French Army told him that France badly needed steel billets, coal and other raw materials. They also told him that this war would be won by the nations whose morale lasted longest.

They estimated that the morale of the French troops was lifted 25 per cent when the United States broke with Germany.

The strain upon the English to furnish materials for Russia, France and Italy has been so great that they are now unable to recruit for the army any further.

Everybody I have talked to connected with the English and French Governments tells me that if we intend to help defeat Germany it will be necessary for us to begin immediately to furnish the things the Allies are lacking.

It has seemed to me that we should constitute ourselves a huge reservoir to supply the Allies with the things they most need. No one looks with favor upon our raising a large army at the moment, believing it would be better if we would permit volunteers to enlist in the Allied armies.

It seems to me that we can no longer shut our eyes to the fact that we are already in the war and that if we will indicate

our purpose to throw all our resources against Germany it is bound to break their morale and bring the war to an earlier close.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House's opinion that it would be misdirected effort to build a large American army was doubtless that of many Americans at this period.¹ That he was wrong became obvious after the events of the spring indicated the complete failure of the French offensive and the collapse of Russia's military strength. House himself changed his mind as reports of the increasing danger came in. Of these the most persuasive were sent to him, for the President's information, by his friend Mr. Arthur Hugh Frazier, Counsellor of the American Embassy in Paris. The reports were based upon what Mr. Frazier described as 'most confidential information . . . furnished by the French War Office.' In his opinion it was 'evident that the so-called information on this subject which is published in the public press is very inaccurate and altogether too optimistic.'

The French memoranda painted the situation in gloomy tints, perhaps the more effectively to emphasize the need of immediate assistance. But there was no escaping the statistics regarding the relative man-power of France and Germany, nor the conclusion of the French War Office that after some thousand days of war Germany still possessed, in the military and political sense, a powerful machine: strong in men and materials of war, strong in its solidarity.

'It results,' a supplementary memorandum from Mr. Frazier added, 'that after almost three years of war the

¹ This opinion was shared by many persons abroad. André Tardieu writes (*France and America*, 218): 'Every one looked upon the United States as a vast reservoir from which European forces and supplies could be fed. No one believed it capable of creating a new army to be added to those already in line. Every one believed it would be dangerous to make the attempt.'

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Allies see themselves reduced by circumstances for a certain period longer, to a most disheartening inertia. The French people sorely tried by the privations and losses of a great war have before them several months of suffering without, as far as Europe is concerned, the stimulating hope of an encouraging event to help them bear up, and necessarily their minds will turn toward interior difficulties. The moment to be passed is rather critical. In such a juncture . . . it is deemed most important by the French that the United States should *immediately* send an important army to Europe. As for the Germans who universally believe that America's land participation in the war will be limited to sending money and supplies to the Allies, the arrival of an American army on the Western Front could but dismay this people already beginning surely to suffer from a fatigue due to a long war. . . .'¹

The attitude which President Wilson assumed towards American coöperation was that in all large questions the United States must be guided by the experience which the Allies had gained in almost three years of fighting. If they wanted an expeditionary force for its moral or its material value, he believed the United States should send it. That the man-power as well as the munitions of America might ultimately become necessary to Allied victory was a conclusion naturally to be drawn from the increasing indications of the Russian collapse. In mid-May House received the report of an American agent in Germany, forwarded to him by Maurice Egan, American Minister at Copenhagen.

Report on Conditions in Germany

'Russia is regarded as being eliminated from a military standpoint for this year. There is an enormous [German] reserve army in the West, the largest reserve army which

¹ On April 8, Norman Hapgood cabled House that Nivelle and Painlevé 'plead privately for Americans in small groups for French army. Say would mean salvation.'

Germany has had at any time during the war. Officers and men from the Eastern Front, with whom I talked, told me that the Russians and Germans fraternize freely between the lines. The quiet in the East has enabled Germany to concentrate all munitions for the West.

'The strong depression in Germany two months ago has been effaced by the U-boat successes as published in Germany. Not in a year has confidence been so rockbound as at present. . . .

'The food situation is better than I expected to find it. The next eight weeks will see it at its very worst, but Russian chaos, U-boat successes, failure of the French and British to get through in West, strengthens the people's fortitude, and there is much less complaint than I expected. . . .

'Military circles regard America's entrance as an admission on the part of England that she cannot defeat Germany, [has] thereby abdicated her leadership against Germany, and that the war now really is between Germany and America. . . .'

From London Charles Grasty, whose repute as a journalist secured for him numerous personal contacts and sources of information, wrote to House that while the English were 'more confident than ever,' the London newspaper offices were convinced that the new Government in Russia was composed of a 'thoroughly corrupt set of grafters.' The French, he said, were on their 'last legs' when the United States entered the war, and the friction between political and military elements still clouded hope.

A month later House regarded the European situation with extreme disquiet. The British Foreign Office had just sent him an urgent cable, explaining the acute financial crisis and the need of immediate help. He recorded in his diary on the last day of June that the 'panicky cable which came to me yesterday is alarming.

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'I see evidences of all the belligerents weakening, and the cracking process being actively at work. My letters from France indicate that the condition there is serious, and it is a question whether they will be able to hold out during the year. Great Britain I have counted upon but if she is going to pieces financially because certain funds are not given her, or certain debts paid, the situation is not reassuring.'

III

A few years after the close of the war Colonel House wrote that 'no matter how discouraging the situation might appear at any particular moment, my belief in ultimate success never wavered, and chiefly because of my perfect confidence in Wilson's capacity for popular leadership.' That quality the President never displayed more effectively than at the very moment of our entrance into the war, when he impressed upon the nation that each citizen was essentially a soldier: thereby he evoked not merely enthusiasm, but a willingness to submit to organized discipline which was scarcely to be expected from so individualistic a people.

'In the sense in which we have been wont to think of armies,' said Wilson, 'there are no armies in this struggle, there are entire nations armed. . . . A nation needs all men; but it needs each man, not in the field that will most please him, but in the endeavor that will best serve the common good. Thus, though a sharpshooter pleases to operate a trip-hammer for the forging of great guns and an expert machinist desires to march with the flag, the nation is being served only when the sharpshooter marches and the machinist remains at his levers. The whole nation must be a team, in which each man shall play the part for which he is best fitted.'¹

It was not the least of the triumphs of the United States that the Nation was made to feel itself part of the fighting

¹ Proclamation of the Selective Draft Act, May 18, 1917.

forces and coöperated enthusiastically in the organization of the national resources. The process was inevitably of an emergency character, for the United States possessed no bureaucratic system comparable to those of Europe, which could immediately begin the necessary task of coördinating the national industries for the supply of the army. Every firm in every line of production was competing in the manufacture of essential and unessential articles, in transportation, in bidding for and holding the necessary labor. The army itself was decentralized, did not form or state its requirements as one body, but through five supplies bureaus which acted independently and in competition with each other. Bids for materials from the different bureaus conflicted with each other, with those of the navy, and of the Allies. From this chaos order must be evolved before the United States could bring effective assistance to Europe, and in the nature of things it was many months before the necessary centralization was secured, whether in the strictly military sphere through the General Staff or in the industrial through the War Industries Board.

Characteristically the President avoided the creating of new machinery so far as possible. He believed always in evolution rather than in revolution. It was this tendency and not mere partisanship which led him to refuse the demand for a coalition cabinet which should include members of the Republican Party. As a student of politics he had never had any confidence in the efficiency of coalition government, and he assumed that the demand was based upon selfish motives.¹

On the other hand, President Wilson was determined to keep partisan politics out of the war organization. He told House in February that so far as the foreign service was concerned he would not permit party affiliations to have any influence upon the selection of candidates, and he was

¹ Wilson to House, February 12, 1917.

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minded to apply the same principle to war appointments. Colonel House was entirely of the same mind and did all that he could to harmonize the differences between the Republicans and the Democrats. He discussed the organization of the House of Representatives with Mr. Willcox, Chairman of the Republican Committee.¹ In March he wrote the President that the British Ambassador reported that Senator Lodge had 'expressed a desire to coöperate with you in the future and Sir Cecil thinks if you will meet him halfway, this can be brought about. If you get Lodge it will probably mean the other Republican Senators upon the [Foreign Relations] Committee.'² A few weeks later: 'I am glad that you saw Roosevelt. I hope that you will send for Lodge also. It looks as if you would have to depend largely upon Republican support to carry through your war measures. Did you see the admirable speech that Root made last night at the Republican Club?'³

As it turned out, personal coöperation between the members of the Administration and the Republican leaders was never very cordial, although partisan issues were by common consent excluded from Congressional debates. But President Wilson, in his appointments to the new war boards, to military and civil positions of the first importance, made his choice without regard to political factors and probably in general without knowing what might be the party affiliations of the appointees. So much was certainly true in the cases of such men as Pershing, Sims, Hoover, Goethals, Schwab, Davison. It is true that neither Colonel Roosevelt nor General Wood was given a command in France; but the evidence is overwhelming that in each case the decision was not made by the President but by the military experts of the General Staff.

¹ House to Wilson, March 30, 1917.

² House to Wilson, March 14, 1917.

³ House to Wilson, April 10, 1917.

In this new war organization Colonel House held no formal position and exercised no official functions. The President had offered 'with the deepest pleasure and alacrity' to place him wherever he was willing to be placed.¹ But House preferred always to avoid office. Because of his personal relations with Wilson and at the President's desire he was none the less drawn into an unbroken series of informal conferences, the gist of which when important was sent down to Washington, and when unimportant shunted aside and prevented from confusing the already overburdened officials. Although he was rarely in the capital, he had daily conversations with members of the Government and the President, for a private telephone ran directly from his study to the State Department. 'It is only necessary to lift off the receiver, and I reach Polk's desk immediately. . . . It gives me constant touch with Washington.' The telephone was extended to Magnolia when House left New York for the summer, so that his immediate connection with the capital remained unbroken.

The papers of Colonel House record a kaleidoscope of personal contacts. To his small study on Fifty-Third Street came all sorts and conditions. It was there that he discussed with Paderewski the plans for the formation of a Polish army, the raising of funds for Polish relief, the political character of the Poland that was to be revived by the future Peace Conference, and its boundaries.² Thither came the Ambassadors of all the Allied nations and the special commissioners in charge of the problems of finance and supplies. There, or, if it were summer time, to his house in Magnolia ('all the roads lead ultimately to Magnolia,' said Northcliffe

¹ Wilson to House, February 6, 1917.

² Cf. the speech made at Warsaw, on February 20, 1919, by Paderewski, Prime Minister of the new Polish Republic: 'The great results obtained in America ought to be attributed to my sincere friend, the friend of all the Poles . . . Colonel Edward House,' *Indépendance Polonaise*, February 22, 1919.

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in August), Colonel House talked with unofficial envoys: with Henri Bergson, the distinguished French philosopher, concerning methods of coöperation with France; ¹ with T. P. O'Connor, who outlined the Irish situation — 'a good conversationalist, has an Irish brogue, takes snuff like a gentleman of the eighteenth century.' Labor leaders like Peter Brady, socialists like Max Eastman, journalists like Herbert Croly and Lincoln Colcord, British and American Major-Generals, bankers, members of the Administration and members of the Republican Party — with all of them House talked so as to have an insight into each situation from as many angles as seemed necessary to get a true picture, so that it might be passed on to the President. 'It is a wearisome job, but I keep at it.'

To him came also those especially interested because of their position or knowledge, in the shipping, food, aircraft, coal, and Red Cross problems. Members of the Advisory Commission of the Council on National Defense explained their anxieties and submitted their proposals for the co-ordination of government purchasing and fixing of prices. His days were a continual turmoil; telephone calls, telegrams, letters, and personal interviews occupied every waking hour. To his callers House gave encouragement, sometimes advice; but he served them chiefly by putting them in touch with the proper official authority.

If the callers on Colonel House were measured by the hundreds, the letters written to him during this period, when he acted as the auditory nerve of the Administration, are to be reckoned by thousands. His files are crammed with applications for government positions from college presidents and professors, the heads of great industrial corporations, camouflage artists, journalists (some of them since not undistin-

¹ Colonel House's papers record various conversations with M. Bergson in the United States and in Paris and there are letters from the French philosopher expressed in the most intimate terms.

guished), professional organizers. A politician of some note suggests that he will accept a cabinet position, or would like to become a member of the Peace Commission. There are myriads of memoranda to be handed over to the proper official: 'Will you be good enough to inform me if you can suggest any method of getting a prompt decision from the War Department on this important matter?' There are letters of gratitude, not quite so numerous indeed: 'I know that I am indebted to you for this honor and you know how I thank you for it.'

Those planning the mobilization of scientific and industrial effort sent him their memoranda for criticism;¹ industrialists wrote him on the proper method to settle the coal or the railroad problem; financiers wrote regarding the tax plan of the Secretary of the Treasury; naval experts on the policy of Secretary Daniels; journalists on the unsatisfactory relations between the Administration and the Press, which 'have become intolerably tangled. . . . If something could be done to straighten it out, it would have an immense influence on the conduct of the war.' Pacifists sent him plans for the ideal peace settlement; experts or pseudo-experts wrote concerning the dehydrating of food, the destruction of German crops by salt scattered from airplanes, the introduction of a system of portable moving pictures to enliven the addresses of patriotic orators.

If Colonel House had passed on to Washington a hundredth part of the applications or the information which thus came to him, it is not likely that he would have long maintained friendly relations with the Administration. What filtered through him was evidently regarded as valuable, for the letters of the President breathe not merely affection but gratitude: I am grateful to you all the time . . . and everything you do makes me more so. . . . You may have entirely

¹ Cf. Report of Advisory Commission of Council on National Defense, by Dr. Hollis Godfrey.

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satisfactory replies to my objections. . . . Will you not write me again. Your grateful friend. . . . I devour and profit by all your letters.¹

President Wilson invoked the advice of House, as in the early days of his administration, in making the new appointments and arranging for the new organizations that resulted from our entrance into the war. The President left it to him to develop the suggestion of Cleveland Dodge, that H. P. Davison be induced to accept the war organization of the American Red Cross. 'Dodge wants Davison to be the executive head of the Red Cross,' wrote House in April, 'believing that it will mean the difference between a five million proposition and a fifty million.'² Davison undertook the great task, which House later described as 'perhaps the finest piece of executive management accomplished during the entire war.' Through his visits and letters House was kept in close touch with the initial difficulties that Davison overcame.³

President Wilson also asked House to take up with Mr. Hoover, who had achieved the miracle of Belgian relief, the conditions under which he would assume control of the food problem. On April 6, Mr. Hugh Gibson, who as secretary of the American legation at Brussels had formed close relations with Mr. Hoover, wrote to House that 'he is evidently anxious to go to work'; he enclosed a cable from Mr. Hoover: 'Relief will be fully organized within ten days and I shall be available for any appropriate service if wanted.' On April 18, Norman Hapgood wrote to House that Mr. Hoover was sailing for the United States. 'He is somewhat worried: does not wish to undertake the work unless enough independence goes with it to make it successful: that is, he would not want

¹ Wilson to House, June 1, July 21, August 16, 1917.

² In the end Davison raised approximately four hundred million.

³ Davison to House, July 25, August 8, August 17, August 24, September 1, September 5, September 21, 1917.

to be under any department. I am writing this more tactfully to the President and Secretary Houston, but to you I may speak without indirection.'

Mr. Hoover landed in New York on May 3, and came up to House's apartment that afternoon. 'He has a well-thought-out and comprehensive plan,' wrote House in his diary, 'if he can only put it into execution. . . . Hoover knows the question of food control as no other man does, and he has energy and driving force.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 4, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Hoover, as you know, is just back. I hope you will see him. . . . He has some facts that you should know. He can tell you the whole story in about forty minutes, for I timed him.

I trust Houston will give him full powers as to food control. He knows it better than any one in the world and would inspire confidence both in Europe and here. Unless Houston does give him full control I am afraid he will be unwilling to undertake the job, for he is the kind of man that has to have complete control in order to do the thing well.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Mr. Hoover was at once appointed Food Commissioner. In August, by the Lever Act, the President was empowered to create the Food Administration, at the head of which he placed Mr. Hoover with almost dictatorial powers. These he exercised with a combination of tact and enthusiasm which inspired the complete coöperation of the entire country. Without food cards or statutes, purely through the force of public opinion and of voluntary self-sacrifice, the Food Administration accomplished the economies and the extra pro-

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duction necessary to meet the famine that threatened our European associates in the war.

Colonel House was also commissioned by the President to discuss with General Goethals, the constructor of the Panama Canal, who had just been appointed the head of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, the conditions necessary to producing new ships in sufficient numbers to offset the ravages of the submarines.

'April 21, 1917: I went up to Mezes' for dinner to meet General George Goethals. . . . It has been a long time since I have met any one I like so well. He is modest and able. I feel he is something like Kitchener, slow but sure. The undertaking which he has in mind needs celerity rather than thoroughness. . . .

'He told of the difficulties. He agreed it would be better to use steel because the ships would be lighter by 15 per cent, therefore they would bear that much more cargo, and they would be more valuable for a merchant marine after the war.

'He believes if the President will permit him to commandeer certain steel products which foreigners have contracted for, and to commandeer shipyards which are now building for foreign accounts, he can make a creditable showing within a year. The people will be disappointed because the tonnage will be far less than anticipated. Goethals doubts whether he can do better than two million tons the first year, and he does not believe he can get out any tonnage before October 1st.

'May 2, 1917: Paderewski followed Grasty to discuss Polish matters. Farrell, Bedford, and Moore ¹ came upon his heels. The purpose of their interview was to discuss how this

¹ James A. Farrell, President of the United States Steel Corporation; Alfred C. Bedford, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Standard Oil Company, and Chairman of the Petroleum Committee of the Council of National Defense; and George Gordon Moore, New York capitalist.

country could most quickly supply the tonnage the Germans are destroying. I suggested General Goethals be communicated with and that Farrell, Goethals, and I get together here for luncheon or dinner Sunday and work it out. I would then place the matter before the President and ask him to give Goethals absolute authority and not have him hampered by the Shipping and other boards.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 6, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

General Goethals took lunch with me to-day. He is very much disturbed over the delay in getting the shipbuilding programme started. He is already two weeks behind what he had counted on. This means a loss of 200,000 tons — if, indeed, the building of tons can be speeded up within six months to 400,000 tons a month as he hopes. . . .

Goethals, at my request, made the enclosed memorandum to show what in his opinion is immediately needful. If he can know by to-morrow or Tuesday if you favor these proposals he can make a start at once.

The tonnage required cannot be built wholly of timber because, in the first place, there is not enough seasoned timber in the country to anywhere near meet the requirements, and the wooden ships cannot be built as quickly as the steel nor are they as effective when built.

Goethals has gone into the subject exhaustively and he declares there is no other way to meet the question. There are an infinite number of firms that have offered to build wooden ships, but he tells me that after inquiry he finds if contracts were let through these firms, they would never be able to carry them through. For instance, Florida offers to deliver a given number of wooden ships, but, upon investigation, he says the different companies are counting largely upon the same material and the same labor and they would

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not be able to carry on construction for more than one tenth of the number contracted for.

Please pardon me for bringing this matter to your attention but it seems so vital, not only to our success in the war, but also to your own success, that I am doing so.

If Russia can be held in line, if the shipbuilding programme can be accomplished and the food situation be met, the war must go against Germany.

In order to carry through such a programme I know you will agree that it is necessary to place these matters almost wholly in the hands of one man, as it will never be possible to do it through boards or divided responsibility.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

General Goethals' Memorandum

1. Executive order placing the ship yards at the disposal of the Shipping Board or preferably the U.S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation.

2. Authority of the President to build steel ships in addition to wooden ones.

3. Appropriation of \$500,000,000 for building 3,000,000 tons of shipping.

4. Appropriation of \$250,000,000 to purchase ships now on the ways if found desirable.

Estimate of \$500,000,000 based on 3,000,000 tons at \$155 per ton.

To this President Wilson replied immediately after receiving it, that he had devoted practically his entire day to the shipbuilding problem; had had Mr. Denman, chairman of the Shipping Board up 'on the Hill,' explaining the necessities of the situation to the men 'upon whom we shall have to depend,' and that he was arranging for a series of conferences. It would not be possible to follow General Goethals'

programme 'in all its length,' but the President could promise to use his influence in this all-important matter to the utmost: General Goethals may be sure that I am on the job and that the way will be cleared as fast as possible for what I realize to be immediately and imperatively necessary. . . . He added that the German ships were being put in repair as fast as the shops could repair them and that the two interned German raiders would be named the *Steuben* and the *DeKalb*: That seemed to me to have a poetic propriety about it. . . . All of us unite in affectionate messages.¹

Unfortunately for the shipbuilding programme, the relations between the Shipping Board and the Emergency Fleet Corporation did not prove harmonious, conflicts of authority and policy developed, and after months of wasted effort a complete reorganization became necessary. It was not until the following spring that American shipyards, under the driving leadership of Mr. C. M. Schwab, began to launch tonnage with the necessary speed.

IV

Conferences in which Colonel House found especial interest were those with foreign envoys. President Wilson asked him to undertake such relations in the belief that because of their purely unofficial character they might develop a frankness of expression that would be less likely if carried on by an official representative of the United States. The generous attitude and coöperation of the Secretary of State made such conferences possible and useful. For Mr. Lansing House felt admiration and affection. A decade later he wrote:

'The country has never quite appreciated Lansing. No other Secretary of State had so difficult a task. The years of neutrality before we entered the war presented many delicate

¹ Wilson to House, May 7, 1917.

and intricate situations, and a false step might have proved disastrous. He made none.

'I shall always remember with gratitude his attitude toward me. My position was unusual and without precedent, and it would have been natural for him to object to my ventures in his sphere of activities. He never did. He was willing for me to help in any way the President thought best.

'The country owes Lansing much and some day I hope appreciation may be shown for his services during the perilous days of the Great War.'¹

The following excerpts from House's papers throw light on the nature of the conferences he had with the Ambassadors:

'*May 2, 1917:* The Japanese Ambassador took lunch with me and we had more than two hours' discussion. There was no one present other than ourselves. It is delightful to me to come in touch with Eastern diplomacy. Sato is an able fellow and maintained his position well. I got a glimpse of the Japanese Government and of the constitution under which they work.

'The most important point of conversation occurred when he asked me whether or not this was a good time for his Government to take up with the Washington Government the unsettled questions between the two. He said when the war ended, all points which might cause friction between the United States and Japan should be smoothed out. This, he said, he understood to be the President's desire. I asked him to enumerate the points he had in mind. He spoke of the land law and our immigration laws as being the ones that hurt their national sensibilities most. He thought, however, that if an arrangement could be made between the two countries by which no new adverse legislation would be enacted in the Western States against the Japanese, they might be satisfied.

¹ Colonel House to C. S., March 24, 1928.

'He understood the difficulty under which our Government was working, because of the rights of States to pass legislation which sometimes conflicted with the national policy and with foreign treaties.

'I advised Sato not to take these matters up officially at this time because it might leave a suspicion that it was done for the purpose of forcing a decision just as the United States was entering the war against the Central Powers. I advised that he give me a memorandum of his Government's views so that they might be discussed unofficially. He saw the point and agreed to do so. He is to give me the memorandum when he returns to Washington. He hesitated, however, about putting it in writing, saying his Government had not authorized him to take the matter up officially. . . .

'The calmness, the poise and the placidity of this conference delighted me. We were both as expressionless as graven images, and there was no raising of voices or undue emphasis upon any subject, no matter how important.'

Ambassador Sato to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, May 8, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

For your kind reception and open-hearted talk which I had the pleasure of enjoying in New York, I wish you to accept my warm and sincere thanks. According to your suggestion, I have since prepared a memorandum succinctly setting forth the point which formed a part of our conversation and I am taking the liberty to send it to you for whatever use you may see fit. . . .¹

With high regard and cordial wishes, I beg you, Dear Colonel House, to believe me,

Very sincerely yours

AIMARO SATO

¹ See appendix to this chapter.

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Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 11, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Last week the Japanese Ambassador took lunch with me. Before the end of our conversation he wanted to know if I did not think it a good time to take up the differences existing between our two governments. . . .

I am enclosing you a copy of his letter and the memorandum and my reply. When you have leisure, will you not advise me concerning this. If Russia swings back to autocratic government, I think a close alignment between Germany, Japan, and Russia is certain. . . .

Walter Rogers has just returned from the Far East. . . . He strongly advises a better news service to Japan, China, and Russia. I will not go into details, but from what I learn, not only from Rogers but from others, this is one of the crying needs of the moment.

The general public in both Japan and China regard us as being almost as unwilling to fight as China herself, and none of our war preparations and but little of your addresses have reached the people.

This can all be changed at very little cost. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Although of later date, the following letter indicates House's interest in the Japanese problem which doubtless affected his opinion two years later on the Shantung question at the Peace Conference.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, September 18, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I had a talk with Roland Morris¹ to-day. I hope you will see him for ten or fifteen minutes before he leaves for

¹ Recently appointed Ambassador to Japan.

Japan next Tuesday, in order to give him your viewpoint as to Far Eastern questions. I think he has the right view himself and, if you agree with it, he will understand in what direction to proceed.

We cannot meet Japan in her desires as to land and immigration, and unless we make some concessions in regard to her sphere of influence in the East, trouble is sure sooner or later to come. Japan is barred from all the undeveloped places of the earth, and if her influence in the East is not recognized as in some degree superior to that of the Western powers, there will be a reckoning.

A policy can be formulated which will leave the open door, rehabilitate China, and satisfy Japan. Morris sees this clearly but needs your sanction, if, indeed, such a policy has your sanction.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

With the new Russian Ambassador from the provisional government, Colonel House also maintained close relations. At various times during the summer the Russian envoy visited him, evidently believing that through the Colonel he had a means of presenting directly to President Wilson Russia's increasing need of assistance from the outside, if she were to be saved from going to pieces.¹ House endorsed his pleas for aid. 'I do not think we can devote too much attention to the Russian situation,' he wrote the President, 'for if that fails us our troubles will be great and many.'

The relations of Colonel House with the French and

¹ On July 23, House wrote to Wilson: 'The Russian Ambassador was here yesterday. He tells me that he has gone the round of Cabinet officers and officials and is at the end of the passage regarding certain matters. He wanted to know whether he had better approach you with these questions. I advised him again to press the proper officials rather than to take his troubles to you. I promised, however, to tell you of them.' House then summarized M. Bakhmetieff's report on Russian needs.

British Ambassadors were of quite a different nature, for they rested upon sincere personal friendship. He had fought through with them the troublesome issues of the days of American neutrality, when United States interests frequently had clashed directly with those of the Allies. These differences had apparently not shaken the confidence of the Ambassadors in House, and they had certainly not affected his respect and admiration for them. 'Jusserand knew America,' wrote House, 'as he knew Europe. His familiarity with the President's personality and views, due to his long residence in Washington, was of value in many dangerous situations. Jusserand had long been the closest tie between France and the United States and he had the respect and love of both countries.'

Of Ambassador Spring-Rice, House later wrote: 'What a ruthless and destructive force is war! Here was perhaps the ablest and best-trained member of the British diplomatic service. There was no one who possessed to a greater degree the affection and confidence of his chiefs, and no one was more deserving. With all his accomplishments he possessed a personal charm that made him a multitude of friends. But when war broke loose he had a serious illness. Under ordinary circumstances he would soon have righted himself, but with the stress of disasters coming day by day, he could not regain his normal health. On he had to go, impelled by a high sense of patriotism and duty. He went as far and as hard as he could, but what he could not do he was willing should be done by others. He was one of the few I have known who did not hesitate to yield his prerogatives in order that his country's interests might not suffer. Even so the task finally proved too great. He gave his life for his country as surely as though he had been slain on the field of battle.'

In view of House's friendship for the Ambassadors of France and Great Britain, as well as because of his experience in Europe and his contacts with the political leaders of the

Allied Powers, President Wilson placed particular confidence in the Colonel's judgment on all matters of foreign relations: You are closer in touch, he wrote him in the early summer, with what is being said and thought on the other side of the water than we are here.¹

It was thus not unnatural that Mr. Wilson should have called House into active participation in the first important conferences with representatives of the Allies, which took place shortly after our entrance into the war.

APPENDIX

Ambassador Sato's Memorandum

The Japanese-American question which calls for an immediate adjustment, is that of the treatment of the resident Japanese in this country. What Japan desires is nothing more than the enjoyment of the most favored nation treatment. That desideratum may be attained in my personal opinion, by the adoption of some of the following means:

1. By Treaty.

a. By concluding an independent treaty, mutually guaranteeing to the citizens and subjects, the most favored nation treatment, in matters of property and other rights relative to the exercise of industries, occupations, and other pursuits. Negotiations in this line were for some time conducted between Secretary Bryan and Ambassador Chinda, which, however, for reasons I need not here state, have since been in abeyance.

b. By revising the existing commercial treaty between our two countries, so as to conform, in its stipulations, to similar engagements between Japan and various European powers, which guarantee, in principle, the most favored nation treatment, in the enjoyment of property rights and in all that relates to the pursuit of industries, callings and educational studies.

2. By American legislation.

Although the subject is not fit for international discussion, it may be mentioned that a constitutional amendment restraining any State from making and enforcing any law discriminatory against aliens in respect to the property and other civil rights, will prove a far-reaching remedy. In fact a resolution with the same object in view has, I understand, been introduced in Congress lately.

In this connection, I may state the fact that the provisions of racial distinction in the present naturalization law, were, in a number of instances, made use of for the purpose of depriving Japanese subjects of the rights and privileges of a civil nature. Although the wisdom of the law is in itself a matter of national and not international concern, the unfortu-

¹ Wilson to House, June 1, 1917.

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nate circumstance that certain provisions of that law furnish a pretext for the impairment of alien civil rights, should, I may be allowed to remark, constitute a fit subject for legislative attention.

The comparative merits of each means should be studied by both Governments in the light of expediency and feasibility. Whether the adoption of any one means will be sufficient to cover the whole ground is a matter upon which precaution forbids me to pass a final judgment at present, but I am strongly convinced that each means will go a long distance towards a complete solution of the question.

Before concluding, I desire to touch upon the subject of immigration. The question whether Japanese laborers shall be admitted or not, has been consummately solved by the continued faithful observance by Japan of the so-called Gentleman's Agreement. So far as the Japanese Government is concerned, it is no longer in the realm of living questions, and in my view, it would serve the best interests of both nations to leave the question as it is.

CHAPTER II

THE BALFOUR MISSION

It pleased me to have Balfour rise with enthusiasm to the suggestion that Great Britain and the United States would stand together for a just peace. . . .

Colonel House's Diary, April 22, 1917

I

PRESIDENT WILSON realized that the new war organization of the United States must be developed, not upon abstract principles, but in direct relation to the special needs of the Allies. The problem was not so much to get ready for war as to supply those things — men, ships, credit — in which the Allies were running short. The entrance of the United States into the war enhanced the potential resources of the anti-German group tremendously, but it would be of small practical value if it brought an isolated effort and not real coöperation. Germany had counted on the probability that America's effort, undertaken without adequate preparation, would not affect the outcome of the war, which was to be settled by the submarine. The gamble might succeed if close correlation were not at once established between the necessities of the Allies and the ability of the United States to satisfy them. As Sir William Wiseman wrote to House in September, 1917: 'Germany's greatest asset is the three thousand miles that separates Washington from London.'

The futility of an isolated American effort was keenly appreciated by the President and his advisers, and it was largely as a result of American insistence, especially on the part of Secretary McAdoo and the heads of the war boards, that full coöperation was finally secured. The process was necessarily slow, for American opinion had to be educated to both the need and the opportunity. There was then, as there

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will always be, a modicum of opinion which insisted that the United States had been lured into the war by designing interests for the purpose of pulling Entente chestnuts from the fire. President Wilson himself was careful always to keep the United States distinct from any hard-and-fast war alliance, and introduced the phrase 'associated power' to indicate the status of this country in its relation to the Allied powers of Europe.

The Allied Governments were well-informed of the various conditions in the United States which affected the problem of American coöperation. Through the British and French Ambassadors who had many friends in Republican circles, they followed the trend of unofficial opinion. They relied also upon the reports of the British chief of secret service, Sir William Wiseman, who because of his close contacts with Colonel House was regarded as an authoritative exponent of President Wilson's policy.¹ A carefully drafted memorandum of Wiseman, which before going to the British Government was read by President Wilson and pronounced by him to be 'an accurate summary,' explains the difficulty as well as the importance of the problem of American coöperation from the Allied point of view.

Memorandum on American Coöperation

1917

'The sentiment of the country would be strongly against joining the Allies by any formal treaty. Subconsciously they [the Americans] feel themselves to be arbitrators rather than allies. On the other hand, the people are sincere in their determination to crush Prussian autocracy, and in their longing to arrive at some settlement which will make future wars impossible.

'It is important to realize that the American people do not consider themselves in any danger from the Central Powers.

¹ See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, II, 400.



With the affectionate esteem
of
N. H. McNeill. 8-6-19.

SIR WILLIAM WISEMAN

YRABUJL IUTRACSEB

ABR.EOA.IIR

It is true that many of their statesmen foresee the danger of a German triumph, but the majority of the people are still very remote from the war. They believe they are fighting for the cause of Democracy and not to save themselves.

'There still remains a mistrust of Great Britain, inherited from the days of the War of Independence, and kept alive by the ridiculous history books still used in the national schools. On the other hand there is the historical sympathy for France, and trouble could far more easily be created between the British and the Americans than with any of our allies. German propaganda naturally follows this line, and has been almost entirely directed against England. . . .

'Any pronouncement [the Allied Governments] can make which will help the President to satisfy the American people that their efforts and sacrifices will reap the disinterested reward they hope for, will be gratifying to him, and in its ultimate result serve to commit America yet more wholeheartedly to the task in hand. The more remote a nation is from the dangers of the war the more necessary it becomes to have some symbol or definite goal to keep constantly before it. The Americans are accustomed to follow a "slogan" or simple formula. The President realized this when he gave them the watchword that America was fighting "To make the world safe for Democracy"; but the time has come when something more concrete and detailed is needed.

'Our diplomatic task is to get enormous quantities of supplies from the United States while we have no means of bringing pressure to bear upon them to this end. We have to obtain vast loans, tonnage, supplies and munitions, food, oil, and other raw materials. And the quantities which we demand, while not remarkable in relation to the output of other belligerents, are far beyond the figures understood by the American public to-day.

'The Administration are ready to assist us to the limit of the resources of their country; but it is necessary for them

✓) to educate Congress and the Nation to appreciate the actual meaning of these gigantic figures. It is not enough for us to assure them that without these supplies the war will be lost. For the public ear we must translate dollars and tonnage into the efforts and achievements of the fleets and the armies. We must impress upon them the fighting value of their money.

'The Administration are too far from the war, and have not sufficient information, to judge the merits of these demands. The Allies will have to use patience, skill, and ingenuity in assisting the American authorities to arrive at a solution of this one grave difficulty, which is in a phrase, "The coördination of Allied requirements."'

The Allies were anxious to secure close diplomatic co-operation with the United States so soon as our entrance into the war appeared likely. A week after the dismissal of Bernstorff, Mr. Balfour's Secretary, Sir Eric Drummond, wrote as follows to Colonel House:

Sir Eric Drummond to Colonel House

LONDON, February 9, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

Mr. Balfour is sending a telegram to our diplomatic representatives to tell them that he considers that full and frank coöperation between British and United States diplomatists and agents is one of the most important factors of the war. He is further telling them that he relies on them to do everything in their power to secure such coöperation.

This ought to avoid any possibility of relations being anywhere impaired by local suspicions.

Yours very sincerely

ERIC DRUMMOND

Existing diplomatic agencies, however, would hardly suf-

fic to develop and maintain the sort of relations which the entrance of the United States into the war made essential; they would demand the attention of highly expert technical advisers and organizers. No matter how able the Ambassadors, their routine duties would interfere with the new problems of belligerent coördination. Furthermore it would be difficult for the same men who had borne the strain of the discussions relating to neutral trade, the blacklist, and the holding up of American mails, to meet the new conditions.

Immediately following the President's speech asking for a war declaration, the British Government considered the advisability of sending to the United States a special mission, the obvious purpose of which should be to put at the disposal of our Government the experience gained by Great Britain in nearly three years of war and which might also bring the British into closer touch with the situation in America. The importance of the mission was indicated by the choice of Mr. Balfour, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, as its chief.

Sir Eric Drummond to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, April 5, 1917

May I offer you my warmest congratulations on magnificent speech of the President.¹ We are all deeply moved at its terms and tone. When Congress has responded to the great ideals which he has expressed, we trust consideration will be given to a commission, technically expert, being sent from here to place at the disposal of the United States Government the experience gained in this country during the war.

It has been suggested that Mr. Arthur Balfour should be the head of such a commission for a short time to coördinate its activity and to discuss wider issues involved.

Would it be possible for you to give me your opinion pri-

¹ The speech of April 2, asking Congress to declare the existence of a state of war between Germany and the United States.

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vately on this? Your telegram would not, of course, be used to forward any proposal which would not meet with the warm approval of the President and your people; especially as the absence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs for even a few weeks has many inconveniences.

ERIC DRUMMOND

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 5, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing a cable which has just come from Eric Drummond, Balfour's confidential secretary. Of course it is really Balfour speaking.

Will you not advise me what reply to send. I do not see how you can well refuse this request, coming as it does. It might be well to have a Frenchman of equal distinction come at the same time.

Balfour is the most liberal member of the present British Cabinet and it would be of great service to the relations of the two countries to have him here and to talk with him in person.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'April 6, 1917: Polk tells me over the telephone that the President read the cablegram at the Cabinet meeting to-day and they discussed the advisability of my sending a favorable response. . . .

'The French Government have offered to send Joffre and Viviani over. . . . The only objection to their coming that I can see is that it might create an unfavorable feeling throughout the country that we are fighting more for the Allies than we are for the great principles laid down by the President in his April second speech.'

Whatever his doubt of the effect upon certain strata of

opinion, House's belief in the practical value that would result from the suggested missions was such that he wrote the following letter to the President, which indicates what was in his mind but which on second thought he did not send; perhaps he feared lest he might appear to be urging a personal conviction.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 6, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The more I think of Balfour's proposal to come to America, the better it seems to me. It would put you in personal touch with one of the most influential men in the Empire and would increase your prestige enormously at the peace conference. I would like Balfour to know you and to take back his impressions so they might come from a less partisan voice than mine. If a Frenchman of equal distinction should accompany him, that too, would help in the same direction. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On April 6 President Wilson replied to House's first letter that of course the suggested mission would be welcome, although he himself visualized certain dangers in the effect upon opinion and feared that some Americans might misunderstand our relations with the Allies. A great many, he added, would look upon the mission as an attempt, in some degree, to take charge of us as an assistant to Great Britain. But he believed, none the less, that many useful purposes would be served and perhaps a great deal of time in getting together saved.¹ Three days later he wrote House of the coming of a French mission, 'apparently only of compliment,' headed by Viviani and Joffre.²

¹ Wilson to House, April 6, 1917. ² Wilson to House, April 9, 1917.

Colonel House to Sir Eric Drummond

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, April 9, 1917

Many thanks for your kindly message. My friend has always held these convictions, but until Russia joined the democratic nations he did not think it wise to utter them.¹

He is greatly pleased that Mr. Balfour will come to the United States and of course I am delighted. It should result in settling many problems that confront us, and this country will appreciate the honor. I hope he may come immediately.

I would suggest the mission be announced as diplomatic rather than military, and that the military and naval members be of minor rank in order that this feature may not be emphasized.

E. M. HOUSE

Thus on the very day that by formal vote of Congress the United States entered the war, it was decided to welcome the Allied envoys. Within a week the Balfour Mission was on the Atlantic, and on April 21 they landed at Halifax, whence they came by train through New York to Washington. A few days later arrived the French Mission led by Viviani and Joffre, to be followed shortly by the Italians and Belgians.

Whatever the outcome of the conferences that followed, the despatch of these missions was of itself significant, a gesture symbolic of coöperative effort by which alone Germany could be defeated.

II

On the morning of April 22, the Balfour Mission en route to Washington passed through New York. Besides the Foreign Secretary and Sir Eric Drummond the Mission included representatives of the army, navy, and treasury, General Bridges, Admiral de Chair, Lord Cunliffe. At nine in the morning Colonel House, at the suggestion of the British Embassy, went down to the Pennsylvania station in

¹ Referring again to Wilson's speech of April 2.

New York to meet Balfour, who entered and left the city entirely by tunnel. The interview covered general topics only, but House's report to Wilson is interesting in that it indicates his fear lest in the Washington conferences the vital but dangerous topic of war aims should be raised. House himself believed that at this time it ought to be avoided. It was the moment, he felt, to emphasize the need of coöperative effort rather than to bring up any underlying differences of purpose between America and the Allied powers; these could be settled, he thought, only after the defeat of Germany was assured.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, April 22, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

At the suggestion of Sir William Wiseman who, I believe, spoke also for Sir Cecil, I met Balfour as he passed through this morning and had an interesting talk with him. . . .

I told Balfour that unless you advised to the contrary I thought it would be well to minimize the importance of his visit here to the extent of a denial that it was for the purpose of forming some sort of agreement with the Allies. I find there is a feeling that this country is about to commit itself to a secret alliance with them.

Such men as X and Y [extreme liberals] have been to see me and I could not convince them that the object of the visit of the British and French was not for this purpose.

I hope you will agree with me that the best policy now is to avoid a discussion of peace settlements. Balfour concurs in this. If the Allies begin to discuss terms among themselves, they will soon hate one another worse than they do Germany and a situation will arise similar to that in the Balkan States after the Turkish War. It seems to me that the only thing to be considered at present is how to beat Germany in the quickest way.

I told Balfour I hoped England would consider that a peace which was best for all the nations of the world would be the one best for England. He accepted this with enthusiasm.

If you have a tacit understanding with him not to discuss peace terms with the other Allies, later this country and England will be able to dictate broad and generous terms — terms that will mean permanent peace.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

As we shall soon see, it proved impossible not to discuss war aims, partly, at least, because Mr. Balfour himself had naturally assumed that Wilson would wish to know of the secret treaties by which the Allied powers had guaranteed to each other the fulfillment of their war aims, and had come fully prepared to discuss them with the United States Government. At this first interview, however, House touched on the crucial topic only so far as to verify his conviction that the British Foreign Secretary would stand, at least in principle, for the sort of settlement Wilson had demanded in his speech of April 2. So much appears from a passage in his diary supplementing his letter to the President.

'April 22, 1917: I advised Balfour to be entirely frank in his statement to the President of the difficulties under which the Allies are struggling. . . .

'I urged him not to talk peace terms, and to advise the President not to discuss peace terms with any of the other Allies. If he did, differences would be certain to arise and the problem now was to beat Germany and not discuss peace. Balfour agreed to this in full, and said he would not talk to the President about peace terms unless the President himself initiated it.

'Balfour asked what I thought of negotiations with

Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria for separate peace. I thought well of Austria and Bulgaria¹ . . .

'It pleased me to have Balfour rise with enthusiasm to the suggestion that Great Britain and the United States would stand together for a just peace — a peace fair to all, to the small as well as the large nations of the world. Great Britain and America, I thought, were great enough to rise above all petty considerations. I thought that what was best for the smaller nations was best, in the long run, for Great Britain and the United States. This peace might easily be one of the greatest events in history and if we were to justify ourselves, we should not be small or selfish in its settlement.

'In speaking of the war, Balfour said it was perhaps the biggest event in history but beyond that he could not think; he could not grasp the details and probably would never be able to do so; that coming generations might find it possible to see the thing as it really existed but we could not. . . .'

The first days of the Mission's visit to Washington were taken up with official receptions. Mr. Balfour displayed the tact and magnetism necessary to evoke unstinted enthusiasm for the Allies, which was enhanced by the arrival of the French Mission on April 24. If there had existed any fear that the United States was about to be caught in the toils of European diplomacy, it was lost in the burst of applause that was given the Allied Missions. The ceremonials at the capital were by no means wasted time, since they did much to impress upon the country the fact that the war was a coöperative enterprise.

Colonel House remained in New York during the first days of the Balfour Mission's visit; at the request of Wilson he came over to Washington for the week-end. On the 26th of April he had lunch with the President.

¹ At this time the United States was at war with neither of these states.

'My conversation with Balfour,' said Wilson, 'was not satisfactory. How would it be to invite him to a family dinner, you being present, and go into a conference afterwards?'

The President was anxious, apparently, to settle the question of war aims as between the United States and the Allies. There was much to be said in favor of clarifying this problem at the moment the United States entered the war. On the other hand, as House had intimated in his letter of April 22 to Wilson, dangers lurked in the raising of it.

We had taken up arms against Germany, according to Wilson's speech of April 2, both because Germany had already made war upon us through the submarine and because of our desire to achieve a lasting and just settlement. We were tacitly pledged to the defeat of Germany. If we did not come to agreement with the Allies as to the sort of peace to be imposed upon her, there was danger that we might be fighting for Allied war aims, perhaps as crystallized in the secret treaties. On the other hand if, after learning the terms of the secret treaties, we refused our approval, what then? We could hardly state that we would not continue to fight Germany, since we had our own quarrel with her. It would be futile to announce that because of our disapproval of the purposes of the Allies we would make war by ourselves. If we stated that we would fight with the Allies but reserved the right later to dispute the application of the secret treaties, the only effect would be to cause irritation and to injure the chances of effective coöperative action against the enemy.

Colonel House knew of the secret treaties. He had told the President of the Treaty of London before Italy entered the war, and Grey had told him of the demands of Rumania, so that he must have guessed the terms upon which she entered the war.¹ He was shortly to learn more about them.

¹ See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, I, 462.

But he hoped that the President would not at this time make an issue of them, and he feared the results of an American demand that the Allies renounce them. The time might come when the United States would be in a position to enforce such a demand as a necessary preliminary to a stable peace. But America, coming late into the war and as yet having made no material contribution toward victory, had not attained that position.

Later President Wilson was severely criticized for having failed to settle the whole question of war aims at the moment when we entered the war. If the criticism is just, evidently Colonel House must share the responsibility. As will appear, neither the President nor House felt that it was possible to endanger unity with the Allies by raising a protest against the secret treaties.

'April 26, 1917: [Conference with President Wilson.] I argued against discussing peace terms with the Allies, just as I did in my first conversation with Mr. Balfour and in my letter to the President. The President thought it would be a pity to have Balfour go home without a discussion of the subject. My thought was that there was no harm in discussing it between themselves if it was distinctly understood and could be said, that there was no official discussion of the subject, and if neither Government would discuss peace terms with any of the other Allies.¹ It was agreed that this should be done.'

The President commissioned Colonel House to present to Mr. Balfour his invitation to dinner, thus preserving the desired atmosphere of informality; later it was decided that House should first discuss with the Foreign Secretary the general problem of war aims and ask him about the secret treaties, before the dinner with the President.

¹ It is not clear how the British, who had treaties with the other Allies, could be expected not to discuss them if occasion arose.

In view of the later controversy regarding American knowledge of the secret treaties, Colonel House's record of the following conversation with Balfour is of the utmost historical importance. It is unsatisfactory in a certain sense, for he dictated his notes on this conversation in a haste that could not be avoided and was obviously dealing in generalities. Unless this fact is kept in mind, the notes give an impression of superficiality. It should also be remembered that this discussion and those that followed were not directed to the merits of the secret treaties themselves, but rather to their bearing on American policy and the relations between America and the Allies.

'April 28, 1917: My most important conference to-day was with Mr. Balfour. . . . No one else was present and we talked for an hour and a half without interruption. And this reminds me that Sir Eric asked yesterday whether it would be convenient for Balfour to continue to be a guest of the Government rather than to go to the British Embassy as planned.¹ . . . We asked Drummond, and Balfour as well, to open their minds freely, as to one another, so that things might go without friction. They promised to do so and this is an evidence of it.

'Balfour wished to know where we should begin our discussion, whether we should first take up peace terms to be imposed in the event of a decisive defeat of Germany, or whether to take it up on a basis of a stalemate of partial

¹ Through the courtesy of Mr. Breckinridge Long, Third Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Balfour had been given the use of his house during the Mission's stay in Washington. 'In some ways,' Colonel House wrote, 'Breckinridge Long occupied a position of his own in the Wilson Administration. A man of wealth, of culture and of an old and distinguished family, he filled an enviable niche. He had charm, discretion and a sense of political values that made him an important factor in the State Department. He looked beyond his departmental duties, and worked assiduously to strengthen the President's position. He sought to clarify and popularize the President's policies.'

defeat. I thought we had better discuss the first proposition.

'He had a large map of Europe and of Asia Minor and we began this most important and interesting discussion, the understanding being that he and I would go through with it first, letting me convey our conclusions to the President before the three of us had our conference on Monday.¹

'He took it for granted that Alsace and Lorraine would go to France, and that France, Belgium, and Serbia would be restored.

'He first discussed Poland and outlined what its boundaries should be. Of course, the stumbling block was the outlet to the sea. There can be no other excepting Danzig. . . . This would leave an Alsace and Lorraine to rankle and fester for future trouble.² Balfour thought it might be made a free port, and in that way satisfy Poland. At the moment, I do not look upon this with favor, particularly since the Germans and Poles would be antagonistic and ready upon the slightest provocation to find grievances against one another. However, I warmly advocated a restored and rejuvenated Poland, a Poland big enough and powerful enough to serve as a buffer state between Germany and Russia.

'Serbia came next, and it was agreed that Austria must return Bosnia and Herzegovina, but that Serbia on her part should give to Bulgaria that part of Macedonia which the first Balkan agreement gave her.

'Rumania, we thought, should have a small part of Russia which her people inhabited and also a part of Hungary for the same reason.³

¹ House later wrote that this map had the secret treaty lines traced on it and that Balfour left it with the Colonel. It is not to be found among the House Papers, and was doubtless handed over to The Inquiry and later sent to the State Department.

² German protests against this corridor, which was established by the peace treaties, are clear evidence of the extent to which it constituted a factor of unrest.

³ References evidently to Bessarabia and Transylvania and the Banat. They may have looked small upon Balfour's map but the territories

'We thought Austria should be composed of three states, such as Bohemia, Hungary, and Austria proper.

'We came to no conclusion as to Trieste. I did not consider it best or desirable to shut Austria from the Adriatic. Balfour argued that Italy claimed she should have protection for her east coast by having Dalmatia. She has no seaport from Venice to Brindisi, and she claims she must have the coast opposite in order to protect herself.'

The mention of the aspirations of Italy gave to House the opening for which he had been waiting and permitted him to put the pertinent question as to the secret obligations which the Allies had assumed towards each other for the fulfilment of their war aims.

'This led me to ask,' House continued, 'what treaties were out between the Allies as to the division of spoils after the war. He said they had treaties with one another, and that when Italy came in they made one with her in which they had promised pretty much what she demanded.

'Balfour spoke with regret at the spectacle of great nations sitting down and dividing the spoils of war or, as he termed it, "dividing up the bearskin before the bear was killed." I asked him if he did not think it proper for the Allies to give copies of these treaties to the President for his confidential information. He thought such a request entirely reasonable and said he would have copies made for that purpose. He was not certain they had brought them over, but if not, he would send for them.

'I asked if he did not consider it wise for us to keep clear of any promises so that at the peace conference we could exert an influence against greed and an improper distribution of

promised Rumania by the secret treaty of Bucharest, signed August 17, 1916, would almost double the area of Rumania. Bessarabia, belonging to Russia, was not included in the territories then promised Rumania.

territory. I said to him what I once said to Grey, that if we are to justify our being in the war, we should free ourselves entirely from petty, selfish thoughts and look at the thing broadly and from a world viewpoint. Balfour agreed to this with enthusiasm.

'Constantinople was our next point. We agreed that it should be internationalized.¹ Crossing the Bosphorus we came to Anatolia.² It is here that the secret treaties between the Allies come in most prominently. They have agreed to give Russia a sphere of influence in Armenia and the northern part. The British take in Mesopotamia [and the region] which is contiguous to Egypt. France and Italy each have their spheres embracing the balance of Anatolia up to the Straits.³

'It is all bad and I told Balfour so. They are making it a breeding place for future war. I asked what the spheres of influence included. Balfour was hazy concerning this; whether it meant permanent occupation, or whether it meant that each nation had the exclusive right to develop the resources within their own sphere, he was not altogether clear.

'We did not touch upon the German Colonies, neither did we touch upon Japan, China, or the Eastern question generally.⁴

'We went back to Poland. His objection to a Polish state, cutting off Russia from Germany, was whether it would not

¹ This does not tally with the promises made by Great Britain and France to Russia in March, 1915, according to which Constantinople should belong to Russia but should be a free port for goods not entering Russia. House must have misunderstood Balfour, perhaps interpreting 'free port' as meaning 'free city.'

² Meaning evidently Turkey in Asia.

³ Italy's demands were met in a general fashion in the Treaty of London; they were agreed to more definitely at this very time, April 19, 1917, at St. Jean de Maurienne.

⁴ Just before the United States entered the war France, Great Britain, Italy, and Russia agreed to approve Japan's claims to German rights in Shantung and the German islands north of the equator.

hurt France more than Germany, for the reason it would prevent Russia from coming to France's aid in the event of an attack by Germany. I thought we had to take into consideration the Russia of fifty years from now rather than the Russia of to-day. While we might hope it would continue democratic and cease to be aggressive, yet if the contrary happened, Russia would be the menace to Europe and not Germany. I asked him not to look upon Germany as a permanent enemy. If we did this, it would confuse our reasoning and mistakes would likely be made. Balfour, however, was more impressed with the German menace than he was by the possible danger from Russia.'

III

House did not urge Balfour to give him complete details of the secret treaties, nor, being a private citizen, would he wish to ask for copies of the texts. It seems clear that he realized always the danger of pressing the discussion to a point which might emphasize the differences between the American and the Allied war aims. The following evening the Colonel dined with President Wilson and, if we may depend upon his diary notes, nothing was said of the matter nor of the approaching conference which Wilson was to have with Balfour. The President seemed anxious to escape from current politics.

'*April 29, 1917*: The President, Mrs. Wilson, Miss Bones and I had dinner alone. After dinner we went to the upstairs sitting room and talked upon general subjects for awhile. The President read several chapters from Oliver's "Ordeal by Battle." He was interested in what I had to tell him of Oliver, and we discussed the different points Oliver made in the chapters read. . . .

'The President declared his intention of writing some things which were on his mind, after he retired from office.

... He said he had no notion of writing about his administration, but expressed a desire to write one book which he has long had in mind and which he thought might have an influence for good.

'He said, "I write with difficulty and it takes everything out of me." This estimate of himself in that field of his endeavors would surprise the general public, since he is considered such a fluent writer. I asked how long it took him to write his April 2nd Address to Congress. He said ten hours. I offered the opinion that his January 22nd speech to the Senate was a much abler document because it had more original thought. His April 2nd speech pleased, I thought, because it reflected the public mind, both here and in the Allied countries.

'He talked of the proposed book and its contents. I thought if he would bring out clearly the necessity for a more responsive form of government, and the necessity for having Cabinet members sit in the House of Representatives, it would be worth while. He agreed that if the Cabinet officers sat in the House, the outcome would be that the President would have to take his material for the Cabinet from Congress. This, in the end, would give the Cabinet more power, and would have the further effect of bringing into Congress the best talent in the country. It would eventuate in something like the British system.'

On the following evening, April 30, the intimate conference between Wilson and Balfour took place in the White House, preceded by the family dinner which the President insisted upon and which proved conducive to the sort of informal discussion of war aims that was desired.

'Besides the President, Mr. Balfour and myself,' wrote House, 'there was no one present at dinner excepting Mrs. Wilson and Miss Bones. The President did most of the

talking. . . . The conversation was along general lines, mostly educational, historical and architectural. The President told several stories of Lincoln, and Balfour listened with interest. He said Lincoln was not ready for the Presidency when it came to him; that up to that time he was not sufficiently educated and had not had adequate public experience. He spoke of the difficulty Lincoln had in acquiring an education and of his manner of obtaining it. They both thought it little less than marvellous, with his antecedents and limited opportunities, that he should develop a distinct literary flavor. . . .

'In talking of education, the President expressed himself as not being in agreement with the general modern trend against the Classics. He thought the world had gained as much by the untruths of history as by the truths. He did not believe the human mind should be held down to facts and material matters. He considered that the trouble with Germany to-day. German thought expressed itself in terms of machinery and gases. The reading of the romance languages and of the higher flights of fancy in literature led one into spiritual realms which, to say the least, was as advantageous to the world as its material progress. . . .

'We took our coffee in the oval sitting room and when it was finished we went to the President's study and began a conference, the importance of which cannot be overestimated. The President continued to do most of the talking. It was evident to me that he was keyed up for this conference, as he had been resting most of the afternoon, not taking his usual exercise. . . .

'The ground we covered was exactly the same as Balfour and I had covered in our conference Saturday. I tried to steer the conversation so as to embrace what Balfour had said to me and what the President and I had agreed upon in former conferences.

'When we touched upon the internationalization of

Constantinople I suggested that it might lead to trouble. It was with some difficulty that I made them understand that I thoroughly agreed with the general idea, but desired to point out that it would inevitably lead to an attempt to internationalize the Straits between Sweden and Norway and Continental Europe, and the Suez and Panama Canals. They did not agree with me that the two questions had much in common. . . .

'The discussion ran from shortly before eight o'clock until half past ten, when the President was due at a reception given by the Secretary of State to the members of Congress to meet the British and French Missions.

'I asked Balfour again about the Allies' treaties with each other and the desirability of his giving copies to the President. He again agreed to do so.

'When the conference broke up I walked downstairs with Mr. Balfour and asked if he felt that his mind and that of the President had touched at all points. He was quite enthusiastic and said he had never had a more interesting interview. He spoke of the President as having a wonderful combination of human philosophy and political sagacity.

'The President and Mr. Balfour went to the reception together and I went to my room to prepare for the train. Before I left, the President had returned and we had a few minutes further conversation. He was delighted at Balfour's comments, and seemed happy over the result of the evening's work.'

Colonel House's record of this conversation is interesting not merely because it indicates clearly that the existence of the secret treaties was discussed, but also because the President evidently did not think it worth while to make an issue of the topic. The discussion, like that of House with Balfour two days before, was not based upon the treaties, but rather upon the most satisfactory settlement that could be arranged

to ensure peace. House had already told Balfour that he regarded Allied plans as expressed in the treaties as 'bad,' and Wilson, who did much of the talking, must have indicated his own preferences.

Some months later, at the time of the drafting of the Fourteen Points, President Wilson expressed concern over the promises made in the secret treaties, particularly in the Treaty of London. Aware of his misgivings, Sir William Wiseman informed Mr. Balfour, who wrote at some length to the President regarding Allied obligations.

Mr. A. J. Balfour to President Wilson

LONDON, January 30, 1918

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I gather from a message sent by Wiseman that you would like to know my thoughts on the Italian territorial claims under the treaty of London concluded in 1915.

That treaty (arranged of course long before I was at the Foreign Office) bears on the face of it evident proof of the anxiety of the Allies to get Italy into the war, and of the use to which that anxiety was put by the Italian negotiators. But a treaty is a treaty; and we — I mean England and France (of Russia I say nothing) — are bound to uphold it in letter and in spirit. The objections to it indeed are obvious enough: It assigns to Italy territories on the Adriatic which are not Italian but Slav; and the arrangement is justified not on grounds of nationality but on grounds of strategy.

Now I do not suggest that we should rule out such arguments with a pedantic consistency. Strong frontiers make for peace; and though great crimes against the principle of nationality have been committed in the name of 'strategic necessity,' still if a particular boundary adds to the stability of international relations, and if the populations concerned be numerically insignificant, I would not reject it in defer-

ence to some *a priori* principle. Each case must be considered on its merits.

Personally, however, I am in doubt whether Italy would really be strengthened by the acquisition of all her Adriatic claims; and in any case it does not seem probable that she will endeavour to prolong the war in order to obtain them. Of the three west-European belligerents she is certainly the most war-weary; and if she could secure peace and '*Italia Irredenta*' she would, I believe, not be ill satisfied. . . .

Yours very sincerely

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

P.S. I shall always be delighted to answer with complete frankness any question you care to put to me. But this I think you know already.

It is thus quite certain that the President was informed of the character of the secret treaties and was entirely aware of the difference between his own peace programme and that of the Allies. At the time of the Balfour Mission he may have expected that in the end American influence at the Peace Conference would be sufficient to eliminate the treaties as practical factors in the settlement. Writing to Colonel House, a few weeks later, President Wilson intimated strongly that American economic power would be such that the Allies must perforce yield to American pressure and accept the American peace programme: England and France, he wrote, have not the same views with regard to peace that we have by any means. When the war is over we can force them to our way of thinking.¹

If President Wilson regarded the secret treaties as of small ultimate consequence, it is not surprising that at the moment when we entered the war he refused to make an issue of them.²

¹ Wilson to House, July 21, 1917.

² See appendix to this chapter.

IV

In the mean time Colonel House found opportunity, before his return to New York, to come into contact with most of the members of the missions, French as well as British.

'April 29, 1917: At one o'clock, Frank Polk, Miss Bones, Miss Brennan and I drove to the Navy Yard to board the *Mayflower*, which Secretary Daniels had commissioned to take the French and British Missions to Mount Vernon. In addition to the personnel of the Missions the members of the Cabinet were present. I was busy from the time I boarded the ship until I returned, with discussions with different people.

'The most interesting person aboard was Marshal Joffre. . . .

'April 30, 1917: This has been a day filled with important work. . . . State Department officials, Cabinet members, etc., etc. Conversations with the French and British Missions. . . .

'I lunched at the French Embassy. The other guests besides the Ambassador and Madame Jusserand were, Marshal Joffre, Viviani, Admiral Chochresprat, Henry White, Myron T. Herrick, Marquis de Chambrun, Frank Polk. Before lunch there was a very pretty ceremony. The household servants and some neighborhood children brought flowers to Joffre and presented him with a small souvenir. He thanked them in a few sentences.

'My next engagement was with Sir Eric Drummond, which we filled by a drive. Since our last talk he had thought of Viscount Grey of Fallodon as a special envoy to the United States to remain indefinitely. This I considered an admirable suggestion. He wondered whether Grey would accept. . . . It would mean that they would have a representative of the British Government here with whom I

believed the President would talk as frankly as to a member of our own Government. . . .

'We arranged to keep in constant communication and I urged him to let us know of any difficulties which might arise, or of any annoyance however petty which might come up and would not be known unless he dealt frankly with us.

'My next engagement was with Émile Hovelaque.¹ This also was filled by a drive with him through Rock Creek Park. . . .

'Hovelaque told of how serious conditions were in France and how necessary it was to send our troops at once. The Allies seem to be pretty much at the end of their tether, and it is to be hoped Germany is in an even more depleted condition. . . .

'I went to Henry White's residence, where the French Mission is quartered, and was shown into the Marshal's room, where we had our conference. Joffre began by saying that he was anxious to explain the condition of France and how necessary it was for American soldiers to be sent over at once. He thought he could put them in condition to go to the front within five weeks after they arrived, provided they knew the rudiments of military tactics. He merely wanted them to be disciplined and to know the manual of arms.

'To me Joffre looks more of the German than the French type. He must have been quite blonde when young. His hair is now so streaked with gray that it is difficult to know its original color. His eyes are peculiar and, to me, the most striking feature he has. He seems to have a well ordered mind, and appears to be the type of General well suited to the French in the time of stress which they were under when he was in general command. I constantly compared him, in my own mind, to General Grant. I told him this, and he seemed not displeased at the comparison. . . .

'The French have used bad judgment in sending envoys

¹ Of the French Mission.

here who cannot speak English, for it makes it impossible for us to have as complete an understanding with them as with the English. One hesitates to trust entirely an interpreter. I can see more and more clearly the danger of friction between the Allies. Distrust lies close beneath the surface, and a little difference between them would bring it from under cover. This danger is not being well guarded. The Japanese, Russians, and Italians are being left out of English, French, and American calculations. As far as one can see, they do not appear at any of the functions in Washington except the larger ones, and there is a lack of Russian, Japanese, and Italian flags which might easily hurt sensibilities. The British and ourselves are not unlike the Germans in that our manner indicates that other nations do not much matter.'

On the evening of April 30 Colonel House returned to New York, but at Wilson's suggestion arrangements were made for him to continue conversations with members of the Allied Missions. What the President chiefly desired was an understanding regarding the tone of public statements that might be issued with the purpose of affecting opinion in Germany. It was also important to discuss the general sense of any replies that might be made to future peace proposals. He did not intend to bind himself to approve Allied policies, but he did wish to know what was in the minds of the British and French. He was certainly in complete agreement with Allied determination to achieve the 'defeat of Germany,' but he wanted to know exactly what was meant by the phrase. What did 'security against German aggression' connote? Must the war be carried to the point of breaking up the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires? He was anxious not to permit belligerent emotion to cloud common sense and he desired calmly to balance the relative advantages of minimum and maximum war aims in the light

of the price that must be paid in human lives and material wealth.

On all these matters agreement between the President and House was so complete that he knew that his own point of view would be clearly explained by Colonel House to Mr. Balfour, and the conference would have the advantage of being entirely unofficial.

'*May 8, 1917*: The usual telephone calls,' wrote House, 'have come from Washington and elsewhere. Wiseman had word from Washington that Balfour will lunch with us on Sunday. I have also arranged to dine with the British Ambassador Saturday and have Sir Eric Drummond for tea Sunday. This will give satisfactory conferences with all of them. . . .

'There is not much satisfaction talking with the French, for the reason they are not clothed with any authority, and are merely here to tell of France's needs and to express her appreciation of our entrance into the war. With Balfour it is different. He is Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of our most powerful ally and it may be that he will figure largely at the peace conference. . . .

'*May 13, 1917*: The main business of the day was my conference with Balfour. He came for lunch and remained until four o'clock, giving us ample time to go over the international situation. At lunch we discussed the impossibility of distinguished visitors getting the true American feeling or spirit because of the kind of people they necessarily met and the limited area of the country they visited. I told of the South and the West and of their sturdy and silent patriotism, and how they would quietly make ready for the struggle upon which we have embarked. . . .

'There was no one at the table excepting Balfour and myself. After lunch we adjourned to my study. We decided we ought to have some understanding as to each other's minds

56 INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

regarding the inauguration of peace measures. Germany at any time might make a tentative offer. . . .'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 13, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Mr. Balfour took lunch with me to-day and we had a very interesting talk.

I suggested that it would be well to use his influence towards limiting the members of the peace conference to a minimum and I expressed the hope that you would consent to go from here as our only representative. He concurred in the wisdom of having a body small enough for it not to be unwieldy.

I asked him what would be his inclination in the event Germany made a tentative offer of peace on the basis of the *status quo ante*. He thought it would largely depend upon the condition of the U-boat warfare and also upon the condition of Russia, France, and Italy.

It was my opinion that we ought not to let our desires run away with our judgment in the matter of making peace. For instance, if Turkey and Austria were willing to break away from Germany, or were willing to force Germany to make peace, I thought certain concessions should be made to them other than what we would have in mind in the event we had our complete will. He agreed to this.

He also agreed to the proposal that there should be no insistence that the makers of the war should be punished before a settlement had been even tentatively discussed.

He asked me to express to you his very great appreciation of your coming to Congress to hear him speak. He understands what an unprecedented compliment it was and is deeply moved. . . .

He is very happy over his visit and considers it a great success from every viewpoint.

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PHILADELPHIA



Arthur James Balfour 1919

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR
(now Earl of Balfour)

YIASHU IUTBACREB

ANLEBAJIN

Some time ago I had a letter from Page proposing that we start a propaganda in England to improve the feeling towards us. I spoke to Balfour about this and suggested that it would be better if this were done by the English themselves. He agreed to take it up with his government and see that it was properly done.¹

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The British were evidently conscious that the question of sincere German peace offers was for the moment quite outside the circle of practical possibilities. They responded more quickly to the suggestion that a concerted and continual drive should be made on German morale. House believed that to break the belligerent spirit behind the lines was as important as to defeat the armies; this result could be attained, he felt, by constant repetition of the note which Wilson struck in his war speech of April 2: that the war was waged by the Entente and America for the liberation of all peoples, Germans included, and that the Allies had no quarrel with the German people, no desire to dismember Germany; with the German military autocracy, however, the Allies would never deal. On May 20 House discussed this policy with Sir Eric Drummond, who promised to draft a memorandum embodying these principles so far as they met the views of the Foreign Office.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *May 20, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Sir Eric Drummond has been here for two days. We have gone over the situation of the Central Powers and he has given me the views of his Foreign Office on many points. . . .

¹ This letter was answered on the telephone by the President, who approved its general tenor.

I convinced Drummond that the most effective thing we could do at present was to aid the German liberals in their fight against the present German Government.

The idea is for you to say, at a proper time and occasion, that the Allies are ready at any moment to treat with the German people, but they are not ready to treat with a military autocracy — an autocracy which they feel is responsible for the troubles that now beset the world. It is not fair to the peoples of Russia, of Great Britain, of France, of Italy, and of the United States to be asked to treat with a military caste that is in no way representative of the German people themselves.

Both Drummond and I think that care should be used not to include the Kaiser. He has a very strong personal following in Germany, and if he is shorn of his power . . . he could be rendered harmless. In not designating the Kaiser, the hands of the liberals will be strengthened because there is an element in Germany that would like to see a democratic Germany under a limited monarchy. The situation in Russia will accentuate the feeling that it is better not to make a too violent change from an autocracy to a republic. . . .¹

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The draft statement of policy agreed upon by Sir Eric and Colonel House, which, according to a note of Colonel House of May 23, was approved by Mr. Balfour, began by declaring that the United States and the Allies were determined to carry on the struggle until the aims set out by President Wilson were secured. America would spare neither treasure nor life, no matter how long the war continued. In 1918 there would be a million and a half American soldiers on the

¹ This letter also was answered by the President on the telephone in a tone of general approval.

Western Front.¹ But, although the Allies would never abandon the 'cause of democracy and civilization,' and Germany could never hope for a favorable decision by force of arms, the Allies were ready to declare, as before, that they had no quarrel with the German people, no desire to dismember Germany.

The points outlined in the House-Drummond memorandum deserve careful appraisal, since they formed the basis for the public statements of President Wilson during the remainder of the war: Peace to the German people, endless war on German militarism. Unquestionably the attempt to differentiate between the Germans and their Government, unpopular as it was and fruitless as it seemed at the time, served finally to weaken German morale, the collapse of which, according to Ludendorff, explains the sudden character of the final surrender. The possibilities of this policy were perceived by Lord Northcliffe, who in the following spring organized at Crewe House the most effective scheme of propaganda known to modern history. Ceaselessly he poured into Germany the idea that unless the people repudiated the old régime, their own ruin would be linked with that of the Hohenzollerns. It acted as a subtle corrosive which ultimately ate away the German 'will to victory.'

v

The Balfour Mission slipped quietly out of New York, across the Canadian border, and back to England. The French and the Italians shortly followed. It yet remained to be seen whether practical working agencies could be evolved capable of directing the strength of America into the channels of assistance most necessary to the Allies. The

¹ It is important to note that as early as May, 1917, as here indicated, President Wilson determined to send over so large an American expeditionary force.

Missions represented the first attempt to secure coördination between the United States and the Allies, and it was not unnatural that they did not succeed immediately in establishing effective coöperation; the task was one which would require long months of experiment.

The Missions, none the less, did go far to create the cordial atmosphere essential to whole-hearted coöperation. Most important of all, perhaps, they made possible a frank interchange of personal opinion which facilitated the settlement of many delicate questions such as are bound to disturb the official relations of even the most friendly governments. The Balfour Mission, in particular, established a close liaison between the British and the Americans that continued throughout the war.

Sir Eric Drummond to Colonel House

LONDON, July 10, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I am afraid that we have been overwhelming you with numerous telegrams on various subjects since we got back, but you were so kind to us on the Mission and definitely asked me to refer to you if any difficulties arose, that we have been emboldened to take what is perhaps an undue advantage of your kindness.

The visit to the United States really has done Mr. Balfour good physically, and he is much less tired than when he started from here. I need not tell you how happy he was in your country nor how much he appreciated the pleasure of seeing you again.

I would like further to say that he formed a very great personal regard and admiration for the President. . . . You know how well the two men got on together and I think I may say how mutual their respect for each other was. . . .

I trust that you are well and that your many cares are not placing too great a strain upon you. I do not like to

contemplate what the position might be if we were deprived, even for a short time, of your counsel and assistance.

Yours very sincerely

ERIC DRUMMOND

APPENDIX

The problem of the extent to which officials of the United States knew of the existence and the content of the secret treaties has always been one of a controversial nature. President Wilson in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on August 19, 1919, stated that he had no knowledge of the secret treaties as a whole before he reached Paris: 'The whole series of understandings were disclosed to me for the first time then.' He further stated that he was not informed of the Treaty of London. Senator Johnson recited the list of various treaties, including the Treaty of London, the agreement with Rumania, the various agreements with reference to Asia Minor, and asked: 'Did you have any knowledge prior to the conference?' To which the President replied: 'No, sir, I can confidently answer that "No" in regard to myself.'

It is difficult to reconcile this statement with available evidence. On March 4, 1918, Mr. Balfour, in reply to a question in the House of Commons as to whether copies of the secret treaties had been sent to the President, replied 'that President Wilson is kept fully informed by the Allies.' On May 16, 1918, Mr. Balfour stated in the House of Commons: 'I have no secrets from President Wilson. Every thought that I have in the way of diplomacy connected with the war is absolutely open to President Wilson.' Furthermore, in a private letter to Colonel House, written July 17, 1922, permission to publish which is now authorized, he states in reference to a discussion of the secret treaties by Mr. R. S. Baker: 'He [Mr. Baker] was certainly wrong in his statement that Mr. Wilson was kept in ignorance by me of the secret treaties, an error which I feel the more acutely, because it is a calumny which, if I remember rightly, I have already publicly contradicted.' The clearest evidence of Mr. Balfour's frankness with President Wilson is to be found in his letter of January 30, 1918, above quoted; this shows that, upon receiving information from Sir William Wiseman to the effect that President Wilson was disturbed by the content of the Treaty of London, Mr. Balfour immediately wrote him regarding it.

The papers of Colonel House confirm this evidence. They indicate that Mr. Balfour and Colonel House discussed the secret treaties, and that in the conference with President Wilson which followed 'exactly the same ground was covered.' The question of the Far East was not raised and there is nothing to show that either Colonel House or the President knew anything of the understanding between the Allies and Japan regarding Shantung. Secretary Lansing stated before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he learned in 1917 of the projected division of the German Islands in the Pacific, but nothing about Shantung.

Although it seems clear that President Wilson knew of the Treaty of London in 1917,¹ it is possible that, after reaching Paris two years later and following the turmoil of the Conference, he may have confused the date of his hearing of this Treaty with the date of hearing of the understanding with Japan regarding Shantung. All these agreements were loosely lumped together under the caption 'Secret Treaties.' At no time did the President take them very seriously, since the peace settlement was determined by the active forces at Paris and not by the secret treaties, which in every case were seriously modified. It is possible that Mr. Wilson had been early advised of the existence of the agreement with Japan, but forgot the fact, as it was crowded out of his mind by the influx of an astounding amount of detail, and thus failed to recollect the date when several years later he was suddenly questioned on the subject by the Foreign Relations Committee. Such confusion of mind, in the circumstances, may reasonably account for his statement that he knew nothing of the Treaty of London before he reached Paris.² The following is the conclusion of Colonel House.³

'I disagree with the critics of President Wilson, both regarding his testimony before the Senate Committee as to when he first had knowledge of the secret treaties, and in the matter of his apparent lack of appreciation of their importance.

'It is doubtful whether he knew of the treaty with Japan until he reached Paris. I cannot recall having such knowledge myself and my papers do not indicate that either of us knew. The President may have had that treaty in mind when questioned by the Senate Committee, or it may be that he forgot the date when the information first reached him. There was nothing to be gained by a misstatement, and it is clear to me that he spoke from conviction.

'There was no man living at that time who had more varied information and misinformation brought to him than President Wilson. How could he on the spur of the moment know when he first heard of this or that?

'There are those who believe the President laid too little stress upon the treaties and that he should have had some understanding with the Allies regarding them before he committed the United States to war. This was not practicable. We had our own quarrel with Germany, and if he had waited until he could have gotten a satisfactory understanding regarding the secret treaties the war would have been over before we entered the lists. England and France might have come to a quick decision, but, of necessity, they would have had first to reach an agreement with Japan, Italy, and Russia. Could any satisfactory agreement have been reached with them? I doubt it. Meanwhile, Germany would

¹ In 1918 the Treaty of London, published by the Bolsheviks and reprinted by the Manchester *Guardian*, was public property.

² His testimony was given barely a month before his complete physical and nervous collapse.

³ In a letter of April 9, 1928 to C. S.

have sunk our ships and we should have been standing idly by, waiting for a termination of negotiations regarding the secret treaties.

'As it was, the United States entered the war promptly and efficiently, but as an associate Power, uncommitted to any agreements made between the Allies. Our hands were untied and we were free to do as we would at the peace table. If any criticism is to be made, should it not be of what we failed to do there, and not what we failed to do before we entered the war?'

CHAPTER III

TARDIEU AND NORTHCLIFFE

These people are getting deeply into the war and are most resolute.

Lord Northcliffe to Lord Rothermere, from New York, September 7, 1917

I

THE difficulties of waging war successfully by means of a coalition may be studied in any history. It is impossible to secure absolute unity of political or military action, and even imperfect coördination of a sort between the governments and armies of allied powers demands a variety of mutual sacrifices which few are willing to make except in the face of compelling peril. These difficulties were experienced by the European allies in their struggle against the Central Powers and never entirely overcome. It was all the more difficult to achieve coördinated action with the United States, which refused to accept the responsibilities of a treaty of alliance and insisted upon keeping its freedom of decision unrestricted.

The Balfour and Viviani Missions did not establish, did not indeed attempt to establish, machinery of coördination. They created, however, an atmosphere of mutual understanding which proved of political importance; this was especially true in the case of Anglo-American relations. President Wilson was acutely aware of the need of frank interchange of opinion and he was particularly pleased by the directness of Mr. Balfour's attitude during his conferences with the President and House. It was natural that he should ask Colonel House to develop his personal relations with the British, so that there might be informal means of exchanging facts and opinions with a frankness that would not always be possible between official departments of even the most

friendly nations. Sir William Wiseman thus describes the arrangements that were necessary.

‘Colonel House foresaw the serious delays which would occur if communication was held through the ordinary diplomatic channels, and realized the appalling difficulty of President Wilson’s coöperating usefully with the Allies at a distance of more than three thousand miles, especially as it was impossible to have any one in Europe who could speak authoritatively for the American Government without reference back to Washington. Balfour also dreaded the delays which must inevitably occur. In discussing this vital question, Colonel House arranged, with the President’s approval, that Balfour should cable in a special British Government code direct to me in New York, and that I should make it my chief duty to attend to these cables and bring them immediately to Colonel House, who could telephone them over a private wire to the State Department or to President Wilson. In this way Balfour, speaking for the British Government, could get an answer from President Wilson, if necessary, within a few hours. This would have been utterly impossible had the communications gone through ordinary diplomatic channels.’

An obvious example of the frankness with which opinions could be exchanged is to be found in a discussion which Colonel House began during the visit of the Balfour Mission and continued after its return to Great Britain. It concerned no less delicate a topic than the relative strength of the British and American navies. Historically it is chiefly of interest not because it affected the course of the war, but rather in the light of subsequent negotiations which became of the first importance after the Armistice and the close of the Wilson Administration.

The provisions of the Navy Bill passed by Congress in

1916 would, when carried into effect, make the United States Navy second only to that of Great Britain; indeed, in the opinion of various experts the reinforced American Navy would approximately equal that of the British in total strength.¹ The immediate value of this increase in the American naval forces, however, was lessened by the emphasis which the Navy Bill placed upon capital ships, whereas in the war against the German submarine the great need was lighter and swifter craft. The Allies asked, accordingly, that the United States postpone the building of capital ships in order to concentrate upon destroyers.

Since the United States desired above everything to bring effective assistance in the war against the submarine, they were anxious to meet this request. But they had also to consider what the ultimate effect would be upon their after-war naval strength if they neglected the building of capital ships. Would it be possible to enter into an arrangement with the British which would permit the United States to concentrate for the moment upon the building of destroyers and yet ensure the American Navy against the peril resulting from lack of capital ships, which, in the opinion of many experts, constituted the bulwark of naval strength? House raised the problem frankly with Balfour and Drummond. On May 13 he wrote in his diary:

‘In talking with Drummond, I called attention to the Allied demand that we build submarine destroyers at the expense of our major battleship programme. To do this would leave us at the end of the war where we are now, and in the event of trouble . . . we would be more or less helpless at sea. I thought if Great Britain would agree to give us an option on some of her major ships in the event of trouble, . . . we could go ahead with our destroyers without fear of subsequent events.

¹ This opinion was advanced at the Paris Peace Conference.

'Drummond replied that Germany's navy might be left intact after the war and Great Britain might have need of all her fleet in a further war with Germany. In this event I suggested we give Great Britain an option to read that in case of war with Germany we would return the battleships which we had taken over, and would give her in addition an option on some of our major ships. He is to take it up with Mr. Balfour and let me know the result.'

Sir Eric Drummond to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, May 14, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have spoken to Mr. Balfour on the matter we discussed yesterday, and personally he welcomes your proposal most cordially. The subject is, however, of so great importance that he has thought it right to send a telegram to the Prime Minister to obtain his approval before proceeding further. I hope we shall have a reply within the next day or two, and if so I think Mr. Balfour may wish me to come at once to New York to discuss with you how best to take the next step. In any event I hope to be in New York again at the end of this week and will of course let you know as soon as I can make any definite plan. . . .

Yours very sincerely

ERIC DRUMMOND

No decision was made by the British until after the return of the Balfour Mission. Early in July House received from Mr. Balfour a cable which analyzed the problem in the light of the immediate submarine danger as well as of the future relations of the United States.

Mr. Balfour's cable stated that the possibility of a naval agreement to permit the United States safely to concentrate upon destroyers and light craft instead of capital ships had been carefully considered by the War Cabinet. It was of

vital importance, the British Admiralty believed, that the maximum number of destroyers be built. If the United States Government felt that its navy was likely to become dangerously unbalanced, the British Cabinet would be willing to consider some sort of defensive arrangement with the United States to meet the danger. Colonel House's proposal that the British agree to provide definite naval assistance to compensate for the unbuilt American capital ships was likely to raise, however, rather dangerous international issues. Mr. Balfour suggested therefore that the defensive agreement be made more general, and that the six major powers at war with Germany all enter into a naval agreement providing for mutual assistance against any maritime attack for a period of four years after the conclusion of the present war.¹

Colonel House did not like the suggestion as well as his own plan providing that the British give the United States a definite option on certain British capital ships to be exercised in case of future trouble. Perhaps he feared lest the general defensive agreement should develop into something similar to a formal alliance that might arouse the opposition of American opinion. In Mr. Balfour's plan may be discovered the germ of the Naval Treaties of 1922, which were later concluded by the Harding Administration.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 8, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing a cable which I have just received from Balfour. I am sending it in duplicate so you will have a copy for the State Department. No one knows of these negotiations excepting Lansing and Polk. . . .

Breckinridge Long who is here to-day is taking this letter. I cannot see that the solution Balfour suggests would be

¹ Balfour to House, July 5, 1917.

of much service excepting that it would prevent Japan from falling into the hands of Germany and forming a combination against us.

In the event of trouble between Japan and ourselves, or other parties to the agreement, they would be forced to be neutral, or if there was war between any of the signatory powers, the others would necessarily be neutral.

That is not quite what we had in mind. I see no reason why our first proposal should not be accepted, and I see no reason why it should offend Japan or any other nation if known. What I suggested was that in view of our diverting government shipbuilding in our naval yards from the construction of capital battleships to that of vessels suitable for anti-submarine warfare, and the building of a merchant marine in order not to interrupt the supplying of the Allies with necessary materials for the continuation of the war, Great Britain should agree to give us an option on the purchase of such capital battleships as we might wish to replace those which we discontinued building because of our desire to aid them.

This would not be directed against Japan any more than it would be against France, Italy, Russia or even England herself.

Sir William Wiseman expects to return to England early next week and before going he will spend a day with me here. Will you not let me know your conclusions so I may discuss the matter with him and let him in turn take it up with his Government?

If the English are afraid of Germany, it seems to me it would be reasonable to include in the agreement a clause by which in the event of war between Germany and England, they might demand the return of these capital battleships. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On July 13 President Wilson invited Wiseman to discuss outstanding problems before his visit to England; in the course of the conversation they came to the naval proposals of Balfour and House. Wilson was not enthusiastic in support of either plan. He did not like the idea of anything approaching an alliance with the major European powers and Japan, even one limited in its scope to a purely defensive naval agreement. Nor did he agree with House that the question of capital ships was one of vital importance. The exigencies of the submarine war, he felt, would in any case lead to an emphasis upon the building of destroyers at the expense of capital ships; he seemed quite satisfied that this would not touch the effectiveness of the American navy after the war. Sir William's notes of this part of the conversation follow:

Wiseman Memorandum upon Conference with the President

July 13, 1917

'Wilson produced a memorandum from House regarding the proposed modification of the United States shipbuilding programme. Wilson said that he was not familiar with this proposition, and was therefore discussing it somewhat in the dark. In his own words — he was "thinking aloud to me." His observations were approximately as follows:

'That in his opinion the war had proved that capital ships were not of much value; that with this in view he did not consider the question of the United States delaying the building of capital ships as very important from a strategic point of view. He explained, however, that when Congress voted money for the naval programme, a specific estimate had to be made of the exact number of the different classes of ships upon which the money had to be spent. It would therefore be unlawful for him to change that programme and alter the number of ships to be built. The only way in which this could be done would be by laying the whole facts before Congress.

'When asked for a suggested solution [of the problem of defense against the submarine], he stated that he had always been opposed to allowing merchantmen to cross the Atlantic without convoy; that he was strongly in favor of forcing merchantmen to cross in fleets adequately protected by light naval craft. That he believed some such arrangement was now being put in force; that when the merchantmen reached some point near the British coast, lanes should be formed, strongly guarded by destroyers, through which the merchantmen could pass, and, again, when they were quite close to shore they should radiate to the various ports. He suggested that if some such scheme could be devised as an American scheme it would undoubtedly require a larger number of destroyers than the United States at present have, but that he could go to Congress with this scheme and ask for an appropriation specifically for this purpose. That as far as shipbuilding accommodation was concerned there would be no difficulty in delaying the building of capital ships and to make room for the laying down of destroyers, if necessary.

'With regard to Balfour's suggestion covering the naval shipbuilding difficulty by some species of defensive alliance:— Wilson stated that in his opinion the Allies had entered during the stress of war into various undertakings among each other which they would find it very difficult if not impossible to carry out when the war was over; and he was not in favor of adding to that difficulty. Moreover he pointed out that while the U.S. was now ready to take her place as a world-power, the strong feeling throughout the country was to play a "lone hand" and not to commit herself to any alliance with any foreign power. With regard to Japan, Wilson said that in his opinion a successful attack on the Pacific coast was absurd owing to the long distance from the Japanese base and the difficulty they would have in obtaining any suitable base on the Pacific coast. The possibil-

ity of their attacking the Philippines or some outlying possession was, he thought, quite another matter, and presented a possibility which could not be overlooked.'

Colonel House was not convinced that the day of the capital ship had passed. Until this was certified by naval experts he believed that it was the duty of the Administration to provide full insurance for the defense of the United States. 'There may be something in the future,' he noted in his diary on July 14, 'but up to now Great Britain's successful blockade of Germany is maintained because she has a superiority in capital battleships.'

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 17, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... I have a feeling that he [Wiseman] misunderstood you [concerning the value of capital battleships] for surely the present control of the seas is solely due to the superiority of the British Fleet in capital ships. No amount of smaller craft could take their place. While they are not effective in submarine warfare yet, submarine warfare is as distinct a phase of sea warfare as aircraft are in land warfare. I think it is true to-day as it was before the war that the nation having the most powerful capital battleships in both size and speed is the nation that will dominate the sea.

I hope you will insist upon some arrangement with England by which this country may obtain some of their capital ships at the end of the war, in the event we should wish them. The arrangement would be a safe one, for they need not be taken if not desired. I discussed this question thoroughly with Lord Fisher and other British naval men and there was no disagreement as far as I can remember.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

To this letter the President returned no specific response, and the discussion lapsed during the summer. Late in August, in answer to an inquiry of Sir William Wiseman, who was then in England, House cabled that the 'capital ship question is lagging because of pressure of matters of immediate urgency.' But when Wilson came up to visit House on the North Shore in September the question was again raised, House emphasizing the need and value of capital ships, the President at once skeptical of their value and convinced of the impossibility of a satisfactory arrangement with the British.¹ Colonel House thus describes the discussion with Wilson in his diary of September 9:

'After I had made an argument in favor of capital ships, he refused to discuss the question further, declaring that no matter whether I was right or he was right, it was impracticable to make an arrangement with Great Britain at this time looking to our securing some of her capital battleships after the war in consideration of our abandoning our ship-building programme of capital ships in order to build submarine destroyers. He thought the only thing that could be binding on Great Britain would be a treaty, and a treaty must necessarily go to the Senate for confirmation. He did not believe this country was prepared for a treaty of that sort with Great Britain. Anything less than a treaty he thought footless, because the present administration might change and the British Government might change, and what would a verbal agreement amount to under new administrations? I argued that an arrangement could be made which would meet the approval of our people. He in turn said if the British Government wanted to do this after the war, they would do it anyway, and if they did not want to do it, we had no means of making them short of a treaty. . . .'

¹ British naval expert opinion supported Wilson rather than House, in so far as it declared that the American navy was already relatively strong in capital ships (except battle cruisers) and weak in the categories of fast light cruisers and destroyers.

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Because of the imminence of the submarine peril and the representations of the Allies, the American naval authorities used the discretion left them by Congress to bend all their energies towards the building of light craft. Only two battleships, the *Mississippi* and *New Mexico*, were completed and commissioned while the United States was at war, and these had been started before we became a belligerent. The keels of two others, the *Maryland* and *Tennessee*, were laid before the armistice. 'Work on capital ships of the 1916 programme,' according to a Navy Department report, 'was virtually suspended during the period of the war in order to concentrate the facilities of the experienced shipbuilding plants upon the destroyer programme and other types needed to cope with the submarine problem.'¹

When the war ended, of the ten battleships provided for by the 1916 programme, only two had been completed and nothing had been done on the six battle cruisers authorized by that programme. It is obviously a matter of conjecture or of expert opinion as to whether the American Navy was unduly weakened thereby during the months that elapsed before the conclusion of the Washington Treaties in 1922.

II

The disagreement between the President and Colonel House over the question of capital ships did not affect ap-

¹ Letter from Navy Department, July 29, 1926. 'Under Acts of Congress dated 4 March, 1917 and 6 October, 1917,' the letter adds, '235 destroyers, in addition to the 50 required by the 1916 programme were laid down; the contracts for six of these were subsequently cancelled, leaving 229 destroyers of the emergency programme which were actually completed. Of the 50 destroyers authorized in the 1916 programme, 38 were contracted for and built.'

'During the period of the war, 6 April, 1917 to 11 November, 1918, 44 destroyers were completed. Of these the keels of five had been laid prior to April 6, 1917.'

'No capital ships were built entirely within the period of the war. The building period of capital ships is materially longer than the 17 months period of actual hostilities.'

parently the former's confidence in House's judgment, for it was during this period that Wilson opened up to House all the sources of official information coming in to Washington and encouraged him to develop his personal relations with individuals in Europe able to summarize unofficial opinion. House received long letters from our Ambassador in Rome, Thomas Nelson Page, Minister Egan in Copenhagen, and Counsellor Frazier in Paris. To him were sent copies of the cablegrams from our European embassies and legations to the State Department. He also received the personal impressions of Henri Bergson in France, of Sir Horace Plunkett in Ireland, and of such American journalists as Grasty and Ackerman.

Of the correspondence in House's files, nothing is more interesting than that with the great Irish statesman Plunkett. During his European visits in 1915 and 1916 Colonel House had developed the most intimate relations with Plunkett; the latter's knowledge of the United States, his close friendship with Mr. Balfour, his sympathetic understanding of opinion on both sides of the Atlantic, enabled him to analyze the European situation in terms most useful for an American. In the days of American neutrality he had earnestly desired and assiduously labored to smooth Anglo-American relations. 'I hold,' he had written to House in December, 1916, 'that the best hope of a lasting peace lies in a right mutual understanding between the peoples of the American Republic and of the British Empire. For this reason I have, as you know, done my best to explain to our Government the difficulties of the President's position, which my long acquaintance with the Middle Western States has enabled me to understand. I wish to continue this slight service; and I should not have come across the Atlantic this year had I not wished to make it more efficient by further study of public opinion in those parts of your country which count most politically and of which least is known in England.'

One of the most dangerous sources of Anglo-American disagreement has always existed in the problem of Ireland, and crises in the history of the Irish struggle for self-government have invariably been reflected in American politics. The 1916 rebellion and its suppression had been followed in the United States by expressions of anti-British sentiments, some of them upon the floor of the Senate itself. If general sympathy developed with the Sinn Fein movement, which grew rapidly after the executions of 1916, and if it stimulated strong anti-British feelings in the United States, the difficulties of Anglo-American coöperation in the war against Germany would be tremendously increased. In these circumstances it was fortunate that Colonel House was in such close relations with the one Irishman of moderate views most capable of explaining the situation to President Wilson; especially fortunate was it that in the summer of 1917 Sir Horace Plunkett became chairman of the Irish Convention called to discover a reasonable settlement of the Irish question, and which sat all through the summer and autumn. With the approval of the British Government, Sir Horace was permitted to send Colonel House, for Wilson's information, the secret reports which he wrote of the Convention proceedings. These he amplified with personal letters and cables, of which the following is typical.

Sir Horace Plunkett to Colonel House

DUBLIN, *September 28, 1917*

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

Sir William Wiseman conveyed to me a personal request from the President that I would keep him confidentially informed of the progress of the Irish Convention. At the same time I was commanded by the King to write a Secret Report for him, and I asked leave to make the same document serve the double purpose. I understand that the first two instalments of this Report were taken out by Sir William but, by

some accident, I was not informed, and only to-day have I learned from Arthur Balfour that I am free to send the further instalments to you for submission to the President. Three more have been printed and will, I hope, be sent to you by the Foreign Office at once. I am struggling to write the sixth, which will bring the story up to date; but in the extreme pressure of Convention work it is hard to get the time.

Yesterday we ended a three days' sitting in Cork and brought the first stage of our proceedings to a conclusion. I was determined to make the Convention reveal its entire mind before I let it adjourn so that a thoroughly representative Committee of workable size might try to agree upon a measure to be submitted to the whole body. . . . In order to get a free expression of opinion, it was necessary to keep our deliberations absolutely secret. No stenographer is allowed to attend though one member of the Secretariat is an old newspaper reporter and gets down a good deal. But I need not add to what you will see in my Secret Report, unless to tell you that, on the whole, I am hopeful that we may get the Irish Question out of the way of your and the President's efforts to bring about a right mutual understanding between the two democracies.

I do wish you could send me, through a safe channel, your own view of the position and prospects of that great work. Medill McCormick spent a week-end with me a short time ago and gave me the only insight I had had into that part of the American situation which interested me most — the attitude of the Middle West towards the war. I always thought — and I think you knew — that this great silent community had been wholly misjudged — that they had more character and a higher idealism than was to be found in the better-known sections of the United States. All that McCormick told me certainly confirmed this judgment. Anything you can tell me about this and other matters will be most gratefully received and, if it saved your time, which must be more

than ever occupied, I would send copies of the letter to Arthur Balfour and any other of the people whom you have taken into your confidence over here.

Please give my kindest remembrances to Mrs. House and believe me to be

Very sincerely yours

HORACE PLUNKETT

It thus came about that President Wilson was kept fully informed of the progress of the Irish crisis and the attempt to settle it. Upon the basis of this information he was able to resist the pressure brought upon him to sponsor protests against British policy in Ireland, which would certainly have ruined Anglo-American coöperation in the war. He was also able to intimate that while the Irish problem was none of America's official business, sympathy with Irish aspirations was so strong that Anglo-American relations would never be entirely right until these aspirations were satisfied. At times the situation became critical in the extreme. As Plunkett wrote in the following April, 'It is all in the lap of the gods, who must be laughing or weeping according to their mood.' But at all times the President had the authoritative information which enabled him to avoid the pitfalls surrounding our relations with Great Britain.

III

When soon after the entrance of the United States into the war, the French and British Governments decided to send over special missions of coördination under Tardieu and Northcliffe respectively, it was natural that they should soon come into intimate contact with Colonel House. He was generally reported to be the man closest to the all-powerful President and his conferences with members of the Allied Governments during his European visits had revealed his influence. Officially he had nothing to do with the plans for

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Mon cher ami, *Henri Harrold*
Ce est l'honneur, ce plaisir
de ce le plus clairnement de préparation, à la vérité.
André Tardieu Paris 28 Juin 1917

ANDRÉ TARDIEU

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organizing Allied demands on the United States and the arrangements by which they were met and financed. His papers, however, give us a glimpse of certain aspects of the various problems, since the Allied Commissioners laid their difficulties before him and always kept him informed of the progress of negotiations that finally led to effective inter-allied coöperation. The Tardieu Mission arrived first, led by the distinguished journalist and historian, fresh from active service at the front, now entering upon a career of administrative organization which culminated in his appointment upon the French Peace Commission and prepared him for entrance nine years later into Poincaré's ministry of all the talents.

'On April 16, 1917, ten days after America had declared war,' writes Tardieu, 'it fell to my lot to direct on behalf of France our common effort. Actor and spectator for thirty-one months, I am still, ten years later, amazed at the prodigious results obtained by the two countries. Ever-memorable days, when twice the war seemed lost; days pregnant with victory; days during which the initial effort of 1917, so weak and halting, grew beneath the spur of danger, grew by the progress of mutual understanding. . . . Astounding figures tell of the effort made, the help mutually furnished. In less than eighteen months the United States armed itself to the teeth. . . . An almost unbelievable achievement if one remembers the past, the existing circumstances (both material and moral), the absence of military preparedness, the total ignorance of things European. During all this time, France and Great Britain held the front waiting for the arrival of American reinforcements, the one providing transport, the other arms for the United States Army. . . . The splendour of this achievement led people to believe that it had been spontaneous. None had been more difficult.'¹

¹ Tardieu, *France and America*, 215.

Tardieu confesses that upon his arrival he found the prospect discouraging. It was for him to arrange a mechanism of coördination between the needs of France and the supply-power of the United States.

‘The problem of coöperation,’ he writes, ‘how to pass from numbers to organization, from manufacture to armament, from inexperience to efficiency; and, in each of these, how to conciliate contrary necessities. The undertaking, every one admitted, might well have proved beyond human possibility. When I assumed responsibility for it, I knew that even those in whose name I was acting had no faith in its success. My Government, in bidding me God-speed, had said: “Do the best you can.”’¹

During the months that followed, Tardieu, assailed by the demands of his Government, strove with the problem of securing supplies for the French army at the moment that the United States was endeavoring to build up its own upon an unprecedented scale.² As he wrote, ‘Any shortcoming in

¹ Tardieu, *France and America*, 217.

² Tardieu (*ibid.*, 224–25) gives the following examples of cabled orders sent from Paris to the French High Commission in Washington:

‘May 27th, from Food Ministry: “The cereal supply is threatened. Rush shipments as quickly as possible.”

‘May 28th, from Ministry of Munitions: “Send 1000 lorries urgent.”

‘May 29th, from Transport Ministry: “Indispensable secure immediately 30,000 tons shipping for food-supply devastated regions.”

‘June 3d, from Ministry of Munitions: “Increase shipments copper to 10,000 tons monthly.”

‘June 5th, from Ministry of Agriculture: “Send all haste 400 reapers binders.”

‘June 6th, from Ministry of Marine: “Send 12,000 tons gasoline for merchant marine and 24,000 tons for navy.”

‘June 11th, from Ministry of Munitions: “Increase shipments nitrate to 46,000 tons monthly instead of 15,000. Vital for national defense. You must arrange for this in addition to programme.”

‘June 13th, from Ministry of Munitions: “Send 2000 tons of lead monthly.”

‘June 16th, from Ministry of Munitions: “Send 6500 small trucks.”

‘June 16th, from Food Ministry: “Arrange for 80,000 tons wheat in excess of programme. Most serious situation ever. Any failure or delay may prove dangerous.”’

the adjustment of effort, any breakdown in the machinery of supply, might have left our soldiers weaponless. . . . Day after day the orders came over. . . . This list reads like a nightmare. For how were all these demands to be met?' With the intensive submarine campaign, the British were forced to withdraw tonnage from the French service. 'On the docks in America, 600,000 tons of goods for France were waiting their turn for shipment. . . . There was a shortage of 490,000 tons a month. That meant a shortage of everything that was essential in food supplies and war material, the things to eat and to fight with. And I was getting cables, "Ask the United States."' ¹

The Tardieu Mission reached Washington on May 17, and eight days later he called upon Colonel House, who thus records the beginning of what became a lasting friendship:

'May 25, 1917: André Tardieu, High Commissioner of France, called by appointment this afternoon. He brought letters of introduction from the French Ambassador and from our Paris Embassy. I told him he needed no introduction, since he was well known as the author of the remarkable articles on the Agadir Incident which electrified the capitals of Europe. . . . He wished to explain the needs of France, both from a military and an economic standpoint. I suggested that he write a letter covering the substance of our conversation. He is to write the letter to the President and send a copy of it to me. . . . He seems to be an exceedingly able man and I do not doubt will serve his country well.'

M. André Tardieu to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, June 13, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL:

I was very sorry that I could not see you again in New York, last week, nor give you further information regarding our work here.

¹ Tardieu, *op. cit.*, 224.

The two essential questions are still the question of tonnage — regarding which Mr. Denman said he could not set up any general plan earlier than within one or two weeks; and the question of the organization of war industries, regarding which it seems to me highly desirable that a final decision, which has been delayed as yet, should take place.

Through such delay a condition of uncertainty has been created as regards the American market, and the prices quoted for the orders which are now being placed by us are certainly excessive. On the other hand, I could not possibly stop our orders, there being no cessation of our needs.

I understand the reasons by which your Government's decision is being delayed. It seems absolutely necessary, however, that such a decision should be made speedily. A satisfactory distribution of orders and the regularity of deliveries are unavoidably depending upon this decision.

The question is not less important from the point of view of prices. You told me that, in your opinion, the armies of the Allies ought to pay the same prices as the American army. M. McAdoo, when last in Washington, told me that he agreed upon this principle; that a general requisition law was not possible, though; but that by means of friendly negotiations he hoped that an equality of conditions could be achieved. . . .

As regards tonnage, I would like that the American Government should promise now to let us have a definite proportion of the German tonnage seized in Brazil. I do not wish to start in Rio a negotiation which might counteract the negotiations of the U.S. Government. But it seems that by handling the matter yourselves alone in Rio, you could secure a certainty which would prove of great value in reference to our shipping within the next few months. I would like to know your own opinion regarding the matter.

As to military affairs two points, which I believe to be

essential, are still being held in suspense. In the present war there is no other way of learning the practice of war than making war. All school methods have been upset by the facts, and fighting is the only school of any value. I have been realizing that directly myself during my two years at the front.

Therefore, I deem it is of the utmost importance that a sufficient number of American officers (not including officers on General Pershing's Staff) should, as soon as possible, spend, in France, a period of three months with our fighting units (Infantry Divisions or Brigades, or Artillery Staffs) and provide, therefore, for the American troops, either in the United States or in France, instructors taught and trained by the reality of war.

To which Mr. Baker answers that you have only a small number of officers, which is true enough. But, by sending officers to be with our fighting units, you could within a few months secure a gain of one hundred per cent as regards the amount of time required for instruction.

Moreover, you could send over very soon young men from American universities who are now in the training camps; this would spare time as well. Two months at the front means more than six months in a training camp. You ought to bear always in mind that since 1914 we promoted to officers 85,000 privates, and that they have become excellent officers.

Such is the true method to be applied to a national and democratic army. We have been, ourselves, hesitating a long time before adopting it, on account of old routine traditions which were, on the whole, German doctrines. I wish that you might profit by our own mistakes. . . .

I am looking forward, my dear Colonel, to your coming some time to Washington, and I beg you to be good enough to let me know about it.

I was so highly pleased with our conversation last week,

that I would be glad if we could meet again, as you can do much towards bringing about our common victory.

I am, my dear Colonel, with highest regard,

Very truly yours

ANDRÉ TARDIEU

IV

Shortly after Tardieu's arrival, House received word from Sir Cecil Spring-Rice that the British Government had also decided to send a War Mission to the United States for the coördination of British war activities. As chief of the Mission they selected no less a person than Lord Northcliffe, who was qualified for this difficult task as much by his superabundant energy as by his conviction that American resources were necessary to turn the scales of war in favor of the Allies. His functions were outlined in a memorandum which Wiseman gave to House on May 31.

Memorandum upon Proposed War Mission

'The War Cabinet think it desirable to have some system of generally supervising and coördinating the work of the representatives of the various British departments in the United States who are employed there on matters connected with shipping, food supply, munitions, and War Office and Admiralty business. If there is no such coördination, the representatives of these departments would waste much valuable time and power, and especially would interfere with each other by mutual competition.

'In view of these circumstances and of this danger which the War Cabinet consider as serious, they consider it essential that for some months to come they should have in the United States an energetic and influential man of good business capacity and wide knowledge for purposes of general supervision and coördination. Mr. Balfour's mission has done excellent work, but it is strongly felt that much still

remains to be done, especially with a view to bringing home to the United States Government the realities of the present war situation, and the necessity of immediate active and strenuous coöperation in the war, with the least delay possible.

'The War Cabinet therefore proposed that they should have a representative in the United States charged with the duty of ensuring to the best of his ability that all possible measures are taken in order to render America's resources available in the most effective manner and with the least possible delay.

'He would have no diplomatic duties. Diplomatic relations would remain in the same hands as heretofore, and the War Cabinet representative would apply to the British Embassy should he require diplomatic support for the purpose of carrying out the duties connected with his mission.

'In the opinion of the War Cabinet Lord Northcliffe is suited for such an appointment, and they propose making the appointment at once with the duties above enumerated. . . .'

Northcliffe arrived early in June and remained in the United States until November, perhaps the darkest period of the war and certainly the most confused and discouraging from the standpoint of America's war effort. The cables which he sent to the British War Cabinet, copies of many of which he gave to Colonel House, reflect the same difficulties which Tardieu had to face.

A nation like the United States, unaccustomed to centralized control and unprepared for war contingencies, could not in the nature of things suddenly attempt to place itself upon a belligerent footing without producing confusion. It was the business of the Allied agencies in the United States to stimulate America to increased production, which of itself led to more confusion; they must also secure for themselves all the

supplies possible, and they must persuade the United States Treasury to lend them the money to pay for them. They found themselves competing with each other, since Allied demands were as yet uncoördinated, and frequently with the United States Government itself, which requisitioned ships, raw materials, and manufactured products upon which the Allied agents counted. They faced the prospect of increased prices, since there was as yet no centralized control over American industries. They must avoid all friction, since they were dependent upon the good temper of the American Treasury. On the other hand, the American Treasury had no safe guide as to which loans were most essential nor as to how priority should be determined.

To this task Northcliffe brought interminable energy and complete disregard of the impossible, gilded with never-failing good temper. 'You may rely upon me never to use minatory language,' Northcliffe cabled to Mr. Balfour towards the close of his mission. 'I have been dealing with these people for thirty years. Nothing can be gained here by threats, much by flattery and self-abnegation.' With all his experience in a life well stocked with problems, he confessed that he had never confronted a task crammed with so many difficulties. 'The task is immense,' he cabled home, 'and ever growing. I have never worked so hard before.'

Northcliffe was fully convinced of the vital importance of bringing the whole strength of the United States to bear upon the settlement of the war; he constantly impressed upon the British War Cabinet the need of arranging the closest sort of coöperation with America.

Lord Northcliffe to Mr. Winston Churchill

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, July 27, 1917

I have long believed war can only be won from here. The position is most difficult and delicate. Sir William Wiseman,

Chief of our Military Intelligence here, should reach England in a few days. He is the only person, English or American, who has access to Wilson and House at all times. He had an hour and a half with Wilson last week and a day with House. The Administration is entirely run by these two men. Wilson's power is absolute and House is a wise assistant. Both are pro-English.

NORTHCLIFFE

House and Northcliffe came into touch soon after the latter's arrival, and there began a personal friendship which lasted until the latter's death. On his visits to England, House had met the great publisher casually, but evidently failed to take true measure of his size. He was soon to confess that he had been mistaken in his earlier estimate:

'Northcliffe has never received the credit due him in the winning of the war,' wrote House after the Peace Conference. 'He was tireless in his endeavors to stimulate the courage and energy of the Allies, and he succeeded in bringing them to a realization of the mighty task they had on their hands. He was among the first to grasp the significance of President Wilson's philippic against the German military autocracy, and the distinction he made between the Junkers and the German people. He caused these utterances of the American President to be sent into Germany by countless thousands, and did more than any single man, other than Wilson himself, to break down the enemy's morale behind the lines.'

The references to Northcliffe in House's papers in the summer of 1917 all reflect increasing admiration and affection. 'Northcliffe is doing good work,' he cabled to England on August 11, 'and is getting along well with every one.'

'When Northcliffe left,' House wrote in his diary two days later, 'I asked Pollen¹ his opinion of his ability. He said he

¹ A. H. Pollen, naval expert and critic.

knew Northcliffe well and liked him. . . . That his talent consisted in the newspaperman's instinct to know where to go for advice. I do not agree with him in this estimate. I think Northcliffe's success is due to his force more than to anything else. He is a dominating man with boundless energy. I like him the more I see of him.'

'He does what he promises,' House wrote two months later, towards the close of Northcliffe's mission, 'and he rings true.'

Lord Northcliffe, on his side, evidently placed full confidence in House and found it advisable to seek his counsel and aid. He cabled Wiseman on August 26 of a certain matter that demanded speed: 'I am doing everything through House, who acts remarkably quickly. For example yesterday, on leaving Washington at four o'clock, I sent him a message through Miller,¹ and on my arrival at New York at nine o'clock I found a reply message awaiting me.' Sir Campbell Stuart, Military Secretary to the British War Mission, who, through tact and keen appreciation of all the elements in a difficult situation, contributed largely to its success, writes as follows:

'Lord Northcliffe worked in close touch with Colonel House. He told me that he regarded him as one of the wisest men he had ever met. Through him he kept in communication with the Administration. In addition he received very great assistance from Sir William Wiseman, the head of the British Intelligence Service in the United States.'²

Northcliffe brought to House copies of many of his most important reports so that he might make clear the difficulties of coöperation; he brought also matters which demanded the immediate notice of President Wilson and which might be

¹ David Hunter Miller.

² Manuscript memorandum given to C. S. by Sir Campbell Stuart.

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delayed if they went through the regular official channels. This was true of the important analysis of the submarine situation in August, and of the acute crisis that resulted when the United States began to take over the output of the shipyards, even requisitioning tonnage already contracted for by the Allies.

Lord Northcliffe to Colonel House

NEW YORK, August 3, 1917

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I have received a cablegram from Sir W. saying that my Government have at length prepared an analysis giving the facts about the submarine losses, presumably for presentation to the President.

Would you kindly give me your advice as to whether I should submit it to you for your consideration and report to the President, or whether I should take it myself direct to him.¹

I have just returned from being well broiled at Washington. I was rather amused to find that the subject of the heat there is rather like that of earthquakes at San Francisco, and the local papers had the audacity to suggest that the District of Columbia as regards the heat question is no wickeder than any other part of the United States.

With kind regards to Mrs. House,

Yours sincerely

NORTHCLIFFE

NEW YORK, August 25, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

Our people are evidently very agitated about this most delicate and difficult question of the British ships now building here. The Censor is wisely stopping reference to it in the

¹ The memorandum was taken direct to the President and a copy sent to House.

English newspapers, but that it will be raised in Parliament is very obvious. That it will create a very bad impression in Europe is equally obvious. Is there not some possible compromise? . . .

My instructions are to point out that my Government will keenly feel the blow, which will be a very serious one to England, if these ships are taken over by your Government.

In the belief that the ships would not be transferred, public statements have been made by the Prime Minister in which these ships have been included in his estimates of British tonnage.

In view of the losses already sustained, the large proportion of our tonnage in direct war services and the complete subordination of our trade through war necessities, we cannot replace these vessels from British sources, and their loss must embarrass our military and naval activities.

It is important that the United States Government should realize that we made arrangements to buy vessels before the United States entered the war and that we stopped directly such purchases might have become embarrassing to United States.¹

¹ The requisitioning of these ships naturally created a serious and an unpleasant situation, and aroused warm protests especially from the Australians. It raised the question of prestige, an additional complication in the problem of coöperation. Thus the offer of the United States to lease the requisitioned vessels to Australia, on condition that they carried the American flag and American crews, was unsatisfactory, since in the mind of Premier Hughes of Australia it would be a 'blow against the naval and maritime supremacy of the British Empire.' Of greater immediate significance was the fear lest such requisitioning should form a precedent.

'It is the opinion of influential people in Washington,' cabled Northcliffe to Wiseman on August 26, 'that having made no provision for war, the American Government may take advantage of various contracts we have here, to supply their army and navy with what they want. I believe that neither the President nor House like this sort of thing, and I am hoping to get some kind of compromise about the ships so as to avoid the establishment of a precedent of confiscation.'

The vigorous protests of the Allies succeeded in saving a portion of the requisitioned tonnage.

My Government places itself entirely in the hands of the President. . . .

Yours sincerely

NORTHCLIFFE

Even more difficult were the problems resulting from competition with the other Allies for securing American supplies. They did not present their demands as a coördinated unit, and what they secured often seemed to them to depend upon chance. Northcliffe, as a veteran journalist with perfect faith in the value of news, believed that the British were at a disadvantage because they failed to emphasize the importance of Great Britain's military effort. Extracts from his cables indicate the close connection in his mind between complete war news and American supplies.

'August 15, 1917: X and Y,' he wrote, 'are naturally working for themselves. . . . They visit House about once a month. . . . We have no British Military Representative who has seen anything of the war. The American soldiers in France write home only about the French army. Nothing is heard of our fleet. House assured me that the President was absolutely aware of the great part we had played in the war.

'House said: "You ought to send to Washington a British soldier of high distinction and war experience. We don't want a military mission, but it would be advantageous to us if you send such an officer and if he were afterwards reënforced by officers in various branches of the service with technical experience gained recently in the field."'¹

'All this has a direct bearing on the money situation and upon McAdoo's position before Congress.'²

¹ Sir Henry Wilson, who later became Chief of the British Imperial Staff, was selected by the British War Committee as chief of such a mission. 'I flatly refused to go,' wrote Wilson in his diary. Callwell, *Field Marshal Sir William Robertson*, II, 11.

² See *infra*, p. 114.

'August 21, 1917: Things are not going well with us at Washington. Geoffrey Butler considers and I agree that we need the visit of some very prominent war characters. I have sent Smuts a cablegram which he will show you if you ask. The highest authorities here cannot understand why we do not make our case better known. Wiseman will . . . tell you that certain leaders are with us and if it were not for them the French would get everything. . . . I wish you would use every effort with those concerned to release Smuts for a six weeks' visit here. He could easily say things that would be difficult for an Englishman to say.

'September 1, 1917: The kind of problem that faces one every morning is typified by the following which reaches me from War Department in Washington: "We should be glad if you would send us for our information whatever material you might receive concerning the progress of the war and matters of general interest for the confidential information of our Chief of Staff and Secretary of War." This is a matter that obviously should have been taken up . . . directly the United States entered the war. The result of this kind of neglect on our part is that the United States Government has no notion of what we are doing in the war. Newspapers give the impression that the war is being fought by France and Canada. At a popular theatre here one of the scenes depicted nightly is of Canadian troops returning from the battlefield to their meals which are being cooked for them by British soldiers. This ignorance indirectly affects all our financial efforts at Washington. . . . It would be well if you spoke to General Maurice. He issued a statement yesterday which appeared only in very few papers giving the proportion of the British and Canadian troops in the war. Such statements have no effect because they are drowned by the daily accounts of the deeds of the brave Manitobans and Montrealers, the wonderful feats of the French flying men and the huge captures of prisoners by the Italians.

'September 8, 1917: There is no German propaganda against the French. The whole Irish and German propaganda is to the effect that we are getting all the money and are doing little of the work. We do our utmost to counteract these impressions by means of my personal influence with friends on the American Press, but we have far to go before we shall have placed ourselves on an equality with the French here, and to do so we must at least be as well equipped, scientifically and otherwise, as they are.'

Northcliffe not merely used his influence with friends on the American Press, but exerted himself in every way to come into close contact with the leaders of industry, so as to hasten and simplify the delivery of supplies for the British. When a misunderstanding arose over the offer of Henry Ford to send six thousand tractors to the British Food Production Department at cost, Northcliffe himself settled the matter and incidentally discovered in the great American industrialist a personality which piqued his interest and admiration. k

'I have endeavored to get into touch with Ford,' he wrote on October 6, 'but he has twice put me off. It may be necessary for me to go to Detroit and eat humble pie, and if so will do so gladly. Ford is entirely indifferent to financial considerations.'

'October 14, 1917: I have no desire for further long journeys, but it is considered important by those who are behind the scenes that I should go out to Detroit, and I propose arriving there Tuesday or Wednesday next. Edison, an intimate friend of Ford and an old friend of mine, has arranged matters. . . .

'October 17, 1917: I spent yesterday with Ford. The construction of the tractors is being pressed forward with immense energy. . . . Ford is not in the tractor business for

money, but because he believes it will revolutionize the home life of England, to which country he is attached. The arrival of the tractors in England should be treated in the American way, and if possible, the Prime Minister should be cinematographed with them. . . . I have seen many tractors, but in my personal judgment the Ford tractor is as great a revolution in cheap efficiency as the Ford motor car. Ford, who looks like the Bishop of London, is an anti-militarist ascetic and must not be treated as a commercial man. . . .

'Ford wants a copy of Cobbett's "Rural Rides," and of Tennyson's "Letters," which were published some years ago by his son. Please send the books direct to him at Detroit, with my compliments, in case I should be on my way home by the time the books get there.'

Northcliffe had the satisfaction of seeing the American effort acquire momentum during the period of his mission. 'These people are getting deeply into the war,' he cabled to his brother on September 7, 'and are most resolute. Things are running more smoothly now.' He had also the satisfaction of seeing the British War Cabinet emphasize more definitely the necessity of close coöperation with the United States. In August Sir William Wiseman cabled to him:

'The Government every day realizes more fully the importance of the United States and are coming to the point of view which I know you hold, namely, that America must be treated as our most important ally. There is, however, need for this truth to be kept constantly before the Cabinet, owing to the great distance of America and the fact that members of the Government have little personal knowledge of Washington affairs. I believe that I have impressed the Government with the vital importance of keeping the President fully and frankly informed about everything and also the necessity of prompt replies to your telegrams.'

Lord Northcliffe not merely realized the potential resources of the United States, but from the beginning insisted that if a proper mechanism of coöperation were devised American supplies would be forthcoming in time; he insisted also that unless the Allies presented their demands for money and supplies in coördinated form, the confusion resultant upon the attempt to speed up American effort might result in disaster. This was precisely the conclusion reached by Tardieu, with whom, as Sir Campbell Stuart reports, 'throughout his stay Lord Northcliffe worked hand in hand.' The need of such coördination in Allied demands became especially obvious in the financial problems of the summer of 1917, upon which the papers of Colonel House throw some light.

CHAPTER IV

FINANCE AND SUPPLIES

Before the American soldier, the American dollar turned the tide.

André Tardieu, in France and America

I

As the student turns over the bulky manuscripts relating to the interests and activities of Colonel House during the war, he is surprised, perhaps, to note the number and size of those relating to financial problems. For years, House had given up active interest in business, which he confessed bored him, and had centered his attention on problems of government. He was certainly not regarded as an expert in financial affairs; it was so long since he had been to Wall Street, or even below Twenty-Third Street, that he could not remember when, if ever, he had visited the financial center of the United States. Nevertheless, in his files are bundles of papers bearing witness to long conferences with the financial representatives of the Allied Powers, and numerous detailed and quite technical memoranda that passed between him and Lord Northcliffe, or the British Ambassador, or Mr. Balfour.

Most of the financial and supply problems of the war could doubtless have been settled with comparative ease by the business experts of each country if they could have been given a free hand without the intrusion of political factors. Such was not the case; international difficulties and jealousies created situations which disturbed the statesmen, who, with justification or not, felt it necessary to interfere. Colonel House, whose one desire in the summer of 1917 was to assist the President in the development of the diplomatic offensive against German morale, found himself brought into touch with various financial questions which, simple as they

might seem to financiers, unquestionably brought the keenest worry to the politicians.

It is far from the purpose of this chapter to sketch the financial history of America's relations with the Allies, of which the papers of Colonel House would doubtless fail to give a comprehensive view. It is important, however, to note his connection with them, since the financial difficulties of the summer led directly to the American War Mission of the autumn, which he was chosen to head.

The essential facts of the financial history of 1917 were simple: The Allies were compelled to ask for loans from the United States of a size which frightened the American Treasury, and which, even if the credits should be given, might be difficult to justify to the American taxpayer. The war was costing sums which were quite inconceivable to the ordinary citizen, and the Allies had begun to scrape the bottom of the chest. Unless the United States helped out freely, the military effort in the field could not be maintained. As Lord Northcliffe cabled late in the summer, the American Government was 'appalled by magnitude of financial task. They are complete masters of the situation as regards ourselves, Canada, France, Italy, and Russia. Loan to us strongly opposed by powerful section of Congress. If loan stops, war stops.'¹

The demands of the Allies were probably justified by the extent and cost of the military undertaking, but they were not understood by the American people. On the other hand, the Allies were too busy dealing with vital and critical questions in the theater of war to give time to a complete and reiterated explanation of the situation. The British financial representatives in the United States were men of unusual ability. Sir Hardman Lever had formerly been financial Secretary to the Treasury and possessed wide knowledge of American business affairs; Sir Richard Crawford had had

¹ H. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 143.

long experience as a commissioner of customs and as adviser to the Turkish Ministry of Finance. Together they formed an admirable combination. But the problem involved political factors which could hardly be met by officials who had been given purely financial functions. No special mandate had been given to Northcliffe to look after financial affairs and he told House that he did not regard himself as qualified to supervise financial relations. What was necessary, if one may summarize from the House Papers, was a man of political experience, supported by an adequate military, naval, and technical staff, who could explain to President Wilson and other Government officials the economic and war strategy of the Allies, and translate those policies into terms of money and supplies, so that the American Government would know what the Allies planned, and why their effort must cost so much, and what might be expected from the vast expenditure contemplated.¹

The Administration at Washington was further confused by the lack of organization in Allied demands for credit and supplies. It was not until August that a purchasing board was created. Previous to the entrance of the United States into the war, the firm of J. P. Morgan and Company had acted with great success as purchasing and financial agents for the British and French Governments. Mr. E. R. Stettinius took charge of the coördination and purchase of supplies, as distinct from purely financial questions, and created within a short period an organization of such efficiency that Ludendorff was quoted as stating that Stettinius was worth an army corps to the Allies.

With the entrance of the United States into the war, it was obviously impossible for a private firm to continue as purchasing agent for the Allied Governments. On April 3, J. P.

¹ Colonel House cabled to Mr. Balfour early in July that the chief difficulty was 'largely brought about by the lack of some directing mind here.'

Morgan and Company suggested that the British take up the question of obtaining supplies and making purchases through the United States Government; it was clear that the business of the British Government ought to be transacted by its direct representatives, working in conjunction with the various departments of the United States Government, in an effort to obtain the benefit of the more favorable prices and terms that could be secured only through the exercise of governmental control. The bankers offered to facilitate the transfer of the buying to any organization formed for the purpose, and on at least three occasions urged the creation of a staff to take over the work that Morgan had been doing; but the British found it impossible to avoid delays, so that from April until the end of August the whole purchasing system of the British was to a large extent marking time.

It was during this period that the anxiety of the Allies to secure from the United States a guarantee of regular monthly credits was most keen. They had to face the increasing costs of the war; they had also in mind the liquidation of their loan with J. P. Morgan and Company, amounting to about \$400,000,000, which represented the various amounts paid from time to time to American manufacturers and merchants for the account of the British Government, less shipments of gold and proceeds from the sale of American securities and British notes. Although the loan has been generally referred to as the 'Morgan Loan,' it was divided among a great many banks and banking institutions, of which twenty-six were in New York and fourteen in Philadelphia. More than half of the loan was at this time divided among banks other than Morgan's. It was secured by American securities of known value. The liquidation of the loan was expected by the participating banking institutions on or about July 1, the British understanding that it would be a first call on the loan to be made them by the United States Treasury.

Mr. McAdoo was anxious to help the Allies with credits so far as possible. From April 1 to July 14 the United States advanced to Great Britain close to £140,000,000 and to the other allies £90,000,000, altogether well over a billion dollars. He was unable, however, to promise regular monthly credits at the rate desired by the Allies. Nor could he agree to the suggestion that indebtedness of the British Government incurred before the United States entered the war should be liquidated through loans of the United States Government; he had engaged himself in a parliamentary agreement to the effect that credits voted by Congress should not be used for that purpose. This was carefully explained to the British War Mission in July: 'House said,' Northcliffe cabled to Mr. Lloyd George, 'that the whole forthcoming winter will be spent in Congressional wranglings about finance, and for this reason McAdoo must be in a position to make perfectly clear that the money of the people of the United States was not being used for the benefit of . . . Wall Street and the Money Power to which the Democracy so strongly objects.'

The situation seemed less desperate, perhaps, to the financial experts than it did to Allied political leaders, for it was likely that supplies would be exhausted before credits could be used. Thus in October, Lord Reading cabled to England: 'What will save the United States Treasury, as it has saved ours in the past, will be the material limitation on what it is possible to buy. Goods will not in fact be forthcoming on a sufficient scale to absorb the vast credits to which the Departments and the Allies are becoming entitled.' None the less, the political leaders in Europe, as well as Northcliffe in the United States, were constantly caught in the nightmare that the loans would be refused: 'If loan stops, war stops.' Hence the frequent appeals to House, asking his help in explaining their need to the Administration.

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PRESIDENT WILSON AND COLONEL HOUSE

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II

One of the most interesting appeals came at the end of June. Through some misunderstanding the British Ambassador gathered that in order to liquidate the Morgan loans on the date desired, July 1, it would be necessary for the British to sell collateral. The securities were perfectly sound, of the highest character; but with American Government loans overhanging the market, it would be difficult to sell American securities in large amounts at satisfactory prices. What chiefly disturbed the British leaders, however, was their fear that if the news of the selling of collateral were noised abroad, the effect would inevitably be disastrous to exchange and to the credit of the British Government. The British Secretary for Foreign Affairs evidently regarded the moment as critical.

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, June 29, 1917

For reasons fully explained to Page here and to Spring-Rice in Washington, we seem on the verge of a financial disaster which would be worse than defeat in the field. If we cannot keep up exchange neither we nor our Allies can pay our dollar debts. We should be driven off the gold basis, and purchases from the U.S.A. would immediately cease and the Allies' credit would be shattered. A consequence which would be of incalculable gravity may be upon us on Monday next if nothing effective is done in the mean time. You know I am not an alarmist, but this is really serious. I hope you will do what you can in proper quarters to avert calamity.¹

BALFOUR

¹ It should be clearly understood that this appeal, as well as that printed on p. 106, was made in behalf of the Allies as a whole and not of Great Britain alone.

'I have been at the telephone continuously for hours,' wrote House in his diary, 'talking first to the State Department, then to New York, trying to unravel the tangle.'

Sir William Wiseman to Sir Eric Drummond for Mr. Balfour

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, June 29, 1917

... I have communicated message to House, who is near Boston, over secret Government telephone lines to his house, which I am allowed to use.

I have use of similar wire to Washington, and have discussed situation with Polk.

On receiving your message House immediately telephoned Washington. He believes matters can be arranged and wishes me to assure you that he is devoting his entire time until crisis is averted. . . .

WISEMAN

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 29, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Things began to break yesterday afternoon in British quarters. Spring-Rice is at Woods Hole and McAdoo at Buena Vista and the machinery became clogged. As usual, Sir William took hold and is trying to-day to see what can be done.

Northcliffe received a message from Lloyd George to come here and advise with me before moving further. He was ready to take the ten o'clock train this morning when I received, through Sir William, the cable from Balfour which I sent you by Lansing. I therefore advised Northcliffe to go to Washington immediately rather than come here, which he has done.

By putting together what I gather from Washington and

Sir William, the trouble that has come about concerning finances is largely a matter of misunderstanding. . . .

The British understood that we would take care of certain Russian obligations they have been carrying. They claim if they had not been under this impression they would have arranged to take care of the matter in a different way.

What they need is \$35,000,000 on Monday, \$100,000,000 on Thursday, and \$185,000,000 a month for two months beginning ten days from next Thursday.

This is a staggering amount and indicates the load Great Britain has been carrying for her allies. It seems to me that we should have some definite understanding with England as to what money she will need in the future and how far she can count upon us.

It seems absurd to be giving her comparatively small amounts, the frequent publication of which make a bad impression on our people. Would they not stand one large amount better than these lesser amounts constantly brought to their attention?

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On July 5, the Foreign Office cabled: 'Balfour is most grateful to House for his intervention. The results are already apparent.' But the situation as a whole continued quite unsatisfactory to both sides. The excitement of the Foreign Office may have been quite justifiable and based upon a genuine peril to British credit, as the political leaders believed; or it may have been the merest flurry resulting from a misunderstanding, as the financiers believed. In either case it was important that Allied requests for credits be organized in such a way as to make misunderstanding impossible. Colonel House urged the desirability of sending from England a financier of high political position.

Colonel House to President Wilson

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS

July 11, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Since Balfour's cable I have been keeping in intimate touch with the financial differences between the British Government and the Treasury Department and I am glad to tell you that everything seems on the road to an amicable adjustment. . . .

I have brought McAdoo and Wiseman in touch and since Sir William is sympathetic with McAdoo's point of view I believe another such crisis can be avoided in the future. It will be necessary, however, for the British to send out another financial man. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

A few days after sending this letter, Colonel House received a visit from Lord Northcliffe at Magnolia. The chief of the British War Mission laid before him the statistics of British expenditure since the United States entered the war and the vital need of regular financial assistance from the United States. He recognized the help thus far given, which in a period of about fourteen weeks amounted to over a billion dollars to the various Allies (229 million pounds). For the same period, however, Great Britain had advanced to the Allies 193 million pounds.¹ The United States, moreover, had limited its assistance to the expenditure incurred by the Allies within the United States. Great Britain had been unable to adopt this attitude, but had supported the burden of

¹ British advances to other Allies (April 1–July 14, 1917): £193,849,000.

United States advances to other Allies (April 1–July 14, 1917): £90,000,000.

United States advances to British (April 1–July 14, 1917): £139,245,000.

Thus the net advances of Great Britain amounted to about 54 million pounds; of the United States about 229 million pounds.

Allied expenditure in various parts of the world. Without this support, the Allies would have been unable to obtain supplies of food and munitions which were essential to the prosecution of the war. Great Britain was still financing the purchases of Russia in the United States. The total expenditure of the British since the United States entered the war was more than 800 million pounds, and they had received from the American Government slightly less than 140 million pounds in loans. Furthermore, during the years previous to the entrance of the United States the British had spent over four and a quarter billion pounds, making a total of more than five billion to the middle of July, 1917.

'It is after having supported an expenditure of this magnitude for three years,' Northcliffe told Colonel House, 'that the United Kingdom ventures to appeal to the United States Government for sympathetic consideration in financial discussion, where the excessive urgency of her need and the precariousness of her position may somewhat impart a tone of insistence to her requests for assistance which would be out of place in ordinary circumstances. . . .

'Our resources available for payments in America are exhausted. Unless the United States Government can meet in full our expenses in America, including exchange, the whole financial fabric of the alliance will collapse. This conclusion will be a matter not of months but of days.

'The question is one of which it is necessary to take a large view. If matters continue on the same basis as during the last few weeks a financial disaster of the first magnitude cannot be avoided. In the course of August the enemy will receive the encouragement of which he stands in so great need, at the moment of the war when perhaps he needs it most.'

At the same time Mr. Balfour again cabled to Colonel House, asking him to impress upon the President the vital

importance which the Allies attached to their request. What they needed was the assurance of an immediate advance sufficient to cover their August purchases and the arrangement thereafter of a programme of regular loans.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 20, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have just received the following cable from Balfour:

'Communication of the utmost importance and urgency with regard to financial position was made to the United States Ambassador to-day with request that he telegraph it *in extenso* to State Department. I should be most grateful if you could ensure that it receives the personal attention of the President and for any assistance you can give as matter is really vital. I am sure nothing short of full aid which we ask will avoid a catastrophe.'

I have answered that I would immediately call your attention to the urgency of the matter.

McAdoo intended coming here on Thursday but was detained. He hopes to come next week. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

III

The hesitation which the United States Treasury displayed in giving immediate and complete satisfaction to the Allied appeal was not entirely unnatural. Mr. McAdoo was responsible to the American taxpayers and he must be able to show that all the funds advanced were for essential expenditures, without which there was danger that the war might be lost. Confusion in the demands of the Allies was such as almost to give the appearance of a scramble for priority of funds and supplies. Before consenting to embark

upon a policy that would lead to loans of unprecedented size, the Treasury insisted that Allied requisitions, whether for money or materials, must be coördinated.

Mr. McAdoo asked, accordingly, for the creation of some sort of interallied finance council, or purchasing board, which would certify to him the absolute necessity of what was asked and indicate the priority of needs.

The situation was clearly expressed in a memorandum that was drafted at this time by Sir William Wiseman in conjunction with Colonel House, the sense of which was approved by Lord Northcliffe.

Wiseman Memorandum on Finance and Supplies

'The demands for money, shipping, and raw materials come from the Allies separately and without reference to one another. Each urges that their own particular need is paramount, and no one in America can tell where the next demand will come from and for how much it will be. The Administration [at Washington] are too far from the war and have not sufficient information to judge the merits of these demands.

'At present, confusion reigns not only in the Administration Departments, but in the public mind. There is, on the one hand, a feeling that some of the money and material is not needed for strictly war purposes, and, on the other hand, some genuine alarm is felt that even the resources of the United States will not be able to bear the strain. German agents at work in the United States have seized upon this situation and are using it to the full. Their activities are aimed at confusing the issues and delaying the time when the full weight and power of America can be brought into the war. They are encouraging the idea that it would be better to conserve American resources for the protection of America, rather than dissipate them in a quarrel with Europe.'

The necessity for coördinating Allied demands through an interallied finance council was earnestly emphasized by President Wilson. Sir William was invited to confer with the President, who laid stress upon the importance of coördinating Allied demands and indicated that his solution was the plan suggested by Mr. McAdoo.

'Wilson urged strongly,' Wiseman reported to House and Northcliffe, 'that more information, both as to actual financial needs and general policy of the Allies, must be given to the United States Government. He pointed out that there was much confusion and some competition in the demands of the various Allies. Specifically, so far as the British are concerned, he pointed out that there was no one who could speak with sufficient financial authority to discuss the whole situation, both financial and political, with the Secretary of the Treasury. All these things should be remedied as soon as possible.

'He was thoroughly in favor of the scheme proposed by McAdoo for a council in Paris. This council, composed of representatives of the Allies, should determine what was needed in the way of supplies and money from America. It should also determine the urgency of each requisition and give proper priority. I suggested that such a council should be composed of the military and naval commanders, or their representatives, and that the United States should be represented on it. Wilson did not seem to have any objection, but thought it was unnecessary for the United States to be represented on it until they had their own portion of the front to look after and a large force in Europe.'¹

The failure of the Allied Governments to accept and act upon Mr. McAdoo's recommendation for an interallied coun-

¹ Another indication that as early as July, 1917, President Wilson expected to see a large American expeditionary force in Europe.

cil was doubtless due in part to the fear that the financial autonomy of London and Paris might be sacrificed. It was also due to the press of affairs in Europe, which left small leisure to study the important factors that underlay America's relations with the Allies. Both Northcliffe and Tardieu worked to impress upon their Governments the necessity of meeting the American demand for a general system of co-ordination in matters of finance and supply, but without immediate results.

M. Tardieu and the deputy commissioner for Franco-American affairs, M. de Billy, came to Magnolia on various occasions to discuss with Colonel House ways and means of creating a complete interallied organization. They realized clearly the unfortunate effects of British delay in arranging for a purchasing organization to take the place of that which had been carried on by J. P. Morgan and Company, as well as the further confusion in American industry that resulted upon our entrance into the war, with the consequent danger of increase in prices. They recognized equally the fact that the Allies had quite as much to gain as the United States from a system of general coördination.

Tardieu Memorandum on Finance and Supplies

'The old organization has disappeared and the new one has not been set up as yet. Whence a general condition of uncertainty concerning prices as well as terms of delivery. . . .

'Supplying the Allies with considerable advances of money, the United States may properly ask to be assured that money so advanced is actually and fully devoted to war needs.

'The Allies, working in coöperation with the United States may also properly ask that, as regards the negotiating of their orders, they should be protected as to prices against any exaggerated claims from the producers. . . .

'Assurances should be given to the American Government

that the orders of the Allies are not such as to hamper the industries which are necessary to the United States.

'Assurances should be given to the Allies that the carrying out of the orders in the United States shall not be hampered or delayed by orders from the American Government.'

Tardieu's solution was the utilization of existing inter-allied bureaus, which should be developed so as to give the American Government complete information as to the essential demands of the Allies. It would be necessary for the American Government to take complete control of American industry. The interallied conference 'would provide the Government of the United States with a basis for the industrial and financial control over all orders placed in the United States. . . . The United States would acquire a deep and detailed knowledge of the needs and specifications of the Allies, and as soon as their own organization was completed, they would be in a position to undertake the whole direction of American war industries and could substitute their own organization without a break for the former purchasing machinery of the Allies. . . .'¹

Towards the end of July, feeling confident of the support of M. Tardieu and of Northcliffe, Mr. McAdoo addressed a formal memorandum to the Allied Commissioners, in which he declared the necessity of escaping from existing confusion by the creation of an organization that would correlate demands upon the United States and furnish some basis for indicating priority of needs. United States officials, he stated, were being forced to decide questions of which they had little first-hand knowledge. The Allies should first get together, work out a programme deciding the proper needs of each,

¹ The general principles of M. Tardieu's plan were finally followed so as to meet the necessities of the problem. Control over American industry was ultimately taken by the President and exercised through the War Industries Board; interallied councils were set up to determine the needs of the Allies and the priorities of their demands.

and present it to our Government as a whole. In this way there would be no necessity for continual applications by each country for comparatively small amounts and our Government would be relieved from the decision as to which application was the most vital.

A conference of Allied representatives met in Paris to discuss the McAdoo memorandum, and there drafted a plan which in its main lines met the desires of the United States. But ratification of this scheme by the Allied Governments was refused for the moment, largely because of their objection to the extent of the powers which it would confer upon the commissioners. The creation of the interallied council on finances and purchases was thus postponed.

IV

This delay in the ratification of Mr. McAdoo's plan naturally carried with it an element of uncertainty in the discussions over the regular advancement of American funds to the Allies. The anxiety of the latter was intense. Because of his relations with the Secretary of the Treasury on the one hand and with the Allied Commissioners on the other, Colonel House was constantly invited to place the Allied point of view before the Government. On July 23 he wrote to Northcliffe: 'I am doing everything I can to help solve this difficult problem and I hope an understanding may soon be reached.' He urged upon Mr. McAdoo that, while waiting for the establishment of interallied coördination, it was impossible to refuse the requests of the Allies for immediate advances. It was with obvious satisfaction that, on July 24, Northcliffe cabled to Mr. Bonar Law that Mr. McAdoo had gone up to Magnolia to see the Colonel, and that it was likely that the advance for August would be made. So it proved and the crisis of the moment was tided over. At the same time, at House's suggestion, Wiseman was sent to London to explain the necessity for closer coördination. President Wilson and

Northcliffe commissioned him to urge that a financier in a high political position be sent to the United States and to insist upon the necessity of the interallied council on finances and purchases.

Sir William Wiseman to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 3, 1917

I have just had a long conference with Mr. Balfour. He says your help in the whole situation and particularly in the recent difficulty was the factor which saved a very real disaster. He is intensely grateful to you and anxious to use all his influence to do anything to improve and facilitate relations between the two Governments.

I explained the need of the fullest information and the frankest exchange of views.

WILLIAM WISEMAN

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 10, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I talked the financial situation out with McAdoo when he was here Tuesday. I think it can be satisfactorily adjusted. Northcliffe comes for to-morrow and Sunday, and I will be able to see how nearly the English position coincides with McAdoo's. . . .¹

I cautioned McAdoo to give, when he had to give, with a glad hand, for in any other way we will lose both money and good will. As long as we have money to lend, those wishing to borrow will be agreeable, but when the bottom of the barrel is reached, it may be a different story. It is their turn now to

¹ 'I am spending the next four days with Colonel House, through whom I have been able to effect much more good than I have achieved at Washington.' Northcliffe to Bonar Law, August 10, 1917.

be pleasant — later it will be ours in order to collect what they owe.

I remember, during one of the old-time panics, a very rich man was asked by a friend of mine whether he was terribly worried. He replied, 'No, I am not at all worried, but the banks that are carrying me are.' . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House's desire that the financial advances of the United States should be generous ought not to be taken to mean that he was merely interested in helping the Allies. He did not fail to impress upon them the absolute necessity of falling in with Mr. McAdoo's plan for an interallied council and the coördination of demands, if adequate American assistance was to be expected. The details of the plan might have to be altered to meet the objections of London and Paris, but the principle was essential to American financial help.

Lord Northcliffe to Mr. Lloyd George

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, August 15, 1917

House quite realises the force of our objections to the proposed powers of the interallied conference, but he urged that an endorsement of this kind was essential for McAdoo's political position. McAdoo has many enemies and is about to go to Congress for permission to issue another immense loan. He must be fortified by expert military opinion from Europe that these vast loans are necessary to victory. I argued the matter at considerable length.

Eventually Colonel House, who rarely raises his voice, said with much emphasis: 'McAdoo will insist upon the inter-allied council.' . . . Things were going smoothly and there were remarkably few strikes or conscription riots. But there

was an ugly spirit in Congress and McAdoo must be able to prove that no money is being wrongfully used. . . . In view of the popular underestimation of Great Britain's efforts, said Colonel House, it was most difficult for McAdoo to explain the immense appropriations for Great Britain.

NORTHCLIFFE

Lord Northcliffe to Sir William Wiseman

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, August 16, 1917

The monthly money question seems easier, but we shall have an anxious winter in regard to finance. McAdoo is being accused in some newspapers of spending the nation's money like a drunken sailor. He was five hours with House last week. House was very emphatic about the interallied conference. . . . It is absolutely necessary to McAdoo to have this expert endorsement of the money that is allocated to the Allies, he added.

NORTHCLIFFE

A few weeks later he reemphasized, in a cable to the Prime Minister, the close relation between the difficulties of this problem and public opinion: 'House, who always sees three months ahead,' he wrote, 'obviously foresaw the present agitation in the mind of the public here as to the immense sums required by the Allies, and especially by England. The current newspapers are giving much space to the subject of the loans to the Allies, particularly to England.'

The difficulties of the financial problem were appreciated quite as keenly by the French Commissioner. Tardieu later wrote of them:

'Without means of payment in dollars . . . the Allies would have been beaten before the end of 1917. America's entry into the war saved them. Before the American soldier, the

American dollar turned the tide. . . . For Europe, what a stream of gold! But its approaches were crowded. Banker of her Allies since 1914, England came first. France, who had suffered more than England, wanted to be served equally well. The others pressed behind, a clamouring crowd whose enormous estimates frightened the Treasury officials. . . . Associated, but not Allied, the United States had authorized its Secretary of the Treasury to grant advances to Europe, but not to enter into definite undertakings. There were to be no bilateral negotiations, no general agreements, no mutual stipulations. The United States in financial matters was to play the part of distributor and arbitrator. That was to be its financial policy.

'This independent policy was justified and strengthened by the unbridled competition of the borrowers, by their ever-outstretched hands, by the astuteness of their ever-increasing demands. American mistrust increased when . . . both London and Paris, on the ground of their financial autonomy, stubbornly opposed the American proposal for an interallied finance board. . . . Every day my Government called upon me to obtain regular agreements, which it considered indispensable. Every day the Treasury told me, as it told my colleagues, that it did not intend to enter into any binding agreements. The American Congress had limited the object, the amount, the form of financial assistance. No one could complain that this assistance was not forthcoming. But no one had the right to count upon it.' ¹

V

To mitigate the consequences of the delay in the formation of an interallied economic council, Lord Northcliffe urged the appointment of a British official of high political station, as commissioner qualified to settle with the American Government the funds that might be advanced at regular intervals.

¹ Tardieu, *France and America*, 227-29.

Early in the summer he had discussed possibilities with Colonel House and reached the conclusion that Viscount Reading, Lord Chief Justice, would be the ideal choice. Lord Reading was a close friend of Mr. Lloyd George and a financial expert who had created the happiest impression in Washington during the autumn of 1915. He was highly placed in the political sense and would speak with full authority.¹ 'Before asking for Reading,' wrote House, 'it was agreed that I should see McAdoo and discuss it with him.'

The Secretary of the Treasury, like Mr. Wilson, had already urged that a financial commissioner be sent to Washington, and he warmly approved the suggestion of Lord Reading. The only question was whether the British Government would appreciate the need of appointing so high an official, who might be spared from London only with difficulty. Lord Northcliffe delegated Wiseman, then in London, to impress upon the War Cabinet the critical nature of the situation in the United States.

'There is a very urgent need,' Wiseman reported of American conditions, 'for an official of the highest standing to proceed to Washington and discuss with Mr. McAdoo financial problems. He should be a man who can not only grasp the strictly financial problems, but who will also understand the political situation in America and can discuss with the Secretary of the Treasury the political problems involved in the raising of immense loans in the States. The mistake in the past has been to send purely financial experts who have had but little knowledge of, or patience with, the serious political difficulties which face the Administration in Washington.'

¹ So far back as February, 1916, House had thought of Lord Reading as an ideal British envoy. See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, II, 196.

Sir William Wiseman to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 12, 1917

I have now seen most people of importance including the King, Premier, Chancellor of the Exchequer. . . . The British Government understands, though it is reluctant to admit, the most powerful position of the United States. The British Government trusts the President and will give him all information willingly, but certainly did not understand the necessity of keeping him frankly informed of their weakness as well as strength. . . .

WILLIAM WISEMAN

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 20, 1917

I believe I have succeeded in making the Cabinet appreciate the vital importance of the United States in the present situation, and the necessity for very frank and cordial coöperation between the Governments; but owing to enormous pressure of urgent affairs on the Government it takes considerable time to get action taken. . . .

WILLIAM WISEMAN

The British may have appreciated the need of close cooperation with the United States, but they continued to hesitate before deciding to send another representative. Perhaps they feared lest their organization in America might become still further complicated. Northcliffe exercised all his persuasive powers and sent frequent cables to the different members of the War Cabinet, insisting that the situation demanded the appointment of a financial commissioner with broad political powers. 'I am semi-officially informed that delay about Lord Reading is causing irritation. . . . House insists that a politician should come.'

Lord Northcliffe to Colonel House

[Telegram]

WASHINGTON, August 24, 1917

The Government has once more asked me if it is essential that Reading should come. Can I have your yes or no through Miller.

NORTHCLIFFE

Colonel House to Lord Northcliffe

[Telegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 24, 1917

Yes, I think it is essential to have Lord Reading or some one like him.

EDWARD HOUSE

Sir William Wiseman to Lord Northcliffe

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 24, 1917

Have done my best to persuade Government to send Reading and this morning Chancellor informed me that he will ask him to undertake mission. I do not know Reading personally but dare say his sound impartial judgment will help on general questions, besides finance, and on his return will be able to give sound advice to the Cabinet. Suggest you cable Reading urging him to accept and to discuss matter with me. I believe his appointment will be another step to better co-operation and making Washington real war headquarters. Cabinet actually thought Wilson might be persuaded to come here.

WISEMAN

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 25, 1917

Balfour is on a holiday and I am acting for him. It is proposed to ask Lord Reading to go to Washington in connection with financial situation. I gather you approve of this suggestion and in itself it seems excellent from here, but I am afraid lest it should complicate still further our representation in United States, unless in fact it was part of some general rearrangement.

It is at this point that I should greatly value your advice. A complete understanding between our two countries is of such vital importance to both of them and even to the whole world that I am venturing to hope you may feel able to tell me quite candidly and fully what you think. . . .

What powers should Lord Reading have, and how should they be made to fit in with the position of the Ambassador and of Northcliffe if he remained?

I know I have no right to ask you for this service, but I also know that whether you feel able to advise me or not you will forgive me in view of the vast importance of the interest at stake. I realize that you were able to express your views very fully in these matters to Mr. Balfour, Drummond, and Wiseman, but circumstances have so much changed that I have ventured to ask you for a fresh expression of them.

CECIL

Sir William Wiseman to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 25, 1917

We have reached a crisis in our immediate relations with the United States. . . . Your opinion will be treated in strictest confidence by the War Cabinet. May I not urge upon you the great service you will do for the cause by cabling your

views, whatever they may be, quite fully and frankly to Cecil. . . .

WILLIAM WISEMAN

Colonel House to Lord Robert Cecil

[Cablegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 26, 1917

. . . In my opinion the best temporary solution would be to send Lord Reading or some one like him, who has both a financial and political outlook, and give him entire authority over financial questions, Northcliffe to retain charge of all commercial affairs. When Northcliffe feels that he can return, Grey might be sent here, and if he cannot accept could you not come yourself? What is really needed is some one who can dominate and compose the situation and who would have the entire confidence of the President. . . . Sir William Wiseman understands the situation and can give further details.

The opinion given is wholly mine and without consultation with any one.

EDWARD HOUSE

This remarkable interchange of cablegrams illustrates, as nothing else could, the kind of service performed by House in behalf of President Wilson and the Allies. Sir William Wiseman has commented upon it as follows:

'It is difficult for the chronicler to define, and for the reader to appreciate the position and influence of Colonel House during the World War. Every now and then, a phrase in a cable or letter, or the tone of a despatch, throws striking proof — a spot-light on a darkened stage. Of such is the cable from Lord Robert Cecil. As Acting-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs he speaks directly in the name of the

British Government when he cables to Colonel House asking in effect whether Reading should be sent to Washington, whether Northcliffe should remain, and how their duties should be defined and made to fit in with those of the Ambassador. A truly remarkable tribute to both the wisdom and discretion of Colonel House, that a foreign Government should seek his advice upon so important and delicate a problem. But only those who know the ways of Chancelleries can fully appreciate what it meant for the British Foreign Office, with its great tradition, even to discuss so intimate a problem with an unofficial statesman of another country. It must be added that the Foreign Office in this instance, as in many others, accepted Colonel House's advice and acted upon it.'

The request that he undertake the mission, which was immediately laid before Lord Reading by the British Government, was supported by a long cable of August 26 from Northcliffe to him, urging the necessity of accepting it. Northcliffe again emphasized: '(1) that the Americans have no conception of our sacrifices in men, ships and money: (2) that they are as yet unaccustomed to the huge figures of war finance. . . . I am most anxious that we should get a firm contract with the United States Government for the regular allocation, for the duration of the war, of the monies we require.' Without any delay Lord Reading agreed to come.

Lord Reading to Lord Northcliffe

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 31, 1917

Much impressed with your telegram. Have arranged to leave next week. I am getting information here and will discuss with you on arrival. Have seen Wiseman, who will accompany me on voyage.

READING

VI

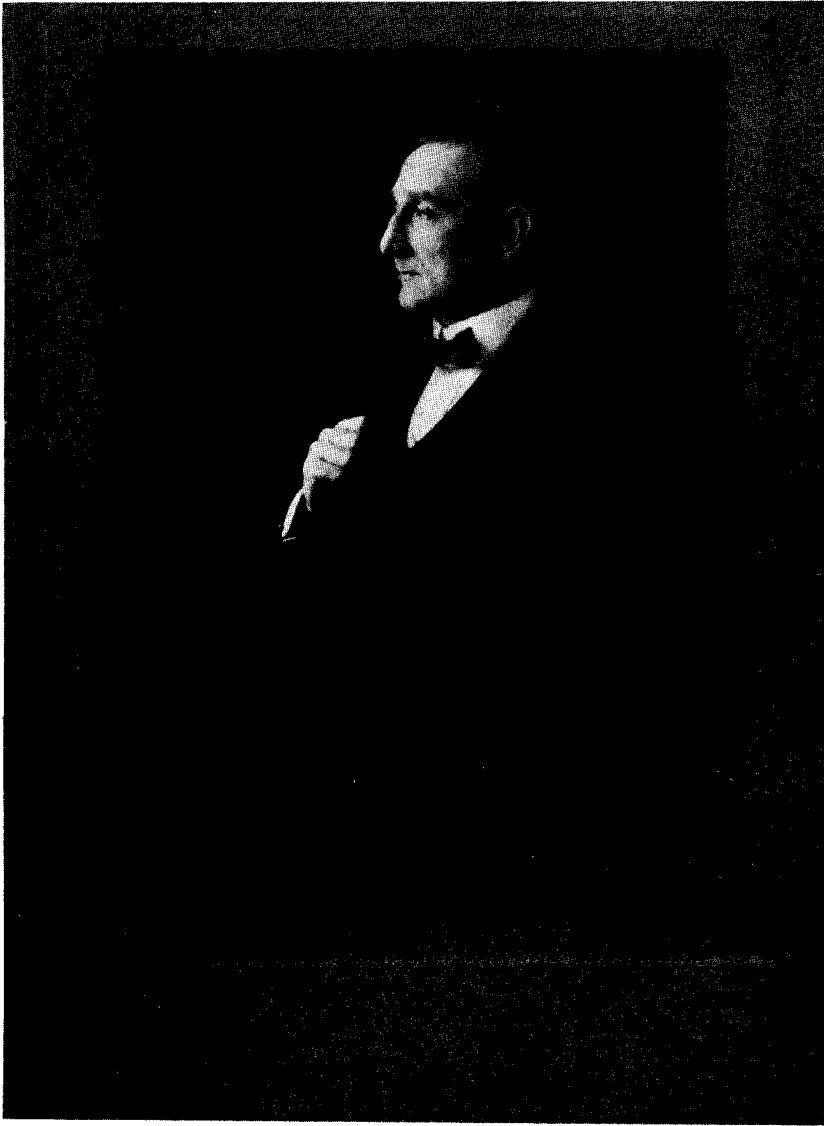
At almost the same moment that the British Government decided to send over Lord Reading with wide authority with which to meet the problems of finance and supply, an arrangement was made at Washington by which the purchasing necessities of the Allies were to be cared for by a commission, created to take over the functions formerly exercised for the British Government by J. P. Morgan and Company. The official announcement, issued by Secretary McAdoo on August 24, was as follows:

‘Formal agreements were signed to-day by the Secretary of the Treasury, with the approval of the President, on behalf of the United States, and by the representatives of Great Britain, France, and Russia for the creation of a commission with headquarters at Washington, through which all purchases made by those Governments in the United States shall proceed. It is expected that similar agreements will be signed with representatives of other allied Governments within the next few days.

‘The agreements name Bernard M. Baruch, Robert S. Lovett, and Robert S. Brookings as the Commission. These gentlemen are also members of the recently created War Industries Board of the Council of National Defense, and will thereby be able thoroughly to coördinate the purchases of the United States Government with the purchases of the Allied Powers.

‘It is believed that these arrangements will result in a more effective use of the combined resources of the United States and foreign Governments in the prosecution of the war.’

Northcliffe cabled to London on August 24, commenting upon the satisfaction of the American Administration, which had evidently chafed under the delays in arranging the purchasing agreement: ‘Government greatly pleased, and as a



LORD READING

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result expressed intention of helping us in every way possible.' And on the following day to the Chancellor of the Exchequer: 'It will probably surprise you to know that the pens with which the agreement was signed are to be engraved and kept.'

This commission, of course, did not in any way meet the request of Mr. McAdoo for an interallied council for the correlation of Allied demands, but it went far towards organizing effective machinery for the payment for supplies purchased by the Allies in this country.¹ It obtained offers at the best current prices, submitted them to the accredited representatives of the Allies, and finally oversaw and directed the purchases made, the Allied representatives themselves determining technical details, such as contracts and inspection.

The purchasing agreement of August was an essential improvement in mechanism, which greatly facilitated all buying operations on the part of the Allies and led to unquestionable economies. It did not touch the major problems of interallied finance and supply which, as the summer closed, still remained unsettled. But the process of adjustment was at least in course of development.

The arrival of the Reading Mission early in September proved to be a step of the first significance in the general co-ordination of Allied problems. House was clearly delighted. 'There is no one,' he wrote, 'so well equipped for the work in hand. A great jurist, he possesses a knowledge of finance which is at the moment essential if order is to be brought out of the present chaos. He has a fine diplomatic touch which will ensure against unnecessary friction. The jangled nerves of many high-strung individuals will be soothed by this imperturbable negotiator. He has also the confidence of the British Prime Minister as perhaps no other man has,

¹ 'We cannot replace Stettinius, who is a genius . . .' Northcliffe to Mr. Balfour, August 29, 1917.

and that in itself is a compelling reason for his appointment on such a mission.'

The Reading Mission paved the way for the creation of the interallied finance council so insistently demanded by Mr. McAdoo. It led equally to the decision to send an American War Mission to Europe, the object of which was to secure not merely a working organization in economic and military affairs, but also agreement upon a unified programme of war aims.

CHAPTER V

WAR AIMS AND PROPAGANDA

My thought is to give the German liberals every possible encouragement.
Colonel House's Diary, May 19, 1917

I

No less a statesman than Bismarck averred that the most important elements in politics, upon which the fate of empires might turn, were the 'imponderables.' This was supremely true of the World War, in which moral forces combined with economic to break down the spirit of the peoples of the Central Empires behind the fighting fronts. They are easy to trace although difficult to evaluate; historians will always differ as to the relative influence of military, economic, and moral factors upon the final result. But it is certain that while the final surrender was the direct result of defeat in the field of battle and the ravaging effects of the Allied blockade, it was hastened by the spirit of revolt against the old imperial system.

Sir William Wiseman drafted the following memorandum on Wilson's war policy, after the lapse of a decade.

Wiseman Memorandum on Wilsonian War Policy

February 1, 1928

'It might appear to the reader of the *Intimate Papers* that President Wilson and Colonel House devoted most of their time to propaganda, and not to the active conduct of the war. This is not true. It is natural that the *Intimate Papers* should dwell more on those questions which are of continuing interest rather than the problems of war supplies and organization, which were technical and not of any particular interest now, excepting as showing the gigantic efforts that were made.

'It was undoubtedly true that from the first outbreak of the Great War both President Wilson and Colonel House were more interested in the causes and purposes of the war and means to prevent another such catastrophe, rather than in the actual military operations. This was also true after the United States entered the war, and yet both men realized the need for strenuous and immediate effort on the part of their country, and devoted themselves to the uncongenial task of making war with all the energy of mind and body that they possessed. Wilson (who always said that he had a "one-track" mind) felt that he could not allow his thoughts to dwell on the fascinating problem of the League of Nations while he was responsible for the American war effort, and he deliberately excluded it from his mind and devoted himself to what he described as "knocking the Kaiser off his perch," making, as he always did, a very deliberate distinction between war on Prussian militarism and the German people themselves, with whom he felt he had no quarrel. It was during this time that he asked Colonel House, who he thought could properly devote some of his time to these questions, to study particularly the Covenant for the League, and also to develop propaganda destined to show the true war aims of the United States and associated powers, and particularly to encourage the liberal elements in all countries to realize that it was a war of liberation; also to seek means of getting this thought to the German people.

'One of the greatest services Wilson rendered to the Allied cause was his appeal to the liberal-minded people of all countries, who naturally recoiled from the horror of war. Wilson made them feel it was a necessary, although terrible, undertaking; and there is no doubt that there would have been more trouble among the so-called pacifists had it not been for the Wilson influence. The vital effect of his speeches and propaganda in Germany have been fully recognized by

German writers, and culminated in the German request for an armistice based on the "Fourteen Points."

From the moment in which the United States entered the war, President Wilson adopted the principle of undying hostility to the imperial régime and of friendship to the German people. 'We have no quarrel,' he said in his speech of April 2, 1917, 'with the German people. We have no feeling towards them but one of sympathy and friendship.' He hammered constantly upon the note that the war was one of liberation for Germany, and that the German people might have peace so soon as they renounced their 'imperial masters.' German leaders declared that his efforts to separate German people from German Government were as useless as 'biting on granite.' In the United States and in Entente countries there was bitter criticism of his attempt to exculpate the German people. Historians of the future will doubtless question the truth of his thesis that the German people had been dragged unwillingly by their chiefs into a course which they abhorred. Wilson's political justification lies in the fact that in the end, their resolution worn away, the Germans abjured their old political system and surrendered upon the basis of his demands.

The policy of driving a wedge between Government and people was nothing new. The Allies of 1814, in their invasion of France, began with a proclamation of unending war upon Napoleon and peace to the French people. During the World War the Germans themselves constantly attempted to stimulate Socialist feeling in the Entente countries against the Governments; Steed of the *Times* and others who understood conditions in the Central Empires insisted that the shortest way to winning the war was through effective encouragement of the disaffected subject nationalities of the Hapsburg Empire. The possibility of appealing to the German Social Democrats against Prussian imperialism had been suggested

both in Great Britain and France. At the time of the *Lusitania* sinking, House wrote to the President proposing that in case of war with Germany Wilson might, in his speeches, 'exonerate the great body of German citizenship, stating that we were fighting for their deliverance as well as the deliverance of Europe.'¹

This attitude Wilson maintained consistently throughout the war, and in the end it produced results. It was no pose upon his part. For German accomplishments and culture in the past he had high admiration; for the creed and the methods of those whom he called the 'military masters of Germany' he had nothing but hatred. Colonel House was evidently of the same feeling. 'If you could hear the stories these Americans bring back from the occupied portions of France and Belgium,' he wrote the President on April 20, 'you would feel that any sacrifice that America might make was well worth while in order to crush German militarism.' Both Wilson and House wished to fight militarism with brains as well as with cannon, and persisted in the belief that it was foolish to assume that the German people were naturally and inevitably bound to the chariot wheels of their existing masters or that they served them from preference. 'The German common people seem sick at heart,' House added in his note to Wilson, 'and would be glad to rid themselves of the pest.'

His comment may or may not have been true, but there was much logic in his argument that the Allies had lost an opportunity by refusing to emphasize a distinction between people and rulers in their fulminations against Germany; furthermore certain of the speeches of Allied statesmen had seemed to threaten the destruction of the German nation and had thus fortified rather than weakened German loyalty to their rulers. The policy of making allies of the German

¹ House to Wilson, June 3, 1915. *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, II, 466.

people themselves, which Wilson had expounded in his speech of April 2, must be continually reëmphasized, although there was perhaps good cause for the emotional repugnance of the Allies to any extension of the hand to the German people.

'*May 29, 1917: Carl Ackerman was my most interesting caller. I am arranging with him to get his articles, entitled "The Peace Snag," widely syndicated in this country, South America, and Europe. It seems necessary for the world to know what the German military clique have in mind, and how impossible peace is at the moment.*'

Colonel House to Lord Bryce

NEW YORK, *June 10, 1917*

DEAR LORD BRYCE:

... It is clear that the German military clique, which brought about the present world tragedy, are now bent upon the amalgamation of Central Europe from Bruges to the Bosphorus. If they are able to accomplish this purpose, the German people will sustain them, for the war will seem worth while. If they fail, it is probable that the Government will offer the people a liberal monarchy in order to save the present dynasty.

Our advices are that the liberal movement in Germany is strong and is constantly receiving new recruits of influence. They complain, however, of the little help they receive from the outside. Every reactionary utterance made by those in authority in England and France is quoted in Germany and used to prove the Government's contention that the Allies' purpose is to crush Germany both politically and economically.

On the other hand, the German Government is making a pretense of wanting a just peace — a fact which has no foundation whatever. The President is trying to get the

truth into Germany in order to wage war against the Prussian autocracy from within as well as from without. I hope you also will lend your great influence in the same direction. . . .

Your very sincere

E. M. HOUSE

During the course of the spring it had become clear that some sort of a restatement of war aims by the Entente was desirable and perhaps necessary, if revolutionary Russia were to be kept in the alliance. The Provisional Government formed in March, which still supported Allied war aims as expressed in the secret treaties, had been re-formed and the Social Democrat, Kerensky, brought into control. He hated Germany and was loyal to the old alliance, but both by conviction and by pressure from anti-war groups in Russia, he was compelled to disavow all imperialist war purposes. The new policy was summed up in the phrase, imported from German Socialism, 'Peace without annexations or indemnities, on the basis of the rights of nations to decide their own destiny.' The response of the Entente Powers, as expressed in the speeches of their leading statesmen as well as in official notes sent to Petrograd, seemed evasive and did not satisfy the Russians. It was easier for President Wilson, whose hands were tied by no promises of territorial annexations, to meet the new Russian attitude. He thus found an opportunity to express sympathy with the radical Petrograd Government and at the same time to throw out a line to the German liberals. On May 26 he addressed a note to the Russian Government as follows:

'Wrongs must first be righted, and then adequate safeguards must be created to prevent their being committed again. . . . But they must follow a principle, and that principle is plain. No people must be forced under sovereignty

under which it does not wish to live. No territory must change hands except for the purpose of securing those who inhabit it a fair chance of life and liberty. No indemnities must be insisted on except those that constitute payment for manifest wrongs done. No readjustments of power must be made except such as will tend to secure the future peace of the world and the future welfare and happiness of its peoples.'

In the mean time President Wilson, whose time and attention were naturally taken up with all the problems connected with placing the country upon a war footing, commissioned House to make a special study of the German situation and advise him as to the proper moment for a public statement of American policy and what lines it should follow. House was sent copies of all telegrams coming from Copenhagen and Berne, the two chief sources of information on Germany and Austria.

Symptoms of discontent were evident in the Central Powers. Austria was war-weary and had already started secret peace conversations; the Hapsburg Monarchy faced the expressed discontent of her subject peoples, which threatened to become translated from debates in the recently convoked Reichsrath into open revolt. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Czernin, was anxiously searching out possible paths to peace and talked of liberal reforms. In Germany he found an ally in the restless intriguer, Erzberger, a clever albeit unstable figure, who promised that the Reichstag would fly the banner of democracy and peace in a revolt against the militarists and imperial bureaucrats. At no time were the latter in serious danger of losing control. Nevertheless it seemed to Colonel House, who was kept well informed of the liberal ferment in Germany and of the increasing demand for peace, that the movement might well be fostered by help from outside.

'*May 19, 1917*: The cables coming for me through the State Department from our Minister at Copenhagen, which are parts of the diary, show that a large element in Germany is now working for democracy. If it is true, as these despatches indicate, that Bernstorff is leading this movement, I have great hopes for its success, for Bernstorff is much cleverer than either the Chancellor or Zimmermann, who seem to be standing in the way. Bernstorff has been away from Germany long enough to catch the drift of world opinion, and he sees that eventually democracy must come to even autocratic Germany, and he evidently desires to become its sponsor and the recipient of its favors.

'My thought is to give the German liberals every possible encouragement so they can tell the German people that "here is your immediate chance for peace because the offer comes from your enemies, who will treat with you at any time you are in condition to express your thoughts through a representative government. On the other hand, the present government is offering you peace through conquest, which of necessity has in it all the elements of chance and cannot be relied upon."' "

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *May 30, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

It is, I think, evident that the German military clique have no intention of making peace upon any other basis than that of conquest. . . .

The Kaiser and his civil government are taking the gambler's chance. If they are able to hold what they have, then the German liberals can be defied, for the mass of the German people will be satisfied with the outcome of the war.

If, on the other hand, military reverses come, the Kaiser and his ministers will lean towards the liberals and give Germany a government responsive to the people. In the near

time, they will give no terms because they hope to hold what they have seized, and if their intentions were known, there would be near revolution in Germany because a majority of the people want peace even if it should be without conquest.

The pacifists in this country, in England and in Russia, are demanding a statement of terms by the Allies which shall declare against indemnities or territorial encroachments. They believe, and are being told, that Germany is willing for peace on these terms.

It seems to me important that the truth be brought out, so that every one, both in and out of Germany, may know what the issue is. I hope you will think it advisable to take some early occasion to do this. Unless you lead and direct the liberal Allied thought, it will not be done.

Such utterances as those recently made by X and Y [British and French statesmen] play directly into the hands of the German imperialists. There seems to be no intelligent or coördinate direction of Allied policy. Imperial Germany should be broken down within as well as from without. The German liberals justly complain that they not only have had no help but that their cause is constantly hurt by the statesmen and press of the Allied countries.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson responded enthusiastically, averring that House's letter 'chimed exactly' with his own thoughts. 'I wish you would follow it up,' he wrote, 'with advice on these points': When should he give the address? How could he express the point of view of the American Government without seeming to contradict the British and French statesmen who made no distinction between German people and Government? He added that he would like to say: in substance just what you say in your letter. . . . You are in closer touch with what is being said than we are here and could form a much safer

and surer judgment than I could on how the necessary things ought to be said.¹

To this Colonel House replied, having his various talks with Drummond and Balfour in mind, that there would be no difficulty with the British. As to the date of delivery, he urged that it be at once.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 5, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . June 14th — Flag Day — I think would do if you will arrange for wide publicity. I would get the world on tiptoe beforehand, and then arrange to have what you say cabled in ungarbled form to the ends of the earth. You have come to be the spokesman for Democracy, as indeed the Kaiser is the spokesman for Autocracy. However, I would caution against mentioning him. He is nearly as unimportant as the Tsar was before he was dethroned — both merely representative of systems.

It will vastly accelerate liberalism in Germany to ignore the Kaiser, and let the German people work out their own details.

I would advise care in phraseology so that neither France nor Italy may see their respective hopes for Alsace and Lorraine and the Trentino endangered. England will not be offended. She is interested in having German hopes for a Middle Europe under Prussian control forever shattered. I have talked this out with Balfour.

A kindly word for Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey would help the purpose in mind.

The two points that I would bring out are, (1) to make clear Imperial Prussia's purpose of conquest, (2) and the unwillingness of the democracies to treat with a military

¹ Wilson to House, June 1, 1917.

autocracy. I would emphasize the thought of a world at arms not against the German people but against a Prussian oligarchy.

If you would send me in advance a copy of the address, I think I would know if there was a word or line which might offend sensitive friends. If you also think well I can ask Sir William Wiseman to come here, so that he may take a word of explanation to the Ambassadors of England, France, and Italy.

For your information only, let me say that Balfour has given Wiseman his confidence to an unusual degree, and they have arranged a private code that can only be unraveled by Drummond and themselves. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House did not see the President's speech before its delivery, which was given as planned, on Flag Day. Wilson wrote to him that he had been much delayed in getting at the composition of it and did not have a chance to let him see it beforehand: I do not think, he added, that it contains anything to which our Associates in the war (so I will call them) could object.¹ The sentence is important as containing an early, perhaps the first, use by Wilson of the phrase which described America's status, that of an 'Associated Power'; also because it indicates the President's appreciation of the delicacy of the problem of war aims in view of the aspirations of the Entente.

Both at home and in the Entente countries tremendous enthusiasm was evoked by the Flag Day speech. In it the President held closely to the two ideas which had been agreed upon in the Drummond memorandum: that we were fighting the existing German Government and not the German people; that peace was impossible so long as that

¹ Wilson to House, June 15, 1917.

Government remained in power. Wilson gave the speech, as he wrote to House, 'in a downpour of rain to a patient audience standing in the wet under dripping umbrellas.'

'We know now as clearly as we knew before we were ourselves engaged,' said the President, 'that we are not the enemies of the German people and that they are not our enemies. They did not originate or desire this hideous war or wish that we should be drawn into it; and we are vaguely conscious that we are fighting their cause, as they will some day see it, as well as our own. They are themselves in the grip of the same sinister power that has now at last stretched its ugly talons out and drawn blood from us.'

The speech concluded with the warning that a stable peace with the military group which controlled Germany and, for the moment, southeastern Europe, was out of the question. Peace offers from such a source could not be taken seriously. There followed the implication that with the overthrow of this group, the opportunity for peace might appear:

'The military masters under whom Germany is bleeding see very clearly to what point Fate has brought them. If they fall back or are forced back an inch, their power both abroad and at home will fall to pieces like a house of cards. It is their power at home they are thinking about now more than their power abroad. It is that power which is trembling under their very feet; and deep fear has entered their hearts. They have but one chance to perpetuate their military power or even their controlling political influence. If they can secure peace now with the immense advantages still in their hands which they have up to this point apparently gained, they will have justified themselves before the German people; they will have gained by force what they

promised to gain by it: an immense expansion of German power, an immense enlargement of German industrial and commercial opportunities. Their prestige will be secure, and with their prestige their political power. If they fail, their people will thrust them aside; a government accountable to the people themselves will be set up in Germany as it has been in England, in the United States, in France, and in all the great countries of the modern time except Germany. . . . If they succeed, America will fall within the menace. We and all the rest of the world must remain armed, as they will remain, and must make ready for the next step in their aggression; if they fail, the world may unite for peace and Germany may be of the union.'

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS

June 14, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I can hardly express the pleasure your speech of to-day has given me. It has stirred me more than anything you have ever done. For two years or more I have wanted some one high up in the Allied Governments to arraign Germany as she deserved. You have done it and done it so well that she will be centuries freeing herself from the indictment you have made. . . .

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

'*June 14, 1917*: The President made his great Flag Day speech to-day. My letter to him tells what I think of it. As a matter of fact, it only partially tells the story, for I think he has done one of those necessary things which as yet had not been done well. . . . They have attempted it, but neither Lloyd George, Grey, Asquith, Briand, Poincaré, nor Viviani have done more than scratch the surface. The Presi-

dent has done it properly, and what he has said will leave a scar that will stay for generations.

'A man in the President's position has the world for an audience, and if he says something worth while and says it well, it will live forever.'

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS

June 15, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I hope you are seeing the reception your Flag Day speech has been given. The... *Transcript* had the enclosed [eulogistic] editorial last night. The Boston *Herald*... says editorially: 'Every American ought to read it and in doing so rejoice that we have at the head of the Republic in such a crisis as this a man of preëminent capacity for clear and convincing statement of public policies.'

While, of course, you will not want to make another speech of this kind soon, yet when it is necessary, what do you think of challenging Germany to state her peace terms in the open as the other nations have? She should be driven into a corner and made to express her willingness to accept such a peace as the United States, Russia and even England have indicated a willingness to accept, or put herself in the position of continuing the war for the purpose of conquest.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

During the succeeding weeks, at the suggestion of the President, House worked on plans that might lead the German Government to state its war aims and destroy the fable that it was ready for a moderate peace. This seemed to the President at the moment more important than a re-statement of Allied war aims, such as the Russians and Entente pacifists asked for.

'June 28, 1917: I have another budget of foreign mail. Buckler writes concerning conditions in England, and encloses a letter to the President signed by Norman Angell, Philip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald, E. D. Morel, Charles H. Buxton, Charles Trevelyan, and several others. I received a copy of this letter some time ago, but did not send it to the President. I shall send the original, although I do not altogether agree with the purpose of the letter, which is to ask the President to demand of the Allies a restatement of their peace terms, and to have them made to harmonize with the President's January 22nd speech and the Russian statement of terms.

'In my opinion, what is needed now is to force Germany to give her terms.'

House also exchanged many letters with Americans of German ancestry and of quite different types, for the purpose of securing knowledge of political conditions in Germany and discussing methods of impressing upon the German liberals the tremendous reserve strength of the United States and the impossibility of a peace of reconciliation so long as Germany refused to democratize her Government.¹ 'I gave X,' wrote House on July 23, 'the thought that I have already given to other German-Americans, as to the folly of Germany trying to make peace under her present form of government. I told X that if I were Germany's best friend I would advise against it.' Bernard H. Ridder brought to House plans to help the liberal movement in Germany through pressure from the German-Americans, and suggestions as to how best America's war preparations might be given publicity in Germany. 'The recent letter of

¹ Paul Warburg to House, May 14, 1917, July 15, 1917, August 4, 1917. Bernard H. Ridder to House, April 25, 1917, April 27, 1917, August 7, 1917, August 31, 1917. For an example of the loyal spirit displayed by Americans of German ancestry, see Otto Kahn, *Right above Race*.

the President,' wrote Ridder, 'emphasizing his confidence in Americans of German ancestry, fell upon grateful ears.'

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 9, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... The letter from Bernard Ridder is interesting. I believe he is right when he says, 'There is no adequate realization in Germany to-day of the enormous preparations being made in our country.'

I believe, furthermore, that where the Allies have fallen down is in their lack of publicity work in neutral countries and in the Central Powers.

Northcliffe sent me a letter yesterday from Stanley Washburn,¹ in which Washburn said that Germany was spending millions in Russia in this way and the Allies were doing practically nothing to offset it.

Bertron² writes that 'the only way to hold Russia and utilize her enormous latent power effectively is through very thorough and extensive publicity. This we have been strongly urging upon Washington but, up to the time of our departure, nothing definite has been done. The reverses that the Russians have had might have been avoided had we been able to get to work immediately on our arrival in Petrograd with sufficient educational literature to reach the army and people.' ...

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Lord Northcliffe, busied as he was with the problems of coördinating supplies, none the less found time to take the

¹ War correspondent, attached for twenty-six months to the Russian army, military aide and assistant secretary to the Root Mission to Russia.

² S. R. Bertron, prominent New York banker, who was a member of the American Mission to Russia under the leadership of Elihu Root.

most active interest in these plans of propaganda and discussed them at length with House. He had already conceived the ideas which were carried into effect in the following spring, of distributing by airplane, in and behind the German lines, great packages of leaflets bearing the double message of war on the German imperialists, peace to the German liberals.¹

Lord Northcliffe to Mr. Lloyd George

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, August 15, 1917

I do not know how far House speaks for the President in this matter of propaganda, but in the course of our interviews he referred to it again and again. He said the war was being fought without imagination; that where the Germans have spent millions on propaganda we have only spent thousands, and that ours was poor matter at that. He repeated that it is essential to spread in Germany through neutral newspapers, by aeroplanes, and by the numerous German visitors to be found in Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, and Norway, news of the immense expenditures and preparations being made by the United States. . . .

House pointed out that the Allies had been altogether outwitted in propaganda [in Russia] and everywhere else. If a small portion of the money which had been expended in war material had been put into effective propaganda in Russia, in neutral countries and in South America, where we had allowed the Germans to spread their lies unchecked, the war would have nearly reached its conclusion.

NORTHCLIFFE

In the course of a discussion with Lord Northcliffe, Colonel House put forward the suggestion of a rather daring

¹ Sir Campbell Stuart, *Secrets of Crewe House*, chapter iv.

experiment in war publicity, nothing less than an open debate on war aims between the *New York World* and a German newspaper of standing. Obviously there was little chance of the German Government permitting any German paper to accept a challenge. Such a refusal, House argued, would in itself help to condemn the German cause and weaken the loyalty of the German liberals. If it should be accepted, the German Government might be forced to a clear statement of war aims.

*Colonel House to Mr. Frank I. Cobb*¹

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 15, 1917

DEAR MR. COBB:

Some weeks ago I asked Sir William Wiseman to suggest to you a challenge from the *World* to the *Berliner Tageblatt* to present in each paper the respective views of the Allies and the Central Powers. That is, the *World* to offer an editorial column twice a week in which the German side of the controversy might be presented to the American people, provided the *Tageblatt* would give the same space in which the American side might be presented for the enlightenment of the German people.

The two papers would at once become a world forum, in which all belligerents and neutrals could form some judgment (1) as to what the quarrel was about and (2) who was in the wrong.

Northcliffe, who is here and to whom I mentioned what I had in mind, thinks it conceivable that such a discussion might lead to peace. He promises to aid in every way we think he can.

If the plan appeals to you, I hope you will come up and talk it out with me, for there are many sides to it, and no move should be made until it has been thought through.

¹ Editor of the *New York World*.

The German Government would probably decline to permit such a discussion, but the refusal would hurt their cause and help that of the Allies. Before making any move the President should approve, and his potential aid be invoked. . . .

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Mr. Frank I. Cobb to Colonel House

NEW YORK, July 18, 1917

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

The *World* will be glad to take that matter up and carry it through, if possible. I cannot get away at present to see you, but perhaps we can arrive at some kind of a general understanding by letter. Of course, the thing cannot succeed unless we have the full coöperation of both the United States and German Governments.

I am not sure, in my own mind, how the matter could best be presented to the *Tageblatt* — whether by direct communication or through the good offices of the Swiss Minister. What is your own opinion about that? We could prepare a formal proposal to the *Tageblatt* and ask the State Department to have it transmitted by cable or otherwise. If the German Government acquiesced, or even permitted the *Tageblatt* to receive the communication, the details could then be worked out.

Such a debate would really amount to a preliminary discussion of peace in its ultimate effect and I do not think its value could well be overestimated, if it could be done. There would be little use in undertaking it, however, unless there were assurances from Germany that our side of the case would not be censored, although we might properly have a private agreement as to the limits of the debate.

Will you be good enough to let me know your own views as to the method of carrying it through? I agree with you

thoroughly that nothing must be done unless we have the plans completely mapped out and agreed upon.

With sincere regards,

As ever yours

FRANK I. COBB

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 19, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a copy of another letter from Cobb and my reply.

I have but little hope that the German Government will permit such a discussion, but if they do not, their refusal can be used in such a way as to make serious trouble for them within Germany itself.

Quick action, of course, is important and I would appreciate your writing or wiring me your decision.

I will give the matter my personal attention and arrange that nothing is published from our side without the most careful consideration. If any question should arise about which there is doubt, it will be submitted to you.

It seems to me we have an idea that may startle the world and, conceivably, be of great value. There is an ever-increasing distrust by the plain people of secret diplomacy, and such a move as this under your sanction would have great influence for good.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. I suggest Northcliffe because of the influence of his publications in England, and Tardieu because he is one of the most brilliant writers on international subjects in the world. . . .

The plan of a public debate, with the tacit approval and support of the respective Governments, was startling in its novelty. This was popular diplomacy with a vengeance! President Wilson found it difficult to consider; he wrote to House on July 21: Frankly, I see some very grave possibilities of danger. Even admitting that the technical difficulties involved in asking an enemy state to permit a free discussion by a newspaper could be passed, the President did not see how it would be possible to keep the hand of the Administration concealed. The debate would amount to the inauguration of peace parleys, and the Entente Powers were by no means in accord with the United States as to the principles of the settlement: Our real peace terms, said Wilson, those upon which we shall undoubtedly insist, are not now acceptable to either France or Italy (leaving Great Britain for the moment out of consideration).

The President asked House to write him again: You may have entirely satisfactory replies to make to my objections; but I cannot think of them myself. He looked upon it, he added, as a 'deeply important matter.'¹

Colonel House to Mr. Frank I. Cobb

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 24, 1917

DEAR MR. COBB:

I am glad to know that you are trying to work out a general plan embracing your theories in the proposed debate and that you will send it to me in a few days.

The President and I are discussing it. He realizes the great importance of it; in fact, he is so deeply impressed with its importance that he is afraid of it. He thinks it might lead us into the discussion of peace terms that would be exceedingly dangerous and cause dissension among the Allies.

I realize this too, but I still think that the danger can be avoided.

¹ Wilson to House, July 21, 1917.

The President also cannot quite see how you can get the challenge to the *Tageblatt* without it being apparent that this Government is sanctioning it and, in a way, responsible for the debate.

I am taking it up with the State Department and they have promised to try and think a way out. I feel that we have something of enormous value if it can be properly used, and we must find a way.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 9, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing copies of Cobb's challenge to the *Tageblatt*.¹ Surely, there could be no objection to putting it in this mild form. Will you not advise me what answer to make?

If this is once started, we could easily get into Germany the knowledge of our preparations, as Ridder suggests. We could also give the Germans as a whole a sense of security which they do not now feel. The whole military propaganda in the Central Powers is directed at the fear of dismemberment and economic rule. If the German people could be brought to realize that their integrity would be better safeguarded by such a peace as we have in mind than it would be by the continued reliance upon great armaments, the militarists' arguments would break down.

If we want to win this war it seems to me essential that we must do something different from what the Allies have done in the past three years.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

¹ See appendix to this chapter.

Despite the attractions of the House-Cobb project, the obvious difficulties involved in it seemed too great to those in authority and the proposed challenge was never sent. President Wilson found himself unconvinced at the end, as at the beginning, that the indefinite dangers to which it might lead were not greater than the possible advantages. He emphasized especially the danger of precipitating open discussions on war aims between the United States and the Allies at the moment when complete unity of purpose was all-important; since this was precisely the point that House had stressed at the time of the Balfour Mission, he could find no adequate answer to the President's objections. Wilson was acutely conscious of the difference between the war aims of the United States and those of the Allies: We cannot force them [the Allies] now, he had written to House, and any attempt to speak for them or to our common mind would bring in disagreements which would inevitably come to the surface in public.¹ Some other means must be found of compelling Germany to state her war aims.

Thus the proposal for an open debate was quietly dropped into the limbo of untried experiments. House's disappointment would doubtless have been more keen, were it not that at this very moment a new opportunity for inspiring a discussion of war aims was given to President Wilson by the Pope's proposal of peace negotiations.

APPENDIX

Mr. Frank I. Cobb to Colonel House

NEW YORK, August 8, 1917

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have made a rough draft of the challenge for *The Tageblatt* and a request to the State Department. It seemed to me better that the State Department request be made perfunctory and formal without assuming that the Government was concerned in any way with the matter, but had merely been asked to transmit it, as it is asked to transmit a thousand

¹ Wilson to House, July 21, 1917.

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other things. That might be much more discreet than trying to arrange an alibi.

Please make any changes whatever that you deem wise in the draft of both these communications.

Sincerely yours

FRANK I. COBB

[Enclosure:]

NEW YORK, August 8, 1917

Editor, *The Tageblatt*,
Berlin.

It is no less important, in the stress of war than in the controversies of peace, that there should be a common agreement as to the issues involved, whatever differences there may be as to the relation of these issues to the aims and objects of government. No such agreement exists as between the German people and the American people. They are at war, but Americans are unable to understand why the German Government adopted a line of policy which forced the United States into the war; nor do the German people understand why the American people should have considered these German policies *casus belli*.

Believing that a frank discussion of the issues is one of the great duties that journalism owes to the general welfare, *The World* hereby challenges *The Tageblatt* to a full and free debate on the questions that have divided the United States and Germany, each newspaper to print the case presented by the other, as well as its own case, under arrangements to be agreed upon later in respect to detail. It seems to *The World* that such a debate might have a permanent value in the way of clarifying the issues and crystallizing public sentiment in the two countries.

Trusting that it will seem expedient for *The Tageblatt* to accept this challenge in the spirit in which it is offered.

Most respectfully

The New York World

CHAPTER VI

THE POPE'S PEACE PROPOSAL

We cannot take the word of the present rulers of Germany as a guarantee of anything that is to endure. . . .

President Wilson's reply to the Pope, August 29, 1917

I

DURING the early summer the movement for a peace of compromise had gone far in Austria and in certain German circles; it was stimulated by the Russian suggestion of a peace without annexations or indemnities. The German military leaders were hostile to any consideration of peace. 'Ludendorff,' wrote Czernin, Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary, 'is exactly like the statesmen of France and England; none of them wishes to compromise, they only look for victory.' In Austria, however, the need of an early peace had been realized by Czernin for some months. 'I am nevertheless quite convinced,' he wrote on April 2, 'that another winter campaign would be absolutely out of the question; in other words, that in the late summer or in the autumn an end must be put to the war at all costs.'¹

The Austrian Emperor had already started secret negotiations with the Entente through Prince Sixte of Bourbon, brother of the Empress and an officer in the Belgian army. But they lagged and finally fell through, partly because the Italians would hear of no concessions sufficient to attract Austria towards a separate peace, partly because Czernin intended to use the negotiations as a means to a general peace including Germany, and the Allies were determined not to compromise with an undefeated Germany. Nor would the German military group consider peace without an increase of territory; Ludendorff made it plain that he regarded

¹ Czernin, *In the World War*, 22, 164.

the war as lost if Germany did not emerge from it with enhanced power.

‘The future will show,’ wrote Czernin, ‘what superhuman efforts we have made to induce Germany to give way. That all proved fruitless was not the fault of the German people, nor was it, in my opinion, the fault of the German Emperor, but that of the leaders of the German military party, which had attained such enormous power in the country. Every one in Wilhelmstrasse, from Bethmann to Kühlmann, wanted peace; but they could not get it simply because the military party got rid of every one who ventured to act otherwise than as they wished.’¹

Members of the German Reichstag began to doubt the possibility of complete victory. Matthias Erzberger, a leader of the Center Party who was in touch with Czernin and aware of the latter’s memorandum upon the necessity of peace, was able to form something of a *bloc*, opposed to the control of the military group and advocating a peace of compromise. On July 19, under his management, a majority of the Reichstag voted a resolution declaring that ‘the Reichstag strives for a peace of understanding and the permanent reconciliation of the peoples. With such a peace forced acquisitions of territory and political, economic, or financial oppressions are inconsistent.’ The resolution was carried by 212 votes to 126.

This revolt against military influence proved abortive, despite the hopes it aroused abroad. The parliamentary crisis made necessary the resignation of the Chancellor, Bethmann, who had lost the confidence of all groups; but his successor, Michaelis, a capable administrator without parliamentary experience, refused to accept the control of the Reichstag and so far as a peace of compromise was concerned

¹ Czernin, *op. cit.*, 362.

became almost as determined as Ludendorff, if less unequivocal. The parliamentary revolution proved a fiasco and the Reichstag resolution 'a mere pious opinion.'¹ The position of those in Germany who advocated a compromise peace was weakened thereby, as it was by the refusal of the Entente to consider the Reichstag overtures in a conciliatory mood.

It was obvious, nevertheless, that a strong current was running towards peace in Germany, although it did not carry with it the governing power in the Empire. Doubtless in the hope of strengthening it and perhaps at the inspiration of Erzberger or Czernin, or both, the Pope issued upon August 1 a note addressed to all the belligerents, suggesting a settlement of the war based upon the principles of complete restoration of occupied territory, disarmament, and international arbitration.

In Europe the Allies seemed to be somewhat fearful lest the President should answer the Pope's offer in such a way as to commit the United States to negotiations for which the Allies were unprepared, or so as to weaken the war spirit in Allied countries. They were embarrassed by the lack of close coördination with the United States, especially in view of the fact that Wilson was coming to be regarded in the popular mind as spokesman for their cause as against that of Germany.

Sir William Wiseman to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 11, 1917

Mr. Balfour has just received through the British representative at the Vatican an appeal from the Pope in favor of peace addressed to the belligerent governments. The full text of the appeal has not yet been received, but from the cabled summary it is clear that it will raise many questions

¹ Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, iv, 14.

of difficulty. What answer, if any [should be made], will have to be very carefully considered, and Mr. Balfour hopes that the President will be inclined to let him know privately what his views on the subject are.

WILLIAM WISEMAN

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 13, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . Enclosed are some cables from Sir William. Balfour is evidently very much concerned regarding the Pope's appeal and I hope you will feel that you can give him your private opinion as he requests. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House himself was unquestionably convinced that a categorical refusal to consider the Pope's peace proposal would have unfortunate effects. It would discourage the German liberals, who would be again told that the Entente were planning nothing less than the political annihilation of Germany. It would hasten the collapse of war-weary Russia. House was anxious that the President should use this opportunity to insist publicly that it was not the Entente that stood in the way of peace, but rather the imperialistic designs of Germany as represented by Ludendorff.

Thus on grounds of policy he desired a conciliatory reply. Emotionally he wanted to have a hearing given to any peace proposal whatever, on the chance of shortening the war and relieving humanity of its present sufferings. He was appalled by the horror of war. Who could guarantee that, by continuing the butchery until the maximum war aims of the Allies were secured, the final settlement would be sufficiently improved to justify the loss of life?

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS

August 15, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am wondering how you will think it best to answer the Pope's peace proposal.

It seems to me that the situation is full of danger as well as hope. France may succumb this winter. Russia is so eager to get at her internal problems that she will soon, almost certainly, insist upon peace on a basis of the *status quo ante*.

It is more important, I think, that Russia should weld herself into a virile republic than it is that Germany should be beaten to her knees. If internal disorder reach a point in Russia where Germany can intervene, it is conceivable that in the future she may be able to dominate Russia both politically and economically. Then the clock of progress would indeed be set back.

With Russia firmly established in democracy, German autocracy would be compelled to yield to a representative government within a very few years.

On a basis of the *status quo ante*, the Entente could aid Austria in emancipating herself from Prussia. Turkey could be sustained as an independent nation under the condition that Constantinople and the Straits have some sort of internationalization. This would settle the question of a division of Asia Minor between England, Russia, France, and Italy — a division which is pregnant with future trouble. Turkey would be inclined towards the Entente to-day if it were not that she prefers being a German province rather than to be dismembered as proposed by the Allies. . . .

This leads me to hope that you will answer the Pope's proposal in some such way as to leave the door open and to throw the onus on Prussia. This, I think, can be done if you will say that the peace terms of America are well known, but that it is useless to discuss the question until those of the

Prussian militarists are also known, and further that it is hardly fair to ask the people of the Allied countries to discuss terms with a military autocracy — an autocracy that does not represent the opinion of the people for whom they speak. If the people of the Central Powers had a voice in the settlement it is probable an overwhelming majority would be found willing to make a peace acceptable to the other peoples of the world — a peace founded upon international amity and justice.

I believe an occasion has presented itself for you to make a notable utterance and one which may conceivably lead to great results.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The President was more belligerent than House, less inclined to any sort of compromise; he intimated that he might not take any notice at all of the Pope's offer. He went on to indicate his objections to even a tentative acceptance of the papal proposal, which he asked House to forward to England for Balfour's information.¹

Colonel House to Mr. A. J. Balfour

[Cablegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS

August 18, 1917

In reply to your request, the President bids me say:

'I do not know that I shall make any reply at all to the Pope's proposals, but I am glad to let Mr. Balfour know what it would be were I to make one — as it is possible I may be led by circumstances to do.

'Appreciation should, of course, be expressed of the hu-

¹ Comment by Sir William Wiseman on the following cable: 'Emphasis should be laid on the fact that Wilson answered Balfour through House regarding so important a matter as the Pope's peace offer.'

mane purpose of the Pope and a general sympathy with his desire to see the end of this terrible war come on terms honorable to all concerned; but these objections should be stated:

'(1) That no intimation is conveyed that the terms suggested meet the views of any of the belligerents and that to discuss them would be a blind adventure;

'(2) That such terms constitute no settlement, but only a return to the *status quo ante* and would leave affairs in the same attitude that furnished a pretext for the war; and

'(3) That the absolute disregard alike of all formal obligations of treaty and all accepted principles of international law which the autocratic régime still dominant in Germany has shown in the whole action of this war has made it impossible for other governments to accept its assurances on anything, least of all on the terms upon which peace will be maintained. The present German Imperial Government is morally bankrupt; no one will accept or credit its pledges; and the world will be upon quicksand in regard to all international covenants which include Germany until it can believe that it is dealing with a responsible government.'

Personally, I feel that the door should not be shut abruptly. It will give the Prussian militarists the advantage of again consolidating sentiment in Germany.

EDWARD HOUSE

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 22, 1917

I am in fullest sympathy with the President's line of thought as expressed in your telegram received August 20th.

I have telegraphed our British Minister at the Vatican saying we have had no opportunity of consulting with the Allies and therefore are not in a position to say what answer if any should be sent to the Pope. But that in our opinion it

was time for the Central Powers to make a statement of their policy. This had already been done by the Entente Powers. Next move should be made by enemy. United States Ambassador here is telegraphing full text. I hope this step will meet with the President's approval.

First thought of the Russian Government is that a reasonable reply on behalf of all the Allies should be sent. First thought of the French Government is that no answer is at present necessary. For my part, I greatly dread idea of any joint endeavor of composing elaborate document dealing with complex problems necessarily looked at from somewhat different angles by each belligerent. Drafting difficulties alone seem to render task impossible.

A. J. B.

II

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 17, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am so impressed with the importance of the situation that I am troubling you again. . . .

I believe you have an opportunity to take the peace negotiations out of the hands of the Pope and hold them in your own. Governmental Germany realizes that no one excepting you is in a position to enforce peace terms. The Allies must succumb to your judgment and Germany is not much better off. Badly as the Allied cause is going, Germany is in a worse condition. It is a race now of endurance, with Germany as likely to go under first as any of the Entente Powers.

Germany and Austria are a seething mass of discontent. The Russian Revolution has shown the people their power and it has put the fear of God into the hearts of the Imperialists.

A statement from you regarding the aims of this country would bring about almost revolution in Germany in the

event the existing Government dared to oppose them. The mistake has been made over and over again in the Allied countries in doing and saying the things that best helped the militarists. The German people are told and believe that the Allies desire not only to dismember them, but to make it economically impossible to live after the war. They are therefore welded together with their backs to the wall.

A statement from you setting forth the real issues would have an enormous effect and would probably bring about such an upheaval in Germany as we desire. While the submarine campaign gives them hope, it is a deferred hope, and the Government, not less than the people, are fearful what may happen in the interim. What is needed, it seems to me, is a firm tone, full of determination, but yet breathing a spirit of liberalism and justice that will make the people of the Central Powers feel safe in your hands. You could say again that our people had entered this fight with fixed purpose and high courage and would continue to fight until a new order of liberty and justice for all people was brought about and some agreement reached by which such another war could never again occur.

You can make a statement that will not only be the undoing of autocratic Germany, but one that will strengthen the hands of the Russian liberals in their purpose to mould their country into a mighty republic.

I pray that you may not lose this great opportunity.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 19, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The Russian Ambassador is with me to-day. He is very much disturbed over the Pope's peace overture and how you will reply to it.

He believes that success or failure in Russia may depend upon your answer. He takes the same view as I do except that he feels more keenly on account of its effect upon not only Russia but the present government there. He believes if it is treated lightly and not in a spirit of liberalism it will immediately split Russia and will probably cause the downfall of the present ministry.

I asked him why he had not conveyed this view to you. His reply was that he hesitated to impose himself upon you unless you sent for him. . . .

His Government think the Allies have made a mistake in refusing passports to the Stockholm Conference.¹ If, in addition to doing this, they brush aside the Pope's overtures, he considers it inevitable that there will be a schism, not only in Russia, but probably in other countries as well.

He would like you to take the lead and let Russia follow. He hopes you may be willing to say that the United States will treat with the German people at any time they are in a position to name their own representatives. He thinks that is the crux of the situation.

At first, he thought it well to speak of the Kaiser. I explained why this was not advisable and he agreed. He then suggested the military caste as the offenders, and again I cautioned against this. The German people here for more than a century [have] been taught to believe that their greatest duty to the Fatherland was to offer their services in a military way and they cannot understand just what we mean by 'militarism' as applied to Germany and not to France, Russia, and other countries. They can and do understand

¹ In April the *Internationale* issued invitations for a Socialist Conference at Stockholm, which the Russian revolutionary leaders insisted should be used to clarify war aims. A committee under the presidency of the Swedish Socialist, Branting, received the deputies who arrived from the enemy states; the British and French Governments refused to give passports to Sweden to those desiring to attend the Conference, which Germany was believed to favor as a means of fostering the pacifist spirit among the Allied peoples.

what we mean by representative government and they are eager for it.

I have pointed out to such Germans as I have met that the worst thing that could happen to Germany would be a peace along the lines of the *status quo ante* with the present form of government in control.¹ All the hate and bitterness that the war has engendered would cling to them and it would express itself in trade warfare and in all kinds of social and economic directions. With a representative government, they could return to the brotherhood of nations, declaring that the fault had not been theirs. In this way, they would make a certain reparation which would come near leading to forgiveness.

I believe you are facing one of the great crises that the world has known, but I feel confident that you will meet it with that fine spirit of courage and democracy which has become synonymous with your name.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House was by no means unaware of the opposing opinion which held that the Pope's offer, inspired by the Germans and Austrians, indicated their failing strength and was designed merely to save them from the just consequences of a war which they had started and made the most brutal in history. Ambassador Jusserand wrote very definitely that any peace based upon pre-war boundaries would mean the defeat of everything for which the Allies had been fighting. He shared with President Wilson a suspicion of the promises of the existing rulers of Germany.

¹ President Wilson later expressed this same thought in his message to Congress, December 4, 1917: 'The worst that can happen to the detriment of the German people is this, that if they should still, after the war is over, continue to be obliged to live under ambitious and intriguing masters interested to disturb the peace of the world, . . . it might be impossible to admit them to the partnership of nations which must henceforth guarantee the world's peace.'

*Ambassador Jusserand to Colonel House*¹

WASHINGTON, August 23, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL,

I usually rejoice at the thought that Magnolia is a cool, pleasant Northern place where you make provisions of health for the good of your country and the satisfaction of your friends. When important events happen, my feeling is not quite the same; I regret that pretty place is so far, and the chain tying me here so strong.

I should have liked so much to have with you a few moments' talk concerning the Pope's note.

To my mind, it is the German note of December last, in a new garb. The garb is more ornamented, but what is under is the same. The aim is to establish a sort of *status quo ante*, and in reality not even as much; so that the criminals (who have just set fire to the cathedral at St.-Quentin, in order to show that the leopard has not changed its spots) be not punished, and that their fate be not what it must *needs* be, if the world is to become 'a safe place for democracy': an example and a warning. All the questions which might trouble the Germans would be postponed till another day, till doomsday may be. As for the *status quo*, think of Belgium and France recovering their ravaged, destroyed, blood-soaked unfortunate cities and territories, just as they are, while the Germans would go home, to there enjoy, until the next time, the 'glory' of their deeds, and the vast plunder taken by them against all laws.

The Austro-Germanic inspiration is shown in many ways. The fact that Serbia is not even mentioned is characteristic; also the insistence for the freedom of the seas, and the statement that 'on both sides the honor of arms is safe.' May our arms never be shamed by the kind of 'honor' the German troops reaped at Louvain, Reims, and elsewhere!

¹ This letter, M. Jusserand writes in 1928, 'is not, of course, permeated with the Locarno spirit; but those were pre-Locarno days.'

And the whole fabric, based on the pledged word of all! when we know, and you know (the submarine pledges made to you) what the German word is worth and how it vanishes when 'necessity,' i.e., interest, is at stake.

I do not know what are the views of the President. Many in Europe think that the note is so obviously one more enemy move, that it might be left with no other answer than the 'accusé de réception' already sent by the English. Or, if one is made, it should be very general, referring to the answer sent to the President concerning peace. We cannot have different answers for the President and for the Pope; we have not changed our minds; and on the principles, at least, embodied in this answer, the President himself has shown, by his subsequent addresses to Congress, that he agreed.

What is, on these grave problems, your own opinion? I should be pleased and proud to think that it somewhat agreed with mine.

With best wishes for your health, I beg you to believe me, my dear Colonel,

Very sincerely yours

JUSSERAND

Colonel House to Ambassador Jusserand

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 26, 1917

DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR:

. . . I, too, regret that I am heat-bound and that I have not been able to be in Washington during the summer. However, my exile is almost over and I hope to see you soon.

I believe you are right in thinking that the Pope's peace overture was inspired by Austria. I am not so certain that the Germans had a hand in it. . . .

Your very sincere

E. M. HOUSE

III

President Wilson finally decided to reply in formal fashion to the Pope and to base his reply, like his Flag Day speech, upon the doctrine of peace to the German people and war on the German Government. He centered his note, as he wrote to Colonel House, on the point that it was impossible to accept the word of the existing rulers of Germany. This in itself might serve to weaken German confidence in their leaders. He continued with the assurance that the Allies did not desire the political or economic annihilation of Germany and hinted strongly that reconciliation with a liberalized Germany might be possible. He disavowed explicitly the threats made in certain Allied quarters of an economic war against Germany after the peace, and specifically guaranteed his opposition to 'punitive damages, the dismemberment of empires, the establishment of selfish and exclusive economic leagues.' The essence of the reply, then, was a refusal to consider a peace of reconciliation concluded with the present rulers of Germany; but an invitation to the German liberals to coöperate in a new and better world organization:

'We cannot take the word of the present rulers of Germany as a guarantee of anything that is to endure [unless explicitly supported by such conclusive evidence of the will and purpose of the German people themselves as the other peoples of the world would be justified in accepting. Without such guarantees]¹ treaties of settlement, agreements for disarmament, covenants to set up arbitration in the place of force, territorial adjustments, reconstitutions of small nations, if made with the German Government, no man, no nation, could now depend on.

'We must await some new evidence of the purposes of the great peoples of the Central Powers.'² God grant it may be

¹ The words enclosed in brackets were not in the draft sent to House.

² In the original draft President Wilson had written 'Empires.'

given soon and in a way to restore the confidence of all peoples everywhere in the faith of nations and the possibility of a covenanted peace.'

President Wilson sent on to House for his criticism the first draft of the note. 'Please tell me exactly what you think of it,' he wrote. And later: I shall await your comments with the deepest interest, because the many useful suggestions you have made were in my mind all the while I wrote. . . . I think of you every day with the deepest affection.¹

With the exception of a half-dozen slight verbal alterations and two short interpolations, the draft note sent for House's inspection was the same as that finally published.

'August 23, 1917: This has been one of the busiest and most important days of the summer,' wrote House. 'The President sent his reply to the Pope's peace proposal. . . . I did not receive it until twelve o'clock and, although I had John J. Spurgeon, Colcord, and Bullitt, of the *Public Ledger*, with me, I succeeded in reading, digesting, and answering it in time to mail on the Federal Express. While Murray² did not know its contents, he seemed to sense its importance, for he said that, unless the superintendent would guarantee its safe delivery by to-morrow morning, he would himself take it to Washington. He is to place the letter in a special pouch, and it is to be taken at once to the White House upon its arrival in Washington. Murray would have been even more impressed had he known that he had in his possession what at the moment was the most interesting document in the world.'

¹ Wilson to House, August 22, 1917.

² Former Congressman and then Postmaster of Boston, who was spending the day with House.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 24, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

You have again written a declaration of human liberty. . . . I am sure it is the wise, the statesmanlike, and the right way to answer the Pope's peace overtures. England and France will not like some of it, notably where on page three you say that 'no peace can rest upon political or economic restrictions meant to benefit some nations and cripple others, upon vindictive action of any sort, or any kind of revenge or deliberate injury.'

And again on page four where you say: 'Punitive damages, the dismemberment of empires, the establishment of selfish and economic leagues, we deem childish, etc.' But you have the right of it, and are fully justified in laying down the fundamentals of a new and greater international morality.

America will not and ought not to fight for the maintenance of the old, narrow, and selfish order of things. You are blazing a new path, and the world must follow, or be lost again in the meshes of unrighteous intrigue.

I am cabling Balfour expressing my personal hope that England, France, and Italy will accept your answer as also theirs.

I am, with an abiding affection,

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 25, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

May I suggest that you substitute some other word for 'childish' in the sentence beginning 'Punitive damages, dismemberment of empires, etc.'¹

¹ In the final draft the President substituted the word 'inexpedient' in place of 'childish.'

This sentence may cause dissension and to apply the term 'childish' to the group advocating these things would add fuel to the fire. Of course, what you say is true, but sometimes the truth hurts more than anything else.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'September 5, 1917: The Attorney General stopped off on his way to Maine,' wrote House, 'and spent the day. . . . I asked him when the Cabinet knew about the President's reply to the Pope. He said not until the afternoon of the 28th, at the Cabinet meeting. . . . Gregory said there was no dissension concerning it. . . . The first proof of the message had in it the word "childish," but after receiving my second letter on the subject, the President evidently called in the first issue and eliminated that word. Gordon tells me that the British Ambassador told him that Jusserand was happy at the change.'

The President's note to the Pope, which was published on August 29, evoked general commendation. I am delighted, wrote Mr. Wilson to House, that you thought the reply what it should be and that it has, on the whole, been so well received.¹ Dr. Alderman, of the University of Virginia, later wrote to House that of all Wilson's messages it touched the 'high-water mark of his papers in its breadth and dignity and beauty.' The day of its appearance Lord Grey said of Wilson's messages, 'one after the other they go to the real root of the matter and fill me with satisfaction.' Lord Robert Cecil cabled to House in the same vein: 'We greatly admire the note and it has been received with much satisfaction by our Press.'

The Americans of German ancestry noted the opportunity given by Wilson's reply for influencing liberal opinion

¹ Wilson to House, September 2, 1917.

in Germany. On September 19 House recorded: 'Bernard Ridder called this morning to talk over his plans to get the German-Americans back of the President's answer to the Pope.'

Mr. Karl von Weigand to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, August 29, 1917

DEAR COLONEL:

It is to my mind the greatest step that has yet been taken towards peace. Its effect will be splendid in Germany. The psychological tactics will avail the President more in attaining the end he has aimed at than many corps on the front. It gives the German liberals every assurance they have wanted. It confirms everything that Harden has been writing about Mr. Wilson. It is a wonderful document.

Sincerely yours

KARL VON WEIGAND

Colonel House had kept in close touch with the British while the reply to the Pope was under consideration, and put forward the suggestion that the Allies would agree to accept the President's note as their own answer to the Pope. This would in itself go far towards a coördination of war aims and perhaps indicate a tendency towards revision of the more extreme territorial aspirations of the Allies. I hope with all my heart, wrote President Wilson to him, that the associated governments will . . . say ditto to us.¹

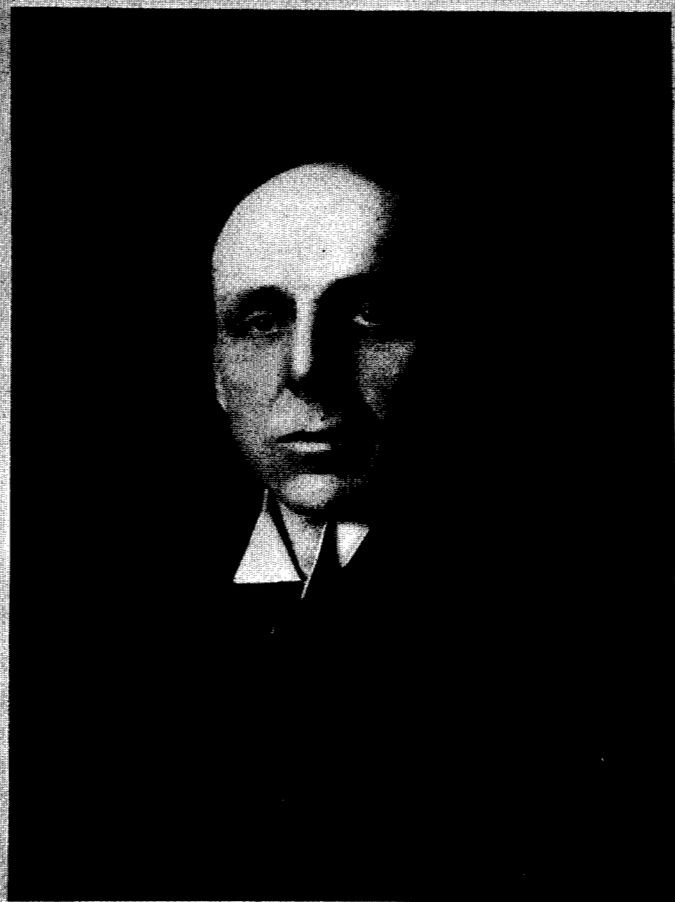
Colonel House to Mr. A. J. Balfour

[Cablegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 24, 1917

The President has composed an answer to the Pope's peace overture, and will probably send it within a few days.

¹ Wilson to House, August 22, 1917.



BRAY
A

Colonial House
with kindest regards
from
Robert Cecil
20 August 1917.

LORD ROBERT CECIL
(now Viscount Cecil)

YRABLU 3ITBAGOM

APR 1964 JPN

It will serve, I think, to unite Russia and add to the confusion in Germany.

If the Allied Governments could accept it as their answer to the Pope, it would, in my opinion, strengthen their cause throughout the world. If the United States are to put forth their maximum effort, there must be a united people, and the President has struck the note necessary to make this possible.

E. M. HOUSE

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, August 27, 1917

I am grateful for information contained in your telegram of August 25th. My view is that it would be very desirable for British and other allied governments to accept the President's reply as their answer to the Pope. The question is however one of such importance that I shall have to consult the Cabinet and also our allies. I assume the President's reply follows the lines already sketched out but I should be very grateful if it were possible to send me a summary of it if the President sees no objection.

ROBERT CECIL

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS

August 28, 1917

... In order to get cordial coöperation it would seem advisable to give your reply to the Governments in advance. It would be particularly desirable in case of Russia.

EDWARD HOUSE

It proved too late to give to the Allies advance copies of the reply to the Pope, since arrangements for publication

on August 29 had already been made. It is evident also that the President was conscious of such a difference between his point of view and that of the European Allies that he feared any attempt to reach an agreement: I felt morally certain, he wrote House, that they would wish changes which I could not make. . . . The differences of opinion will be less embarrassing now than they would have been if I had invited them beforehand.¹

Those differences doubtless account for the disappointment of House's hope that the Allies would formally ratify the President's note and thus achieve something like a unified programme of war aims. It is likely that the French and Italians felt that such ratification would commit them too far in the direction of a revision of the aspirations that found expression in the secret treaties.

IV

It was probably President Wilson's acute consciousness of the difference between his own war aims and those of the Allies that led him at this time to plan a definite formulation of the American peace programme. The time had not yet come when the details of that programme could be publicly announced. In his reply to the Pope, as he had written Colonel House, he was forced to a certain vagueness for the sake of sparing Allied feelings: I have not thought it wise to . . . be more specific because it might provoke dissenting voices from France and Italy if I should — if I should say, for example, that their territorial claims did not interest us.² But the time when the American peace programme would have to be clearly expressed was approaching. Mr. Wilson wanted to be prepared not merely to formulate American war aims exactly, but also to understand the objections to

¹ Wilson to House, September 2, 1917.

² Wilson to House, August 22, 1917. See above, p. 51.

them which might be raised by our associates and to study means to bring our associates over to his ideals.

I am beginning to think, he wrote House on September 2, that we ought to go systematically to work to ascertain as fully and precisely as possible just what the several parties to this war on our side will be inclined to insist upon as part of the final peace arrangements. We ought, he added, to prepare our own position either for or against them and begin to gather the influences we wished to employ, or at least ascertain what influences we could use: in brief, prepare our case with a full knowledge of the position of all the litigants. Several of the Governments, he observed, had begun to gather material and get 'their pipes laid.' . . . What would you think of quietly getting about you a group of men to assist you to do this? . . . Under your guidance these assistants could collate all the definite material available and you could make up the memorandum by which we should be guided.¹

Colonel House replied with enthusiasm that he would undertake the task thus defined by the President. 'I have been trying to do in a quiet and not very efficient way what you have suggested as wanting me to do systematically and thoroughly.'² Mr. Wilson thereupon discussed the main lines of the organization with the Secretary of State, with the result that it was decided to give House a free hand and permit him to work out the problem of outlining the important questions in his own way: Lansing is not only content that you should undertake the preparation of data for the peace

¹ Wilson to House, September 2, 1917.

² Mr. Phillips, First Assistant Secretary of State, had written to House in May that we were not equipped with adequate information for the peace conference on the Balkan and Near Eastern situation. House had made arrangements for a special investigation by Mr. W. H. Buckler of the London Embassy, which he planned to extend to other problems. Phillips to House, May 19, June 6, August 16, 1917; Buckler to House, August 1, November 3, 1917; House to Wilson, September 21, 1917.

conference, wrote Wilson to House on September 19, but volunteers the opinion that you were the only one to do it.¹

The organization thus inaugurated came to be called 'The Inquiry.' President Mezes, of the College of the City of New York, was named Director, and Mr. Walter Lippmann, then on the staff of the *New Republic*, Secretary. Headquarters were in New York, where the American Geographical Society offered its offices, library, and map-making facilities, as well as the invaluable services of its Director, Dr. Isaiah Bowman. For the most part its work was entirely separate from that of the Department of State or of the Military Intelligence Division of the General Staff; it concentrated not on current problems but rather on those that would be raised at the peace conference. Nevertheless the President at various times approached the Inquiry for data and advice on current policy, even before its collections were complete, and on at least one occasion utilized the information thus provided for the most important of his pronouncements on foreign policy.² Regarding the work of the Inquiry, Sir William Wiseman later wrote:

Wiseman Memorandum on The Inquiry

June 5, 1928

'From the early months of the war, allied foreign offices began to consider the terms of peace and the mechanics of the peace conference which must come some day. They were able to look back over many precedents of conferences, great and small. Several of their elder statesmen had actually taken part in important conferences. Lord Balfour, for instance, had been private secretary to his uncle, Lord Salisbury, at the conference of Berlin. The British and the French, and doubtless the other Allied Powers, appointed

¹ Wilson to House, September 19, 1917.

² See below, Chapter XI.

members of their foreign offices, ex-diplomats, and other experts, to prepare for the peace conference.

'The Americans, on the other hand, had little by way of precedent to guide them. The records of the State Department, naturally enough, did not contain much first-hand information about the European peace conferences of the past. It has therefore been sometimes assumed that the American Delegation came to Paris ill-prepared, and that Wilson had not the benefit of the research and skilled advice afforded to the other heads of missions. This is not true. Colonel House foresaw very clearly the need for preparation, and as early as the summer of 1917 suggested a plan to Wilson which at once appealed to the President's scholarly and orderly mind. Colonel House proposed that an organization be created which was called The Inquiry, under the direction of Dr. Mezes. The best available American historians and specialists with practical experience were invited to join the staff. Dr. Isaiah Bowman became executive officer and worked out the organization of the subjects to be studied. Professor J. T. Shotwell was in charge of historical geography and, after the Inquiry moved to Paris, of the library. David Hunter Miller, who was in charge of legal problems, later became known and respected by all the delegations in Paris as one of the ablest legal minds at the Conference. Walter Lippmann, the present brilliant editor of the *New York World*, was secretary. It is my impression that Lippmann furnished the abstract ideas which found their way into a good many of the memoranda of the American Delegation and ultimately into some of President Wilson's public speeches. To name but a few of the others: George Louis Beer was in charge of colonial questions; Charles H. Haskins, of problems of western Europe; Clive Day, of Balkan problems; Douglas Johnson, of boundary questions; W. L. Westermann, problems of the Turkish Empire; and Allyn A. Young, of economic questions.

'This earnest and scholarly group of men gave deep and impartial study to the tremendous and complicated problems arising from a war which shattered the remnants of the Holy Roman Empire, dissipated the dreams of Bismarck, and left the great Russian Empire chaotic and impotent.

'The members of the Inquiry conferred freely with any one — American or foreign — who could speak with authority and knowledge of any pertinent matter. Facts, opinions, prejudices, were patiently considered and carefully analyzed. The results of their work, their conclusions, their best advice, were summarized and submitted to the President by Colonel House, together with his own wise observations.

'Wilson often surprised his colleagues in Paris by his deep knowledge of the affairs of the Balkans, the bitter political struggle in Poland, or the delicate question of the Adriatic. If Wilson's theories seemed strange and impractical to the realists of Europe, at least they could find no fault with the accuracy of his facts.

'Among the many services which the American Nation rendered to the world during this crisis in its history, the work of the Inquiry is by no means the least important and the record of the Inquiry, so little known to the public, remains a fine example of a difficult task, well accomplished and most modestly.'

To the student of Wilsonian policy the chief interest of the inauguration of the Inquiry at this time is the indication it gives of the President's consciousness that the task of persuading our European associates in the war to accept his point of view would demand careful preparation and effort. He felt that the need for a revision of what some termed the imperialist aspirations of the Entente was vital, not merely to attain a final settlement of justice but to assure whole-hearted prosecution of the war against Germany. The Allies must make it plain that they were waging their battle in

behalf of permanent peace and not for the sake of territorial annexations. Only thus could the enthusiasm of liberal and labor elements be maintained. The situation in Russia demanded a new and a more explicit justification of the continuation of the war. The effect of Wilson's speeches upon German loyalty to the military group would attain its full value only when his principles were completely and formally endorsed by the Allies. Coördination of war aims between the Allies and the United States was just as important, in a certain sense, as coördination of military and economic efforts.

CHAPTER VII

AN AMERICAN WAR MISSION

I think it is essential to the cause of the Allies that a representative of the United States of the first rank should come over here officially as soon as possible. . . .

Mr. Lloyd George to Colonel House, September 4, 1917

I

COLONEL HOUSE, driven by the heat away from New York, spent the entire summer of 1917 at Magnolia, so that for the space of more than three months he did not see the President. I am both glad and sorry that you have got off to the Massachusetts shore, Wilson wrote him; glad for your sake, sorry for ours, who would wish to be much nearer to you.¹ The separation gave rise to the usual rumor of a break between the two, which appeared in the newspapers of September 6. Colonel House's only comment to curious reporters who pressed for an explanation was that the rumor was 'somewhat belated,' as it generally came 'about mid-summer along with the sea-serpent stories.'

The truth was that the President's confidence in House was never greater than during this summer and early autumn. He wrote at the end of September that he was hoping each day to get an opportunity to discuss 'the many things we must talk over, you and I. Affectionately yours.'² It was during this period that he constantly asked House for advice and criticism on his speeches dealing with foreign policy and our relations with the Allies;³ he asked him to take charge of the collection of data for the peace conference, to investigate a very delicate problem involving charges of espionage, to give his opinion upon British blockade policy

¹ Wilson to House, June 1, 1917.

² *Ibid.*, September 26, 1917.

³ *Ibid.* June 1, June 15, July 21, August 16, August 22, September 22, 1917.

toward the European neutrals; ¹ he entrusted him with confidential messages to be sent to the Allied leaders regarding interallied coördination, British policy in Palestine, and the handling of suggestions for peace emanating from Germany.² He finally selected him to head the War Mission designed to establish effective coöperation with the Allies, the first of its kind ever sent by the United States to Europe.

The President's letters, almost without exception, contained a personal phrase that more than anything else suggests the nature of the friendship between the two: All join me in warmest messages. Affectionately yours. . . . I am writing on the *Mayflower* . . . seeking a day or two of relief from the madness of Washington. A point is reached now and again where I *must* escape it for a little. Your grateful friend. . . . Do not be alarmed about my health. I need rest, and am growing daily more conscious that I do; but I am fit and all right. All join in affectionate messages. . . . It was a great pleasure to see you. In desperate Monday haste.

The first personal conference between the President and House after the summer came as the result of a surprise visit which Wilson made to the North Shore on September 9. He left the White House by the rear entrance, escaping notice until he reached New York, where he embarked upon the *Mayflower*. Not even the Cabinet knew of his trip until he had left Washington.

'September 9, 1917: Around seven o'clock the Navy Yard of Boston called me over the telephone to say they had a wireless stating that the *Mayflower* would be in Gloucester Harbor at two o'clock. Loulie and I went over to meet the boat, boarded it, met the President and Mrs. Wilson, and motored along the shore for two hours or more. We stopped

¹ Wilson to House, September 19, September 24, September 26, October 1, 1917.

² *Ibid.*, October 7, October 13, 1917.

first at our cottage and then went over to Mrs. T. Jefferson Coolidge's house to look at her prints, china, etc., which have been inherited from Thomas Jefferson.

'We dined on the *Mayflower*. Before dinner the President and I had an intimate talk of perhaps an hour and again for an hour and a half after dinner. . . . He told me of the talk he made to the naval officers when he inspected the fleet at Hampton Roads not long ago. He spoke to all of them, including ensigns, and said about this: "None of you have had any experience in modern warfare, therefore the least of you knows as much as the highest, and I would like suggestions from any officer in the Navy, no matter how humble his rank, regarding the conduct of our war at sea. These suggestions will be received by the Navy Board, and if you find they are not noticed, then send them to me direct."¹ . . .

'He is sending a commission to England recommended at the suggestion of Arthur Pollen and others, and he told the members before they left that he wished them to go over and find a way to break up the hornets' nest, and not try to kill individual hornets over a forty-acre lot. He said he was willing to risk the loss of half our navy if there was a commensurate gain.² We discussed the question of capital ships. . . .

'During the afternoon we were discussing Lincoln. We agreed that Washington would continue in history the

¹ Address of President Wilson to the officers of the Atlantic fleet, August 11, 1917.

² The text of President Wilson's speech does not agree exactly with what he says to House on this occasion: 'I am willing to sacrifice half the navy Great Britain and we together have, to crush that nest,' said Wilson to the navy officers on the Flagship *Pennsylvania*, 'because if we crush it, the war is won.' Admiral Sims comments sarcastically upon this sentence: 'This is master strategy with a vengeance! If the "crushing" had succeeded at the cost of half the fleets, that would have left the German fleet in command of the sea, and ensured the defeat of the Allies.' (*World's Work*, March, 1927.)

To House, however, the President merely suggested risking half of the American navy and not of the combined fleets.

greater man. I repeated what Sedgwick said when he lunched with me Saturday; i.e., that a Massachusetts historian had made the statement that Lincoln would never have been great by his deeds, but it was what he had written that had impressed the world and had given an insight into his mind that otherwise would never have been unfolded. The President did not agree with this. He thought Lincoln's deeds entitled him to greatness as well as what he wrote. He thought that his environment was, to a certain extent, limited and that by lack of wider education he did not have the outlook he might otherwise have had. Yet he thought his judgment would have been equal to any situation that might have confronted him.

'September 10, 1917: Once or twice during the conversation I threw the President off his line of thought by interpolations, and he found it difficult to return to his subject. He smiled plaintively, and said, "You see I am getting tired. This is the way it indicates itself."

'No man has ever had deeper or graver responsibilities, and no one has met them with more patience, courage, and wisdom.

'During lunch the President spoke of his nervousness when speaking in public. I had thought that he was entirely free from it, and yet he said if he had to walk across a crowded stage, with an audience in front of him, he always wondered whether he would drop before he reached the speakers' stand.

'While driving, he described himself as "a democrat like Jefferson, with aristocratic tastes." Intellectually, he said, he was entirely democratic, which in his opinion was unfortunate, for the reason that his mind led him where his taste rebelled.'

II

It is rather surprising that the vitally important problem of interallied coördination was scarcely touched upon by

House and Wilson during this visit to the North Shore. It may have been that each avoided a discussion which might have proved wearying to the President on his vacation and which would at best have been academic, since Lord Reading, the new British Commissioner, was still on the high seas. Two days later Reading landed at New York, and the question of achieving better coöperative effort immediately came to the front.

On his return to New York, Colonel House was soon brought into relations with the new British envoy, as close perhaps as those he maintained with Northcliffe.

Reading handled a difficult situation with skill and tact. 'There are serious financial problems unsolved,' reported Wiseman to the British Foreign Office, 'but Reading is approaching them in the right spirit and is a very acceptable person to all the Administration. House, as usual, is very helpful, and I believe we are now tackling the situation properly. While I cannot say there is any popular enthusiasm for the war, there is a very solid determination to carry on with all the resources of the country until the German military power is crushed. The position of the President remains very strong. Feeling towards the British is improving. . . .'

On October 4, Wiseman reported that Reading 'has made the very best impression on McAdoo and all others concerned. It is universally admitted that the British Treasury is properly represented for the first time, and our other Allies have had to recognize that he has immediately become the dominant figure in finance.' Northcliffe endorsed this opinion enthusiastically.

Northcliffe to Mr. Lloyd George

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, September 30, 1917

Reading is working indefatigably, amidst great difficulties. He was able to obtain fifty million dollars for Canadian

wheat, which really was an inroad on the basic principle that every cent of money advanced to the Allies should be spent in the United States. This achievement of Reading is in my opinion one that could not be brought about by any one not possessed of Reading's ability, charm, and tact in handling these difficult people. Reading, by his frankness in concealing nothing from them and by his sympathetic understanding that they are harassed day by day by the Allies for money and also by politicians and press, will, I am convinced, be able to achieve all that is humanly possible.

NORTHCLIFFE

Lord Reading's success, however, was necessarily limited. He tided over a critical situation and secured for the British the essential credits. But as the military organization of the United States developed, with consequent demands for supplies from every American department, the difficulty of securing supplies for the Allies became greater. The allotment of available supplies as between the Allied armies and the new American force was becoming a nice problem. 'I foresee that there may be a dangerous interval, possibly next summer,' wrote Wiseman, 'between the time when we run short of necessary supplies owing to the American programme, and the time when the United States army is ready to take a big part on the Western Front.'

Lord Reading refused to admit discouragement, but insisted that a more complete system of coördination must be found. On October 29 he left with House the copy of a memorandum which, as he cabled to England, summarized the general impressions formed 'after a long series of conversations with the Administration and others, including the President, Lansing, McAdoo, and House, and winding up with a long conference between ourselves, French representatives, and Crosby,¹ representing the United States Treasury,

¹ Oscar T. Crosby, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

at which the latter set forth at length the details of the United States financial position. What I say about finance,' he added, 'should be read in close conjunction with my political impressions.' The summary is historically of value as giving a picture of American conditions drawn by one in close touch with them but written from a detached point of view.

Reading Memorandum on Supplies

October, 1917

'Criticism comes naturally from two opposed quarters. There is the type of opinion represented by Roosevelt to the effect that the Administration is very ill-organized for war (in which there is a good deal of truth) and that they are not throwing themselves into the business of preparation with sufficient energy (which is by no means so true). On the other hand, there is an undercurrent of suspicion in other quarters as to the extent of America's real interest in the war and as to the aims and methods of the European Allies, not only as regards the ultimate objects of the war, but also as to whether they are not sometimes using their American credits for other than strictly war purposes.

'These two opposed currents tend to drive the Administration in the same direction, namely, to emphasize the importance of the part America is going to play rather than that of the part the Allies are already playing, and to run the American programme to the possible detriment of the Allied programmes. This meets both lines of attack. It satisfies the forward party and it takes away from the others the charge that America is becoming a tool of the Allies. . . .

'A vast programme of military preparations, aviation, and shipbuilding has now passed Congress and during the past week Departments concerned have received their definite appropriations. This programme has been built up piece-

meal by each Department securing approval for what is conceived to be its needs, without coördination or effective control on the part of the Treasury. It has also been drawn up without regard to the effect on existing programmes of Allies or to the date at which these preparations can become effective as compared with the programmes of the Allies. Mr. Crosby did not defend this as being a wise or far-seeing course, but notified it to us as being what was rapidly becoming an accomplished fact. As a result the actual cash outgoings of the United States Treasury are already at the rate of \$600,000,000 a month, apart from advances to Allies, and are expected to reach \$1,000,000,000 monthly beginning with October. He explained that the Departments are not permitted by law to make advance payments, but in lieu of this they pay the contractors for the raw materials as soon as they are purchased and also for the value of the work put into them as it accrues week by week. These cash outgoings begin as soon as the contracts are placed and are not postponed pending delivery of the finished article. Advances to the Allies, which have been authorized at a maximum average monthly rate of \$500,000,000, have to be added to the above. The proceeds of the new war taxation on the other hand will not accrue to the Treasury until next year and the increases over normal revenue immediately available are only \$50,000,000 monthly.

'It is, of course, much too soon to say that the impossible will not be achieved. But however this turns out, the three factors following are likely to govern the situation here for the months immediately in front of us:

'(A) The officials of the United States Treasury are nervous and oppressed. Pending the result of the forthcoming Liberty loan and even thereafter they will hesitate to commit themselves. I believe that for the present we shall always get our money in the end, but it will probably be at the expense of constant importunity and some anxiety.

Nothing will be clear-cut, and each Ally will be struggling for itself. A time will probably come when we shall have to ask the Treasury to take risks which will appear unjustifiable from the strictly financial standpoint.

'(B) Mr. Crosby stated plainly that the requirements of their own Departments must come first. Any shortage of funds, therefore, will fall mainly on the Allies.

'(C) I told Mr. Crosby that what will save the United States Treasury, as it has saved ours in the past, will be the material limitations on what it is possible to buy. Goods will not in fact be forthcoming on a sufficient scale to absorb the vast credits to which the Departments and the Allies are becoming entitled. This will save the financial position. But the same trouble will crop up in another form. The Ministry of Munitions is more likely to be embarrassed by shortage of supplies from America than is the Treasury by shortage of dollars.

'In short, considerations of politics and finance combine to enforce the view that America will put her own needs first and . . . the material resources of this Continent may not be equal to the new programme which it is sought to superimpose on the old. The growing lack of coördination between the programme of the Administration here and the programme of the Allies is probably, on every ground, the biggest question in front of us. But I have some reason to believe that the matter is engaging the attention of the Administration and I shall take any further opportunity of emphasizing to the President the risks lest hastily considered orders by United States War Departments spoil our efficiency before they themselves are ready. I invite the particular attention of the Minister of Munitions to the danger of his preparations becoming ill-balanced in so far as he depends on American supplies and urge him to lay his plans so far as possible without too great reliance on the resources of the United States.

'I shall see our friend [Colonel House] again within next few days and shall discuss the whole question with him.'

III

This important paper, with the ominous phrase, 'growing lack of coördination,' was sent to the British War Cabinet and doubtless impressed upon them a lively appreciation of the need of drastic measures to meet the danger. The United States officials must be made to see that American help would be more efficient if applied to the already existing armies of the Allies, and the Allied programme must be made sufficiently definite to permit the Americans to work toward it intelligently. So much Wiseman emphasized in a supplementary message.

'Partly to develop a war spirit throughout the country,' he wrote, 'and partly in all sincerity, the Government has very naturally adopted the attitude described by the slogan "America first," and has fomented the national tendency to exaggerate the part America is to play. This must not be interpreted as an undervaluation of the Allies, or a misconception of their part, nor does it imply the slightest hostility towards them. America's own requirements will come first, but there is no reason to fear that the American programme will interfere with those of the Allies to the common detriment, provided we also have a clear-cut programme and can tell the Americans clearly what our needs are.'

The general council of the Allies on war purchases and finances, which Mr. McAdoo had demanded early in the summer, would have gone far toward meeting the conditions essential to effective American economic coöperation. But the formation of this council was still delayed. Pending its organization, Lord Reading suggested that the United States send to Europe a mission composed of the heads of

the more important departments or war-making agencies, to study the main problems of the European Allies at close range. Mr. Lloyd George asked him and Sir William Wiseman to present the proposal to Colonel House for discussion with President Wilson.

Sir William Wiseman to Colonel House

NEW YORK *September 26, 1917*

MY DEAR MR. HOUSE:

. . . You know that I try to look at everything as much in the interests of the United States as of my own country, because I believe that what is good for the one is good for the other. You will not mind, then, if I seem to be giving unsolicited advice to America. . .

I believe the greatest asset Germany has to-day is the 3000 miles that separates London from Washington, and the most urgent problem we have to solve is how our two Governments, set at opposite ends of the world, can effect the close coöperation which is undoubtedly necessary if the war is to be quickly and successfully ended. Would the President consider the advisability of sending plenipotentiary envoys to London and Paris, with the object of taking part in the next great Allied Council, bringing their fresh minds to bear on our problems, discussing and giving their judgment on some of the questions I have raised, and also to arrange — if that be possible — for some machinery to bridge over the distance between Washington and the theatre of war?

May I be allowed to add that our leaders have told me of their confidence in you and their respect for your judgment. It is to you, therefore, that we turn for counsel in a matter which would be very difficult to approach through the ordinary diplomatic channels.

Yours very truly

W. WISEMAN

The despatch of an American War Mission to Europe was desired by Mr. Lloyd George, not merely because of the need of better economic coördination but also for military reasons. The Prime Minister had long chafed at the strategy of the military leaders on the Western Front which, while it undermined the ultimate strength of Germany, was appalling in its immediate cost. The long-drawn-out process of the *guerre d'usure* seemed to him unnecessarily wasteful of lives and of time. Instead of throwing Allied forces directly against the strongest enemy, Germany, at the strongest part of its defenses, he wished to strike at the weaker members of the opposing alliance: 'knock down the props.'

What he had in mind was the establishment of a new inter-allied military organization which would, under unified direction, give up the battering of the Western Front and launch a coördinated attack against the weakest point of the central alliance. 'There is no doubt,' wrote Sir William Robertson, 'that had Mr. Lloyd George's wishes prevailed at this period the main British effort would have been transferred from France to Italy, just as in January, 1915, he wished to transfer it to the Balkans.'¹

The British Chief of Staff and Sir Douglas Haig were steadily skeptical of the practical feasibility of such a strategic plan, since, as they maintained, it would be impossible effectively to emphasize the 'side shows' without imperiling the main battlefield in France. 'The General Staff continued to assert,' wrote Robertson, 'that the main road to victory lay straight ahead, across the Rhine, while Mr. Lloyd George insisted that that road was too hard, and that the best one lay, if not via Italy, Trieste, and Vienna, then via the Mediterranean, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. Throughout 1917 this dead-weight of disagreement had grievously hampered the management of the different campaigns in which we were engaged; increased the dif-

¹ Sir William Robertson, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, II, 251.

ficulty of securing concerted action between the Allied armies.'¹

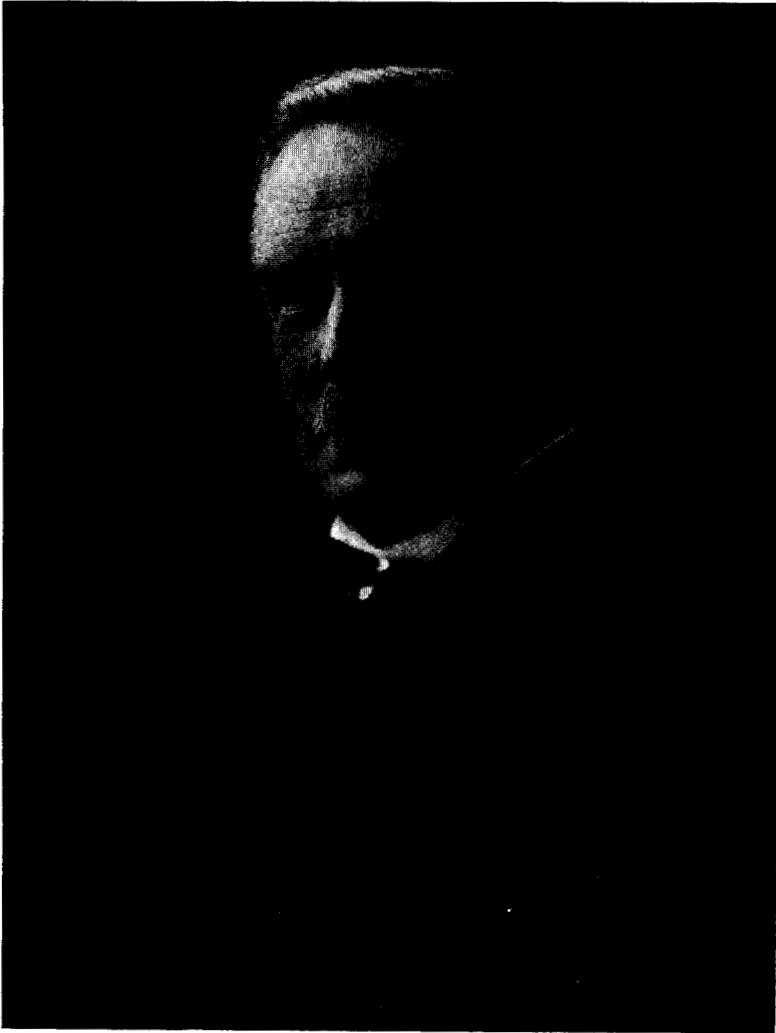
Above all Mr. Lloyd George insisted upon the necessity of unified direction of military policy in all the fields of combat, and it was to this end that he planned an interallied staff superior to the commanders-in-chief and the chiefs of staff of each individual army. In this plan he was encouraged by Sir Henry Wilson, to whom should be given much of the credit for the final achievement of allied military coördination. Sir Henry described in his diary a conversation with Mr. Lloyd George on August 23, in which he sketched the main lines of the organization which later became the Supreme War Council:

'I then disclosed my plan of three Prime Ministers and three soldiers, to be over all C.I.G.S.'s² and to draw up plans for the whole theatre from Nieuport to Baghdad. I told him [Lloyd George] that I had had this plan in mind for two and a half years, and I made it clear that it was not aimed at Robertson, or Haig, or anybody. I told him that if he was to remove Robertson, *now*, and to place me as C.I.G.S., I would still press for my plan, as being the only one which would allow us really to draw up a combined plan of operations.

'He was distinctly taken. He explained the position as follows: He was satisfied with Haig, but dissatisfied with Robertson. He was quite clear in his mind that we were not winning the war by our present plans, and that we never should on our present lines; but he did not know how, or what we should do, and he had no means of checking or altering Robertson's and Haig's plans, though he knew they were too parochial. He said that he was not in the position, nor had he the knowledge, to bring out alternative plans and

¹ Robertson, *op. cit.*, II, 265.

² Chiefs of Staff.



BY

George Floyd

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to insist upon their adoption, as it would always be said that he was overruling the soldiers. It was because of his profound disgust that he had thought of forming a committee of Johnnie [Lord French] and me and another, but he now quite agreed with me that that would not work and that my plan was infinitely better. . . . Altogether he rose well at my proposals.'¹

If the Prime Minister were to forward those plans successfully, the support of the United States would be of importance, especially in view of the problem of man-power. Mr. Lloyd George accordingly commissioned Sir William Wiseman to explain the various elements in the situation to Colonel House. The British had been told by House that President Wilson would support any plan which promised to achieve Allied unity, and Lloyd George may have hoped to receive from an American mission support for his 'Eastern' strategy. House brought the matter to the President's attention when the latter visited New York in the *Mayflower* in mid-September.

Mr. David Lloyd George to Colonel House

LONDON, September 4, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I have to thank you for the letter you sent me through Sir William Wiseman. I have talked things over with him with the special purpose that he should explain to you what I think about the present situation. He will go straight to see you on arrival. Very briefly I think it is essential to the cause of the Allies that a representative of the United States of the first rank should come over here officially as soon as possible to take part in the deliberations of the Allies over their future plans of campaign. Needless to say it would be a source of the utmost satisfaction to us if you were to come yourself. Sir William Wiseman will be able to tell you why

¹ Callwell, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, II, 10-11.

I believe that a representative of the United States could render invaluable services to the Allied cause.

Yours sincerely

D. LLOYD GEORGE

'September 16, 1917: To-day I lunched with the President on board the *Mayflower*,' wrote Colonel House. 'We had a talk before lunch. I told him of Lloyd George's desire that a representative from the United States be sent to the Inter-allied Conference. . . .

'The President thought he could not go much further toward meeting Lloyd George's wishes than to express a feeling that something different should be done in the conduct of the war than had been done, and to say that the American people would not be willing to continue an indefinite trench warfare. He thought it would be inadvisable to commit himself further. . . .'

Colonel House to Mr. David Lloyd George

NEW YORK, September 24, 1917

DEAR MR. GEORGE:

Thank you for the messages and information which came through the Lord Chief Justice and Sir William Wiseman. The President has the several matters under advisement and I hope will come to a conclusion this week.

I have sent you word through Sir William as to what I think of the plan you suggest. I favored it nearly two years ago and, unless conditions have changed so as to make it impossible, it still seems worthy of our earnest consideration.

The coming of the Lord Chief Justice has already resulted in good. Lord Northcliffe is helping to make his visit a success, and I am sure your sending him will be justified.

I have told the President that I was willing to go over in the event he thought well of the plan, although I have work of pressing importance here. I have suggested in lieu of

myself the sending of Secretaries McAdoo and Baker. In some ways, this would be better, for they could obtain so much information that would be useful in their several departments.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson's unwillingness to express any opinion upon matters of strategy resulted from a natural feeling that the United States ought not to exert any influence in military councils until they had an army in the field. But he appreciated clearly the need of better economic coördination, and if this end could best be achieved through an American mission he was disposed to approve it.

Besides finance and supplies, the questions of shipping and of blockade had become critical. All through the summer Lord Northcliffe had insisted upon the vital importance of the tonnage problem. 'The Prime Minister feels,' he told Colonel House on August 14, 'that the speedy turning out of tonnage is to-day absolutely the first war need. The War Cabinet decided on August 9 to devote to the construction of vessels all the steel plates which can be used, in spite of the fact that this will involve a reduction in the output of shells. It was also decided to release men from the munitions works and from the army for the necessary labor.'

The tonnage question had become and was to remain for nine months, in a certain sense, the central problem of American coöperation. As Medill McCormick wrote to House, 'It is of no use to levy great armies if there is to be no shipping to transport them, and what is more important, to supply the wants of the civil populations and the armies of our Allies.'

A memorandum which the British sent House in the summer indicated that the first six months of the intensive submarine warfare had destroyed more than two and a quarter

million tons of British and a million and a half tons of Allied and neutral shipping. Taking into account the boats partially damaged and the new submarines built, which more than made up for those destroyed, it was estimated that the net loss, despite the best effort of British shipbuilders, would be over 350,000 tons a month. As the autumn passed, the Allies became more anxious. Could American shipyards make good this deficit?

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *October 11, 1917*

I would be grateful if you will allow me to put before you the following facts with regard to the shipping situation, for your very careful attention:

In the first two and a half years of the war the total reduction of tonnage in the world due to the enemy's activities amounted to approximately four and a half million tons. Seven months of ruthless submarine warfare increased the above reduction by an additional four and a quarter million tons.

If to the average rate of destruction of shipping during this intensive campaign is added the decrease of tonnage caused, firstly, by the incapacitation of ships which are badly damaged without being a total loss, and secondly, by ordinary misadventures at sea, it is permissible to estimate the total reduction in the tonnage of the world during a year as in the neighbourhood of eight million tons. . . .

To offset this reduction England, who last year reduced shipbuilding to the production of about six hundred thousand tons in order to direct her energies into other channels, is now bending every effort to construct two and a half million tons next year, though it is to be feared that it will not be possible to fully reach this figure.

If the present rate of destruction is maintained Great

Britain's production of shipping added to that of the rest of the world excepting America will yet leave a minimum yearly deficit of five and a half million tons.

The situation is rendered more serious by the fact, well known to you, that, without taking into consideration future losses, available tonnage is far from sufficient to fill the civilian and military needs of the Allies.

Tonnage conditions will be the deciding factor in the extent of spring operations in every theatre of war.

England now considers it important to clearly state that she sees no possibility of carrying on her military and naval part in the war, transporting civilian and military supplies in British bottoms and continuing to furnish her Allies with as many ships as in the past.

The present great need for coal and food in Italy and France will become more serious in the spring.

British ships will also be lacking to furnish the supplies which Russia may want during the season next year when the port of Archangel is open.

At the same time, America will be confronted by the great problems presented by the transportation of her forces and the supplies for them.

In view of all the above circumstances, I suggest for your consideration the possibility of the adoption by the United States of plans for the construction of sufficient tonnage to offset the loss by submarine attack at the present rate. This would mean the construction of approximately six million tons per annum.

The effort that such a programme implies is enormous, but you will recollect that if England is unable to adopt such a programme it is because her energies are committed in those other directions into which they were turned, in common with those of her Allies, in the early days of the war under the immediate necessity of providing for increasing armies and navies and the munitions for both. Less effort

than that thus expended would have sufficed to produce more ships than submarines destroy, even when most active. It was not until 1916 that the mercantile marine became as important as armies, navies, and munitions.

America, with resources of industry and engineering superior to those of any other country, joined the war at this stage. The expenditure of strength necessary to nullify the loss of shipping, though very great, is relatively less than that made by the Allies with success to meet other emergencies. The programme outlined above means the employment of three and a half million tons of steel, which is not even ten per cent of the production of the United States, and the work of half a million men, only a minority of whom need be skilled workmen.

Even before any ships were launched, the definite adoption and vigorous prosecution of a scheme such as the one outlined would in all probability affect the enemy's hopes and, consequently, his powers of endurance in an entirely disproportionate manner. Such a programme would, of course, not provide the requisite number of bottoms by next spring, but the very fact that they were under construction would permit of freer use of those available and would be of invaluable help to tide over the critical time coming before the harvests of 1918.

Although in the last few weeks the loss of tonnage has been greatly reduced, it is not yet certain that this diminution will be sustained and it consequently would be most imprudent to take this improvement into consideration as a factor in calculations looking to the adoption of a permanent policy. I cannot, therefore, lay too great a stress on the grave possibility that the superior efforts being made by all the Allies in various other directions may be set at naught by inadequate provision for making good the loss of tonnage.

It is of paramount importance that adequate arrangements should be made for provisioning and transporting the

powerful army America is preparing, without reducing the tonnage now devoted to supplying the Allied forces already engaged, lest such reduction should weaken them in the same proportion that the American army will strengthen them.

BALFOUR

Another problem which could be settled only through achieving complete coöperation forced itself upon President Wilson. This was the question of embargo policy as it related to neutrals. Allied restrictions upon neutral trade had led to the most acute discontent and the most vigorous protests on the part of the United States, previous to our participation in the war. After entering the struggle against Germany, the American Government naturally changed its point of view and in its efforts to prevent goods from entering Germany rather improved upon the strictness of Allied measures. Relations with Holland and the Scandinavian countries became strained, and for a time it seemed possible that Sweden might be forced into the war.

On September 15 Mr. Balfour cabled House underlining the importance of establishing an Allied blockade council in London and the desirability of including American representatives who might give the authoritative views of the United States Government.¹ The Allies wished to define and coördinate their policy regarding embargoes upon imports to the border neutrals, and the delicacy of the questions involved made it impossible to decide them satisfactorily by telegraph.

Mr. Wilson pressed for more information, especially as to what was expected from the United States. The British replied that it was necessary first to organize machinery for the coördination of the export licensing system of all the nations at war with Germany. In the second place, it was necessary to take decisions on matters of high policy; to acquire infor-

¹ Balfour to House, September 15, 1917.

mation available in London as to the probable effects of a rigorous restriction of exports to neutrals; and generally to estimate the safety or danger of a policy of embargoes in connection with the prosecution of the war. There was, according to the message sent to Wilson, no British official in Washington capable of answering the searching questions that would arise under the head of general policy. The only solution of these difficulties appeared to be a direct conference in London with authorized representatives of the United States.

IV

According to the testimony of Sir William Wiseman, Colonel House worked steadily for the despatch of an American War Mission to Europe. In a later memorandum he wrote: 'House realized the confusion that had set in owing to the conflicting demands for material and supplies. These could not properly be coördinated in Washington so far away from the scene of operations, and, on the other hand, there was no one in Europe who could speak with any authority for the United States Government. House conceived the idea of an American Mission representing all the great Departments of the Government concerned in the conduct of the war; that this Mission should sit in council with the Allies in Paris, and lay out a plan of coördination, and that representatives of the Mission should remain in Europe to see that the work was properly carried out.'

The evidence is clear that, although House urged the Mission, he did not himself wish to accompany it. His organization of the Inquiry was just beginning and his interest in the final settlement was much greater than in administrative problems connected with the war. The informal help he gave to the Allies in the United States was presumably greater than he could render on a formal mission. He had seen a cable from Drummond which stated that Balfour 'thinks

that though visit from House would be most welcome and useful, the advantage for us lies in his continued presence in the United States, where his help is inestimable.' The Colonel suggested to Wilson that he put the Mission in charge of the heads of the two most important departments concerned. 'What would you think of McAdoo and Baker?'¹

On the other hand, the British and French leaders, aside from Mr. Balfour, made clear their conviction that the proposed Mission should be headed by Colonel House. The British War Cabinet notified Wiseman that they felt 'that in view of the forthcoming international conference it was of great importance that a man in the complete confidence of the President should visit Western Europe in order to obtain first-hand information in regard to the position of the Allies, and Colonel House seemed to them the only suitable person.'

Similar messages came direct from France, of which the following is typical. It was sent through Ambassador Jusserand: 'Please tell Colonel House that it is absolutely indispensable that he should come over, even for a week, on board a warship to avoid delay. He must see all the details of the situation before plans are definitely adopted.'

Mr. A. H. Frazier to Colonel House

PARIS, October 12, 1917

DEAR MR. HOUSE:

A report was brought to me a few days ago by a trustworthy person that M. Painlevé, the Prime Minister and Minister of War, had expressed the earnest hope that you might come to France in the near future. . . .

In the fourth year of the war, with every one rather weary of the whole thing, I seem to notice more signs of lack of harmony between the Allies than ever before. As we are the most disinterested nation engaged and as we have the con-

¹ House to Wilson, September 24, 1917.

fidence of all the Allies to a greater extent than any other country, I believe it is our logical rôle to unite the Allies in concerted action and to act as a general harmonizing influence. You are far better able to judge than I whether it is advisable for you to come to Europe at the present time, but I am sure that if you should decide to come now you would find a very warm welcome in France.

Respectfully yours

ARTHUR HUGH FRAZIER

Early in October President Wilson decided definitely that the proposed American Mission was necessary and that he would appoint Colonel House as its head. Sir William Wiseman tells the whole in a cable to the Foreign Office.

Sir William Wiseman to Sir Eric Drummond

NEW YORK, October 13, 1917

'Ever since Reading and I arrived in the States, we have been urging that the United States Government should send fully empowered representatives to London or Paris to deal at first-hand with the Allied Governments on the most urgent questions which require coöperation.

'Reading had an interview with the President on the subject soon after arrival, and has discussed it on several occasions with other members of the Administration, while I have very frequently discussed it with House, who has been in New York. In the meantime invitations and suggestions were received from the French and Italian Commissions and from various departments of our Government through the Embassy and Northcliffe, requesting the United States Government to send representatives on various matters, particularly supplies. . . .

'After several discussions between the President and House, and a meeting with Reading yesterday, the President said that his policy had been not to send American represen-

tatives to sit in the councils of the Allies because he felt the United States had not enough experience in the war, but on the information that we had given him he had changed his mind and come to the conclusion that it was necessary for the United States to be represented. . . . He informed House definitely that he would not send any one unless House would go, and asked him to proceed to Europe as soon as possible, and stay there as special American representative until the end of the war.

'House was very much opposed to going at all, because he has devoted all his energies to the subject which interests him most, namely: that of peace terms and the American case for the Peace Conference. . . . As foreshadowed in my previous cables he has tried to get the President to send either Baker or Lansing or both. Finally he agreed to accept the mission provided it was clearly understood that it was to be only for the purpose of attending the Interallied War Council, and that he would be able to return to the States immediately that was finished.'

WISEMAN

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *October 14, 1917*

I am authorized by French and British Cabinets to extend to you a most cordial invitation to take part in conversations and conferences on all questions of War and Peace. It is with the greatest gratification that they have learnt of the probability that this invitation may prove acceptable. I cannot speak officially of Italians and Russians, but you may safely assume that they share our interests. . . .

BALFOUR

Lord Reading to President Wilson

WASHINGTON, October 15, 1917

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I communicated the substance of our recent conversation to my Government and have to-day received a reply which I thought right to bring immediately to your notice.

I am now authorized by the French and British Governments to express their earnest hope that it will prove possible for your Government to send a representative to Europe to discuss important military and other questions of vital interest to co-belligerents. My Government has learnt with the utmost gratification that the invitation is likely to receive your favourable consideration.

The British Ambassador and I waited upon the Secretary of State this morning and conveyed this message to him. I understand that the French Ambassador, as the doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, will, without delay, present the formal invitation to the Secretary of State.

My Government is also extremely pleased to learn that it may hope for the invaluable presence of Colonel House as the representative of the United States.

I am, dear Mr. President,

Yours sincerely

READING

These papers are of some historical importance, since they furnish an answer to the criticism, later voiced in certain American circles, directed against the President's choice of a private citizen as head of the first American War Mission. The choice was not dictated by personal favoritism, but was made with the express endorsement of those who understood the situation in Europe and the problems which the American Mission would have to meet.

V

In discussing the character of American representation in Allied councils, House had asked Wiseman to draft for the President a memorandum outlining the desires of the Allies. There were three councils planned in which the United States ought to be represented. Sir William described them for Wilson and House as follows:

Wiseman Memorandum on Interallied Coöperation

NEW YORK, October 10, 1917

‘1. The Allied Council of War.’¹

‘This council is composed of representatives of the Allied Governments including naval and military representatives. This council has met before and will meet again whenever it is found necessary. The members of the council have supreme authority from their Governments to discuss the political aims of the Allies and the various military objectives which may help to realize these aims. The next meeting of this council is fixed for October 15th in Paris, and the most important matter which will be discussed at this meeting of the council is the military strategy to be employed by the Allies in the coming year, as, in modern warfare on as large a scale as the present war, it is necessary to determine the military strategy and lay out plans at least six months before they can come to fruition.

‘It is necessary, therefore, for the Allies to meet within the next few weeks and settle the military plans which they hope to carry out successfully next spring and summer. It was this council which was referred to in the letter which the President received. It would be possible, of course, for

¹ Sir William’s term ‘Council of War,’ to describe the general conferences of the Allies, should not be interpreted to mean that there was any real coöperative organization. It was precisely to meet the lack of such an organization that the Supreme War Council was created at Rapallo on November 7.

American representatives to attend this council and return to Washington when the council had concluded its session. The meeting now fixed for the 15th of October could not be postponed, but it would be quite possible for the meeting to adjourn to a future date in order to await the arrival of the American representatives.

‘2. The Interallied Council.

‘This council has not been formed, but the subject has been under discussion for some months and was first suggested by Mr. McAdoo. The object of this council would be to regulate supplies amongst the Allies. All requisitions made on behalf of any of the Allied Governments for money, munitions of war, food, shipping, coal, etc., would be passed upon by this council. The purpose would be to determine which requisition ought to have priority for the good of the common cause. It is suggested that the council should sit in London, but that the section dealing with finance should be located in Paris. This council would, of course, sit permanently until the end of the war.

‘3. The Joint Embargo or Blockade Council.

‘This council is not yet in existence, but it would be intended to provide effective machinery to carry out joint negotiations with neutral countries. The Exports Board at Washington is already acting informally with the British and French experts. The proposed council would ensure that British blockade measures should not clash with the policy of the American Government. The main business of the council would be to regulate supplies to neutral countries. This council would also sit permanently until the end of the war, but would have its headquarters in London.’

Wiseman was insistent, and Colonel House agreed with him, that the latter should make it plain that his visit was temporary and that he would not take direct charge of the work of coördinating the problems of finance, supply, ship-

ping, and embargo, which ought to be left in the care of the chiefs of the different war boards. His functions would be to represent the United States in the discussion of general policy in the main council and to arrange for a mechanism to decide technical questions. Wiseman wrote House definitely on this point, for at first Wilson seemed inclined to give House direct charge of all matters of coördination, and even to appoint a permanent American Commission with offices in Europe.

Sir William Wiseman to Colonel House

NEW YORK, October 10, 1917

DEAR MR. HOUSE:

. . . It must be quite clear that the three councils are entirely separate and do not in any way depend on one another. . . . The British Government, and I am quite sure the French and Italian agree with us, want you to attend council number one as the American representative. We also want American representatives on councils two and three, but I feel strongly that you ought not to be concerned with the operations of two and three. When we first suggested that you come to Europe to attend council number one we naturally thought of it as a temporary visit because, of course, this council would not sit for more than a week or so. . . .

I believe that if you . . . stay in Europe to the end of the war you cannot avoid dealing with all the problems that arise after they have reached a certain point of importance. It would seem to me better to face the situation from the outset and realize that your Government is taking a very important step [in planning a permanent American Mission to Europe]. In my opinion it is no less than shifting the centre of gravity of the war from Washington to London and Paris. . . .

From the point of view of carrying on the war most effectively I have no doubt that it would be best to send a permanent American Commission with offices in both London

and Paris. The Commission should have both naval and military representatives on all the three councils we have mentioned. This, in my opinion, is the only practicable and effective way of getting coöperation, but there remain the two difficulties to be overcome. In the first place, you must contemplate delegating an important part of the American Government to the Commission; and secondly, you must consider whether, if you go as head of the Commission, it would be possible for you to keep clear of the many vital problems which arise daily in the coöperation of the Allies, and devote sufficient time to those problems which are really the most important and which you have made your particular study.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely

W. WISEMAN

'Shifting the center of gravity of the war from Washington to London and Paris' was quite contrary to Wilson's determination to preserve American independence of action and policy. He decided, therefore, that there should be no permanent general American Commission in Europe, but that House should take with him representatives of the different supply boards and of the army and navy, to discuss with their 'opposites' in England and France the technique of co-ordination. On the other hand, as soon as the Allies learned of the decision to send House, they agreed to adjourn the meeting of the main council until his arrival in Europe.

President Wilson wrote to House, on October 8, that he was ready to take up the important matters we ought to confer about. Any time you name this week would be convenient, if you will come down, and I hope that it may be soon. With affectionate messages. . . .¹ Colonel House went to Washington the following day.

¹ Wilson to House, October 8, 1917.

'October 13, 1917: I have had three or four strenuous days. The White House motor met us. . . . The President was over at the offices, having just finished a Cabinet meeting.

'The President and I had no conversations at lunch or dinner, but after dinner we went into executive session until ten o'clock. We threshed out the question of my going abroad to represent the United States at the Allied War Council. . . . Wiseman has pointed out the danger of transferring the center of gravity from this country to Europe. He believes this is inevitable if I go abroad to remain as long as the President has in mind, and take with me a military, naval, and economic staff.

'This shook the President because he has no intention of loosening his hold on the situation. . . .

'Reading came at noon and remained for an hour. . . . Reading knew what the President intended to propose, and the President knew what Reading expected. He seemed pleased with the President's reception. I walked to the door with him and he asked me to meet him at five o'clock at the British Embassy for a further conference. . . .

'I have made it clear to both the British and French Governments that we wish to go in the simplest way possible. There must be no banquets, no receptions, but merely conferences to transact business as speedily as possible.

'At our conference Tuesday night, the President authorized me to see both Baker and Daniels and tell them of our plans and ask them to suggest suitable military and naval officers to accompany me. The President thought General Bliss, Chief of Staff, would be the proper man to represent the Army, in which Baker later readily acquiesced. Baker sent for Bliss while I was at the War Department, and the three of us had some talk upon the subject. When I visited the Navy Department, Daniels suggested Admiral Benson. . . .'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, October 16, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... I hope you will send Vance McCormick¹ over with me to look into the British methods regarding the embargo. It would please them to have him come, and it could not fail to be of value to us in working out this problem over here.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'October 19, 1917: The French Ambassador called unexpectedly to convey an invitation from the British, French, and Italian Governments to attend the War Council in Paris. He said I would be the only representative in the Council who was not a high official; that the Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries of all the Allied Nations would be present with the exception of Russia, which now has no stable government. . . .

'Jusserand promised to cable his Government requesting that no official or private entertainments be given, at least until the conference ends.

'October 21, 1917: The Russian Ambassador called at 9.30. He came to say that it was essential for the War Council which is to meet in Paris to recognize Russia's political as well as her war needs. He believes it would strengthen the present government and perhaps enable it to maintain itself. It is evident that the Russians feel they are in bad repute with the other Allies. . . .

'October 23, 1917: The President decided this morning that it would be well for me to take over representatives of the Army, Navy, Munitions, Food, Finances, Shipping, and Embargo. When he first asked me to go on this trip he wished me to go alone. I had some difficulty in per-

¹ Chairman of the War Trade Board.

suading him that I could not possibly confer with the heads of the Allied Governments on matters of policy, and in addition confer with the War, Navy, Treasury, Shipping, Munitions, Food, and Embargo Departments of those Governments.

'It took the better part of the day seeing the proposed staff and explaining the purposes of the trip. Admiral Benson has arranged for the transportation. We are to have two cruisers and a destroyer, and we are to be met at the danger zone with four other destroyers.

'*October 24, 1917: [Conversation with Wilson.]* He outlined a "letter of marque" for me to use with the Governments of Great Britain, France, and Italy. Neither of us knew how it should be addressed, whether to the sovereigns or prime ministers. It was decided to consult the State Department to-day, which I have done. Lansing thinks, since the invitation came to participate in the War Council through the French Ambassador, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, that the acceptance should go through the same channel. Therefore the President wrote a letter to the Secretary of State, asking him to inform the French Ambassador that he was pleased to accept the invitation of the Allied Governments to participate in the War Council and that he had commissioned me to represent him. He decided that I should also keep the letter he wrote last night addressed to the Prime Ministers, even though that was not the proper procedure. . . .'

VI

The American Government made plain its expectation that the Mission would be devoted entirely to business. Reading sent word to the Prime Minister: 'House desires no public functions. His visit must be regarded as exclusively devoted to affairs of state.'

'House is very insistent,' wrote Wiseman to the Foreign

Office, 'on not having any public banquets or lunches; at any rate, none which he has to attend personally. You know that he is not strong physically and has a perfect horror of public functions. I presume some of the other members of the Commission could make the few necessary speeches and appearances at lunches, but you should be very careful to keep House out of anything of that sort.

'May I remind you that the Americans hate cold houses, and it is important that the places should be steam-heated, as they do not think fires are enough. . . .'

On October 24, House received from the President what he called his 'letter of marque' for presentation to the Allied Governments, an interesting document since it gave him practically a power of attorney for Mr. Wilson. As it turned out, the credentials were never presented. House's position rested upon something far less tangible than letters patent and something far more effective: the confidence of the President of the United States, who by reason of his office was for the moment the most powerful individual in the world.

Official Credentials

WASHINGTON, October 24, 1917

GENTLEMEN:

I have taken the liberty of commissioning my friend, Mr. Edward M. House, the bearer of this letter, to represent me in the general conference presently to be held by the Governments associated in war with the Central Powers, and in any other conferences he may be invited and thinks it best to take part in for the purpose of contributing what he can to the clarification of common counsel, the concerting of the best possible plans of action, and the establishment of the most effective methods of coöperation. I bespeak for him your generous consideration.

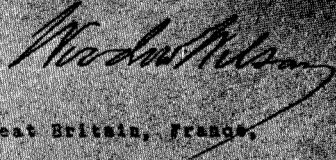
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Gentlemen:

I have taken the liberty of commissioning my friend, Mr. Edward M. House, the bearer of this letter, to represent me in the general conference presently to be held by the governments associated in war with the Central Powers, and in any other conferences he may be invited and think it best to take part in, for the purpose of contributing what he can to the clarification of issues, the concerting of the best possible plans of action, and the establishment of the most effective methods of cooperation. I bespeak for him your generous consideration.

With great respect, and the most earnest hope that our common efforts will lead to an early and decisive victory,

Sincerely Yours,



The Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France,
and Italy.

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With great respect, and the most earnest hope that our common efforts will lead to an early and decisive victory.

Sincerely yours

WOODROW WILSON

To the Prime Ministers of
Great Britain,
France and
Italy.

Wilson closed the covering letter to House: I hate to say good-bye. It is an immense comfort to me to have you at hand here for counsel and for friendship. But it is right that you should go. God bless you and keep you both. My thought will follow you all the weeks through, and I hope that it will be only weeks that will separate us.¹

The American War Mission left on October 28 for Halifax, there to embark upon the cruisers *Huntington* and *St. Louis*. It included representatives of all the important war-making agencies whose coöperation with those of the Allies had become essential. The Navy was represented by Rear Admiral W. S. Benson, chief of naval operations, an office corresponding to the British First Sea Lord, who by his position as well as his ability was inevitably designated as the man to discuss naval coördination with the British and French. The Army was represented by its highest official after the President, the Chief of Staff, General Tasker H. Bliss, later distinguished by his service as a member of the Supreme War Council and the American Peace Commission. Oscar T. Crosby, a graduate of West Point, electrical engineer and financier, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, was placed in charge of financial problems, aided by the eminent metropolitan lawyer, Paul Cravath, as legal adviser. Embargo and blockade problems were in charge of Vance C. McCormick, chairman of the War Trade Board. The Shipping Board was represented by Bainbridge Colby, and the

¹ Wilson to House, October 24, 1917.

Food Administration by Alonzo E. Taylor, who, as physiological chemist, close observer of famine conditions in Europe, and assistant to Herbert Hoover, was recognized as an outstanding authority. Thomas Nelson Perkins, legal adviser to the War Industries Board and a member of the Priority Board, represented the United States in the discussions on priority of shipments. It was a distinguished group.

'October 29, 1917: Our private car was ready for us,' wrote House, 'at the Pennsylvania Station last night by ten o'clock. Bainbridge Colby and Nelson Perkins were already on board. We were picked up at four o'clock in the morning by the special train from Washington which is to take our party to Halifax. . . .

'No one is allowed to leave the train en route to Halifax. X tells me that his wife has not the remotest idea where he is going. He merely told her that he was to be absent some time on a trip which it was necessary for the moment to keep secret. He did not know himself from what port he was to embark; in fact, no one [apart from Commander Carter] knows this excepting Admiral Benson and myself.

'November 3, 1917: [On board U.S. Cruiser *Huntington*.] The discussion on shipboard is almost entirely of submarines, their methods of working, the way they are to be met, and every possible detail of that subject. One is reminded of the time when people took ship in earlier days and did nothing but discuss pirates and the possibility of being attacked, robbed, and sunk by them.

'November 4, 1917: The decks have been cleared for action, the sitting-room in the rear of our private dining-room is now filled with gunners, crews of fourteen each, to operate the two stern guns on this deck. There is a constant going in and out, both during the day and night, and unless one is a good sleeper, as I am, it would be impossible to get much rest.'

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

LONDON, *November 6, 1917*

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

A thousand welcomes to our shores. I promise that you will not be smothered with hospitality! . . .

Sincerely yours

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR

The Mission disembarked safely at Plymouth on November 7, and was met by Admiral Jellicoe, British First Sea Lord, and Admiral Sims. A special train brought them to London, where on the platform of Paddington Station, at the stroke of midnight, Mr. Balfour and Ambassador Page greeted this first manifestation of America's determination to achieve coöperative endeavor in waging war.

CHAPTER VIII

CONFERENCES IN LONDON

General Smuts . . . is one of the few men . . . who do not seem tired. He is alert, energetic and forceful. . . .

Colonel House's Diary, November 13, 1917

I

THE House Mission arrived in Europe at a moment of extreme crisis in the fortunes of war. In November, 1917, the Allied cause was overshadowed by a double disaster: the collapse of the Italian army at Caporetto and the advent to power of the Bolsheviks in Russia. The situation was perhaps the gravest which the Allies had faced since 1914. No longer was it a question, as it had been in the spring, how best to defeat Germany; the problem was now, how to escape defeat.

On Wednesday, October 24, the Austrians, reënforced by carefully chosen German divisions, attacked Cadorna. Aided by the weather, which seemed designed for the German tactics of surprise, General Below broke the Italian defense at Caporetto and through the breach the Germans poured down on the plain of Friuli. The Second Italian Army, 'weary with the autumn offensive, weakened with discontent and treason, and shattered by the impact of the new tactics, had become a fugitive rabble. . . . Streaming back in wild disorder to the Friulian plain, it uncovered the Duke of Aosta's flank, and seemed to imprison him between the invaders and the Adriatic. The suspicion that treachery had in some degree contributed to the disaster was like to make the retreat more difficult, for such news spreads like a fever among troops and saps their resolution. The huge salient had broken at the apex, and every mile of retirement on the east meant a complex withdrawal on the north. Upon

forces wearied with a long campaign descended in a black accumulation every element of peril which had threatened Italy since she first drew the sword.'¹

Italy was saved from complete disaster partly through the valor and speed of the Third Army under the Duke of Aosta, partly because the enemy themselves, surprised by the immensity of their triumph, were unready to exploit it. By November 10 what was left of the Italian armies was behind the Piave, the sole defense for Venice and a poor defense at that. British and French divisions were crossing the Alps to stiffen the resistance. But the Italians had lost effectives which in a month of fighting reached the appalling total of about three quarters of a million men.

It was just as the House Mission reached England that the full magnitude of the Italian disaster was recognized. Two days later news came from Petrograd that the Kerensky Government had been overthrown, and that on November 8 Lenin had seized control. Within three weeks the Bolshevik dictatorship was firmly established and the Allied leaders were brought face to face with the imminent withdrawal of Russia from the war. For at the moment of seizing the reins of government, the Bolsheviks proposed an armistice to all the belligerents, and approved the notable manifesto marking the Soviet's first official step towards a 'just and democratic peace.' Such a peace was defined as 'an immediate peace without annexations (that is, without seizure of foreign territory, without the forcible annexation of foreign nationalities) and without indemnities.' On November 22, Trotsky advised the Allied Ambassadors in Petrograd of the Soviet's proposals. 'I have the honor to request you,' continued the new Commissary for Foreign Affairs, 'to consider the above-mentioned document as a formal proposal for an immediate armistice on all fronts and the immediate opening of peace negotiations.'

¹ John Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, iv, 53, 55.

For some months the Allied leaders had watched the disintegration of the military power of Russia and confessed that the chance of receiving effective assistance on the Eastern Front was slight. But the advent of the Bolsheviks, if it resulted in a separate peace, meant that Germany would be free to withdraw her troops in great masses from the East and resume the position of numerical superiority on the Western Front which she had not held since the first days of the war.

The crisis which followed Caporetto and the danger that the end of the war in the East would permit Germany to concentrate in overwhelming strength in the West, stimulated Lloyd George to the decision which he had been pondering for some time, and which he had discussed with Sir Henry Wilson in August. If the Allies had been unable to win when holding numerical superiority over the enemy, what chance had they now, unless they adopted new methods? Reliance upon the hammer-and-tongs strategy of the General Staff, he argued, had resulted in tremendous losses in man-force and no material gains. Allied strength had never been pooled, and each army had done what seemed right in its own eyes, with the result that one by one they had been defeated. The sole hope for the Allies lay in regarding the battlefields as a single front and in the establishment of unity of command. Lloyd George in a speech at Paris on November 12 publicly affirmed the failure of Allied military policy, as he reviewed the strategical errors of the past three years:

‘It is true we sent forces to Salonika to rescue Serbia, but, as usual, they were sent too late. . . . Half the men who fell in the futile attempt to break through on the Western Front in September of that year would have saved Serbia, would have saved the Balkans and completed the blockade of Germany . . . 1915 was the year of tragedy for Serbia; 1916

was the year of tragedy for Rumania . . . it was the Serbian story almost without a variation. . . . The Italian disaster may yet save the alliance. . . . National and professional traditions, prestige and susceptibilities all conspired to render nugatory our best resolutions. . . . The war has been prolonged by sectionalism; it will be shortened by solidarity.'

The same thought was expressed by the French Prime Minister, M. Painlevé, who insisted: 'One Front, One Army, One Nation — that is the programme of the future victory.'

There was nothing new in this insistence upon the need of unified command. Very early in the war the waste involved in the lack of central control became obvious; 'the probable action of the enemy was inadequately studied and not always foreseen; and when measures to meet it had eventually to be taken, hurried conferences, panic-decisions, incomplete preparations, and conflicting aims were the natural result.'¹ Various schemes were put forward, designed to achieve coördination of strategy, but actual unity seemed impossible because of the natural unwillingness of the British to accept a French generalissimo and the equally natural assumption by the French that no foreigner could command Allied armies fighting on French soil. It is true that early in 1917 Mr. Lloyd George agreed to a temporary and local arrangement which placed Sir Douglas Haig under the orders of General Nivelle, during the course of the spring offensive. But the failure of the operations that followed merely reaffirmed the opposition of the British military leaders to a single supreme command in the hands of the French. 'The main result,' wrote General Bliss, 'was mutual recrimination and the belief of British troops that they had been sacrificed in a hopeless attempt to secure

¹ Sir William Robertson, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, I, 192.

success for their ally.'¹ 'The necessity for coördinating the management of the war was fully appreciated,' wrote the British Chief of Staff, 'both by Ministers and soldiers long before so-called unity of command became a political catchword at the end of 1917. The necessity was admitted by everybody. The difficulty was to determine the method by which coördination could be effected.'²

Mr. Lloyd George recognized the impossibility of persuading British opinion at this time to accept a generalissimo. Such a suggestion would almost certainly have brought about the overthrow of his Government. On November 19 he told the House of Commons that the appointment of a generalissimo 'would produce real friction, and might really produce not merely friction between the Armies, but friction between the nations and the Government.'³ He was equally opposed to a system of coördination that might be secured by joint action of the British and French Chiefs of Staff, partly, perhaps, because of his lack of confidence in the 'traditionalism' of the professional soldiers.

According to the memoirs of M. Painlevé, then Premier of France, he had proposed to Mr. Lloyd George, three months previous, the creation of an interallied staff with General Foch as its chief.⁴ The proposal differed in principle from that made to Mr. Lloyd George by Sir Henry Wilson, since Painlevé's plan would have included the Chiefs of Staff and made Foch essentially generalissimo, while Wilson's looked to the organization of a War Council superior to the Chiefs of Staff and excluding them. On October 30, after the disaster of Caporetto, Mr. Lloyd George wrote to M. Painlevé a long letter outlining the British suggestion

¹ Tasker H. Bliss, 'The Unified Command,' in *Foreign Affairs*, December 15, 1922, p. 3.

² Robertson, *op. cit.*, 1, 213. ³ Hansard, November 19, 1917, p. 896.

⁴ Painlevé, *Comment j'ai nommé Foch et Pétain*, 240 ff.

for 'a sort of interallied staff,' which should be political in its composition although to it would be attached military and, if possible, naval and economic experts.¹ Mr. Lloyd George's letter and his plan for a war council were carefully studied by the French experts, who finally accepted its principle and drafted thereupon a definite constitution for the new organization. On November 5, the British and French Prime Ministers left for Italy, where at Rapallo, on the Italian Riviera, they were awaited by the Italian Premier, Orlando, and his Foreign Secretary, Sonnino. After two days of discussion the plan for this interallied council was approved, and the new organization called the Supreme War Council (*Conseil Supérieure de Guerre*).

No one could criticize the effort to coördinate Allied military policy. Whether the Supreme War Council would succeed in achieving unity of military control was another question. The functions of the new organization were not clearly defined.² It was essentially a political body composed of 'the Prime Minister and a member of the Government of each of the great Powers whose armies are fighting on that [the Western] Front.' It was not to act as a commander-in-chief, 'but as an agency for the adoption and maintenance of a general policy for the Allies in the prosecution of the war, consistent with the total resources available and the most

¹ The text of this letter, translated into French for the benefit of the French War Council, is printed in Mermeix, *Le commandement unique: Foch et les armées d'occident*, 164-68. M. Painlevé ascribes to himself credit for originating the Supreme War Council idea and he insists that Mr. Lloyd George had agreed to his proposals a fortnight before Caporetto. (*Comment j'ai nommé Foch et Pétain*, 256). He apparently failed to perceive that Lloyd George could not possibly at that time accept an interallied staff headed by Foch, and that there was the same difference between the French and British ideas then as later, regarding the inclusion or the exclusion of the Chiefs of Staff. The text of Lloyd George's letter of October 30 makes this clear; obviously in this letter he is not accepting Painlevé's proposals but himself setting forth a new plan.

² The text of the Rapallo agreement is printed in the appendix to this chapter.

effective distribution of those resources among the various theaters of operations.’¹

It may have been sound policy to give the new council a political character, and it was essential to find a compromise between French insistence upon a single military command and the British objection to putting their troops under foreign control. But the nature of the compromise and the vagueness in the definition of the functions of the Supreme War Council resulted in misunderstanding and criticism. Upon Mr. Lloyd George fell the burden of advocacy of the new venture, for the French Ministry was overthrown on November 13. M. Painlevé resigned, and three days later the historic Clemenceau Ministry was formed.²

In the mean time Mr. Lloyd George hurried back to England to face the parliamentary crisis which followed his criticism of the conduct of the war by the professional soldiers and which threatened to throw him out of office. His task of winning support for the new interallied organization was not facilitated by the criticism of the British Chief of Staff and that of the British Army Council, which raised strong objections to the plan of excluding the Chiefs of Staff from the Supreme War Council.³ ‘Strange to say,’ wrote General Bliss, ‘in the light of recent experience — the thing which carried most weight with the public was the allegation that a deliberate attempt was being made to surrender national for interallied control. This is of no consequence now except as showing how little ripe was either the civilian or military sentiment for a unified command in the field.’⁴

¹ Bliss, ‘The Unified Command,’ in *Foreign Affairs*, December 15, 1922, p. 6.

² Painlevé’s fall was not the result of his advocacy of the Supreme War Council, which was approved by a vote of 250–192. His ministry was overthrown by a hostile vote, the same day, in the matter of the Malvy-Caillaux prosecutions.

³ Robertson, *op.cit.*, 1, 216.

⁴ Bliss, *op.cit.*, 7.

II

The House Mission was thus greeted upon its arrival in Europe by a situation in which the technical problems of coördination between the United States and the Allies were thrust into the background by the larger question of inter-allied unity as a whole. That question must be settled or the combination of disasters that threatened the Allies might prove fatal. The defection of Russia and the rout of Italian armies clouded the entire landscape. The French Government was in dissolution. Whether Mr. Lloyd George himself could maintain his position and his policy of unification seemed doubtful.

It was natural that the British Prime Minister should look for the support of the American Mission, which occupied in the public mind a position of peculiar importance that was indicated by numerous articles in the newspapers, emphasizing the resources of the United States. 'Colonel House and his distinguished colleagues have arrived at the critical moment,' said the *London Spectator* on November 17. 'Their influence will be invaluable in the somewhat perturbed councils of the Allies.' Mr. Grasty cabled to the *New York Times*, commenting upon the turn of fate that had made of House 'the bearer of encouragement and reassurance to all civilized Europe. . . . Never in history has any foreigner come to Europe and found greater acceptance or wielded more power. Behind this super-Ambassador, whose authority and activities are unique, stands the President . . . and behind the President stands the country whose measureless resources and unshakable will are counted a sure shield against the successful sweep of Prussianism.'¹

Returning to London on November 13, Mr. Lloyd George invited Colonel House to dinner with him alone the same evening. House knew that Wilson desired to assist any

¹ *New York Times*, November 18, 1917.

scheme that promised real unity of Allied policy. Whether or not he would agree to actual participation in the Supreme War Council by United States representatives was less certain, although House regarded it as advisable so far as the military end of the Council was concerned.

'November 13, 1917: George wished to explain his attitude regarding the Supreme War Council,' wrote House in his diary, 'and to convince me that the United States should sit in. . . . I gave my reasons for thinking it would not be wise for us to have a representative who at all times would sit in with the Allied Prime Ministers and Ministers for Foreign Affairs. I promised to recommend that General Bliss, or some other military personage, should sit with the military branch of it. George was satisfied with this, but he wished me to consent to his making a statement in the House of Commons to-morrow that we approved the idea and would send a representative. I declined emphatically to permit this until it had been submitted to Washington.

'He said that Pétain and Cadorna thoroughly approve the plan. He also said that Pétain does not approve of future offensives on the Western Front. If George has his way, and if he represents Pétain correctly, there will be no further offensives in France, but they will wait until the United States can throw her strength on the Allied side or until Russia can recover sufficiently to make a drive on the Eastern Front. I suggested if we definitely decided upon that policy, it might be well to make a public statement. The Germans would not receive with enthusiasm the thought that the Allies on the Western Front proposed sitting still and holding the line until the end of 1918 or the beginning of 1919, when the United States could bring her full power against them. George concurred in this view, but we left it for further discussion.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *November 13, 1917*

The Prime Minister arrived to-day. I dined with him alone to-night to have a frank conference.

The Italian situation is desperate. Venice will fall.¹ French and British troops are being rushed to the front and they should be ready for action by November twentieth.

France, England, and Italy have agreed to form a Supreme War Council and believe that it is imperative that we should be represented in it because of the moral effect that it will have here. I am cabling you through the Department a copy of the agreement as signed at Rapallo.

I would advise not having a representative on the civil end as designated in Article One, but would strongly urge having General Bliss on the military end as described in Article Five. It is important that an immediate decision be made as to this so that it can be announced that America is in full coördination with England, France, and Italy.

It is necessary to do everything possible at this time to encourage our friends here and in France. . . .

It is not probable that another offensive will be made on the French front until the spring, or until the Americans are strong enough to give material assistance, or the Russians recover sufficiently to resume on the East. It looks like a waiting game. I will advise of this further in a later dispatch.

EDWARD HOUSE

The cable sent by Wilson in reply was vigorous and offered full support for the Supreme War Council. The cipher cables from the President to House were, in accordance with the invariable rule of the State Department, put into a para-

¹ House's pessimism was not justified by the event, for Venice was saved.

phrase when deciphered. It is this paraphrase and not the original text of the cable that is published. The paraphrased text of the cable to House is as follows:

Paraphrase of Wilson's Cable to House

WASHINGTON, November 16, 1917

Please take the position that we not only approve a continuance of the plan for a war council but insist on it. We can no more take part in the war successfully without such a council than we can lend money without the board Crosby went over to join. The War Council, I assume, will eventually take the place of such conferences as you went over to take part in, and I hope that you will consider remaining to take part in, at any rate, the first deliberations and help in the formulating of plans. Baker and I are agreed that Bliss should be our military member. . . .

Colonel House did not hand this text to Mr. Lloyd George for use in the House of Commons debate, since he feared that President Wilson might appear to be advocating a particular plan of achieving Allied unity. In view of the difference of opinion that had been raised by the Rapallo Agreement and the opposition of influential members of the House of Commons, including Mr. Asquith, there was danger of the American President's being involved in an issue of British domestic politics. Hence House rephrased the cable from Wilson so as to avoid committing the President to any specific plan, but in such a way as to emphasize his insistence upon the principle of Allied unity.

Published Statement of American War Mission

'Colonel House . . . has received a cable from the President stating emphatically that the Government of the United States considers that unity of plan and control between all

the Allies and the United States is essential in order to achieve a just and permanent peace. The President emphasizes the fact that this unity must be accomplished if the great resources of the United States are to be used to the best advantage, and he requests Colonel House to confer with the heads of the Allied Governments with a view to achieving the closest possible coöperation. President Wilson has asked Colonel House to attend the first meeting of the Supreme War Council with General Bliss . . . as the Military Adviser. It is hoped that the meeting will take place in Paris before the end of this month.' ¹

November 17, 1917: Lloyd George has been after me several times to know our decision as to the Supreme War Council. If favorable, he desires to announce it in the House of Commons on Monday.

November 18, 1917: I was careful in the statement not to approve specifically the Lloyd George plan, but I simply approved the general idea of unity of action and unity of control of resources. Before I consented to give out the statement, I had Reading telephone George and obtain a definite promise from him that there should be a meeting of the Supreme War Council held immediately after the general Interallied Conference in Paris. I did this to meet the President's insistence that I should attend at least one meeting. Lloyd George readily promised.

November 21, 1917: Last night I read to Lloyd George and Reading the cable which the President actually sent. Lloyd George asked why I had not published it as the President sent it rather than diluting it as I did. My reply was that I considered it too strong, and while I desired to help I did not want to overdo it, which I thought the message in its entirety would do.'

The effect of the President's message was all that the sup-

¹ *The Times*, November 19, 1917.

porters of the Rapallo Agreement could hope for. *The Times* devoted a leading article to the promise of American participation, and described Wilson's endorsement as 'incomparably the most important development of the Allied Council scheme. . . . It is as guarded in tone as it is comprehensive in scope. . . . It does emphasize unmistakably the central principle for which Mr. Lloyd George is standing at this moment—that "unity of plan and control" which received partial recognition at Rapallo.'

The debate in the House of Commons upon Lloyd George's demand for greater unity of control, as expressed in his Paris speech and in the creation of the Supreme War Council, took place on Monday, November 19. Its importance and the relation of it to Wilson's cabled message were mirrored in the Press.

'It is a long time,' said *The Times*, 'since so much interest has been shown in advance in a parliamentary debate as in that which takes place in the House of Commons to-day on the creation of an Allied War Council and the Prime Minister's Paris speech. . . . The project of a Vote of Censure, which was open to the Opposition, was apparently rejected as unwise. Nevertheless, the Government have sent out an urgent three-line "whip" to their supporters, and an unusually large attendance of members, judged by war-time standards, is expected. . . .'

'To-night's debate on the Interallied War Council,' said the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 'finds an important prelude in the action of the American Government. President Wilson avows his strong conviction that "unity of plan and control" must link the United States with all the other Allies, and he has accordingly commissioned Colonel House to attend the first meeting of the new Council along with the American Chief of Staff. America, in short, claims her place in the concentration of method and force which some critics of the British

Government are still denouncing as impossible and improper. This striking step on the part of Washington will perhaps bring home to the objectors the utter insularity of the arguments they present, not to speak of the prejudices they try to rouse in reënforcement. They can scarcely fail to note that the opinion of our Allies is overwhelmingly in favour of that real and effective solidarity which Mr. Lloyd George demanded in his Paris speech. . . .'

The Prime Minister passed triumphantly through the parliamentary crisis. There was mild criticism on the part of the Opposition, but there was no serious attempt in the House of Commons to make an issue of the policy of coördination as expressed in the Rapallo Agreement, nor to force a division.

For a moment during the session of the following day, the matter seemed on the point of being reopened, as the result of a rumor that Colonel House had exaggerated Wilson's endorsement of the Lloyd George plan.

Statement issued through Reuter Agency, November 19, 1917

WASHINGTON, Monday

'President Wilson denies that he sent a cablegram to Colonel House stating that the United States considers that a united plan and control between the Allies and the United States is essential to a lasting peace. This denial was issued through Mr. Joseph Tumulty, the President's private Secretary.'

Strictly speaking the denial was correct, for in his cable to House President Wilson had said nothing about 'a lasting peace.' These words, however, were implied in the cable and their introduction in House's paraphrase did not affect the main sense of the message, which was that Wilson 'insisted' upon the War Council. The original authorization was in

fact stronger than House's paraphrase. Whether the statement was issued through misapprehension of the facts by Mr. Tumulty has never been made clear. Inasmuch as the President and Colonel House exchanged their cables in a special code known only to themselves, it is possible that because of pressure of time and business Mr. Tumulty was not informed of Wilson's cable of endorsement.

'November 20, 1917: This has been one of the most disturbing days,' wrote House, 'I have had since I have been here. For some unaccountable reason, a wireless was published in the papers this morning as coming from Washington, denying some parts of the statement I gave out Sunday. . . .

'It was disturbing to have such an incident occur when so much of real importance was to be done.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

LONDON, November 20, 1917

A very difficult and dangerous situation has been rife here since the Prime Minister made his Paris speech announcing the formation of a Supreme War Council. . . . The announcement along with his implied criticism of the military authorities precipitated a political crisis that threatened to overturn his Ministry.

In the very critical condition of affairs elsewhere in the Allied States this might have proved the gravest disaster of the war. The Prime Minister was constantly urging me to say something to help the situation. This I refused to do until I had heard from you. The statement I gave out purposely refrained from approving the Prime Minister's plan, but merely stated the necessity for military unity and your instructions for Bliss and me to attend its first meeting following the Paris Interallied Conference.

The situation had become completely composed, but Tumulty's denial has started everything afresh, and the Government is to be questioned in the House of Commons this afternoon.

I am refraining from and am asking the Press to refrain from any further statements. If this is done the incident will be closed.

EDWARD HOUSE

On Tuesday afternoon the question was raised in the House of Commons as to whether the statement of Wilson's endorsement of the War Council could be regarded as authoritative, in view of the denial from Washington. But since no confirmation of the denial came, and as Colonel House had read to Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Reading the original Wilson cable, Mr. Bonar Law was able to say for the Government that they had the official guarantee of American approval. 'I had every newspaper and Government official on my back yesterday, because of it,' House wrote to Wilson on Wednesday. 'However, the incident is now happily closed.'

III

During the course of this parliamentary crisis, which ended in the ratification of Lloyd George's Rapallo policy, the members of the American Mission, conscious of the immensity of the task of coördination and anxious to learn at first hand the essence of the problems for which they must find a solution, were brought into touch with the corresponding members of the British war boards.¹ They took up with them the questions of man-power, tonnage, finance, food, blockade, war industries.

¹ It goes without saying that this chapter should not be regarded as attempting to give a comprehensive survey of the work of the Mission. The complete story can be found in the official but as yet unpublished records.

Through the courtesy of the Duke of Roxburghe the British Government made Colonel House their guest at Chesterfield House, with all its Gainsboroughs and Sir Joshuas, its old china and books, even its servants with cockades. The other members of the Mission were installed at Claridge's. In the library of Chesterfield House, built for Lord Chesterfield of the *Letters* by Izaak Ware, Colonel House carried on his interviews with journalists, standing in front of the chimney-piece with its Latin motto. 'It is one of the most beautiful rooms in London,' wrote the representative of the *Manchester Guardian* after an early conference with the head of the Mission, 'with a coved ceiling round which are panels of the great dames of the eighteenth century painted by famous hands. Around Colonel House, listening to the consolidated silence of his observations, was the world in the person of the news gatherers of America, England, and her dominions. It added new history to Chesterfield House.'

It was here for the most part that Colonel House devoted himself to political conferences with the British leaders. 'He sought,' wrote Wiseman, 'to find out the views of various Allied statesmen so that he might determine with whom he could most usefully coöperate.' The nature of his conferences is indicated in the following extracts from his journal.

'November 8, 1917: Lunch with Mr. Balfour. The only other guest was Sir Eric Drummond. . . . We made a survey of the entire field during and after luncheon. We spoke with the utmost candor. Mr. Balfour expressed great pleasure at our coming at this time and declared it meant much, not alone to Great Britain but to the Entente cause, on account of the *débâcle* in both Russia and Italy.

'He has made me feel that I have the confidence of his Government as much as I have of our own. . . .

'November 9, 1917: Drummond showed me a confidential despatch which Mr. Balfour has been sending British agents



DRAWING-ROOM, CHESTERFIELD HOUSE



MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE MISSION, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, 1917

YRASHU LITBACRBM

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throughout the Empire. It had reference to the adjustment of differences, should any arise, between American and British commercial interests. . . . He showed me the latest despatches received concerning the Italian and Russian situations.

'Sir George McDonough, Director of Military Intelligence, was an interesting caller. He is a canny Scot, and I did not get much from him. I learned afterward that it was because he feared Lloyd George might possibly 'scrub his head' if he told things which George desired to tell himself.

'Lord Milner¹ followed McDonough. We found ourselves in agreement upon nearly all the subjects discussed. . . .

'Milner is able enough and judicious enough to see where this war is leading Europe, and he has a keen desire to bring it to an end in some way that will not make the sacrifices futile.

'November 10, 1917: . . . Bainbridge Colby followed to discuss the advisability of commandeering all neutral shipping in the world. My first thought is that Great Britain and the United States should not set a precedent that might some day return to haunt us, nor be parties to any action akin to what Germany has done in the violation of Belgium.

'Before Colby left, Lord Robert Cecil was announced. Much to my surprise, Cecil agreed with Colby, the argument of both being that it would work to the advantage of the neutrals. This may be true, nevertheless it is a pretext upon which such high-handed action by powerful nations is always done. Lord Robert and I conferred after Colby left, taking up the embargo question, the shipping question, and many other subjects in which our countries have a common interest.

'Lunched with Bonar Law at 11 Downing Street. There was no one present other than ourselves, excepting his daugh-

¹ Member of War Cabinet (Minister without Portfolio), 1916-18; Secretary of State for War, 1918-19; the greatest of British administrators of the period.

ter. Law is depressed and broken. Two of his sons have been killed and he cannot restrain his emotion in speaking of them. . . . The lunch was very simple. . . . He is practicing economy of food, which public men preach but seldom follow. After lunch we discussed the possibility of terminating the war and the war's aftermath. I told him of the President's purpose to address Congress on the subject of economic freedom, and to threaten Germany with an economic war in the event she refused to be a party to a just and lasting peace. He expressed unqualified approval. . . .

'Mr. Balfour and Lady Essex dined with us. After dinner Mr. Balfour and I retired to the library and conferred for more than an hour. At his request, I gave a detailed view of the situation at Washington. . . .

'We talked of the proposed Supreme War Council. Mr. Balfour followed up the argument Drummond made yesterday upon the same subject, concerning the advisability of the United States having representation in it. After analyzing the question for some time, he thought it would not be necessary for the United States to be constantly represented on the civil end, but that we should keep a permanent military representative on it. I suggested General Bliss as a suitable member. . . .

'November 11, 1917: Walked with Wiseman to Buckingham Palace this morning at eleven o'clock. . . . There was a large crowd at the gates watching the changing of the guards. I was with the King for nearly an hour. . . . He was exceedingly cordial. We talked of the naval situation, the army, munitions, airplanes, and the question of my sitting in the new Supreme War Council.

'November 12, 1917: [Sir William] Robertson is a plain, forceful soldier . . . without subterfuge. I was prepared to hear him criticize the proposed Supreme War Council, of which he is not to be a member. General Wilson, who is to be the military member, is not *en rapport* with either Robertson

or Haig. . . . He said the Turks had become rather assertive and it was necessary to give them 'a dressing down.' When that was done, nothing further at the moment was contemplated. I found him against dividing the Allied forces into the several expeditions this, that, or the other one thought advisable. He wishes to concentrate on the Western Front, and he believes in the British having control of their own forces without regard to France, for they might have to stand alone against the enemy. . . .

'Loulie and I lunched with the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace. Prince Albert and the Princess Mary were the only others present. We sat at a small table in a corner room overlooking Green Park and the Mall. It was as informal and as friendly as if it had been a family party. The lunch itself was simple. No wine was served. . . .

'I returned to Chesterfield House in order to receive Lord Curzon.

'Viscount Grey of Fallodon did me the honor of coming down from Northumberland to see me. He dined with us tonight. After dinner we had a long and interesting conference. . . .

'We reviewed the war from its beginning. He recalled our many conversations, and he was pleased when I brought to his mind what he had said about the sanctity of treaties, almost a year in advance of Germany's violation of Belgium. The occasion of his remarks was the Panama tolls controversy, a controversy which the President settled to the lasting glory of honest diplomacy.'

IV

'*November 13, 1917:* General Smuts was my first afternoon caller. Nearly every one I have met has asked me to be certain to see Smuts. He has grown to be the lion of the hour. . . . My expectations were unusually high; it was not alone what I had heard of him, but I have been impressed by his

speeches and statements which I have read from time to time. He has just returned from Italy. He spoke enthusiastically of the plan for the new Supreme War Council. This was valuable, for I have confidence in his opinion. He is one of the few men I have met in the Government who do not seem tired. He is alert, energetic, and forceful. . . .

'The French Ambassador, M. Paul Cambon, came next. We had a long and interesting conversation.

'M. Cambon began by saying that in his opinion it would be advisable for the four principal Powers, the United States, France, Great Britain, and Italy, to hold a preliminary meeting in Paris before the general conference, this meeting to be devoted exclusively to a discussion of the military plans of the Allies. The conference as originally planned was to have been merely a conversation, but after the idea became known to the Press the smaller nations asked to be represented and out of politeness their request was granted. M. Cambon feared that at the conference these smaller Powers would utilize the occasion to voice their political aspirations and thus obscure the main object of the conference, which was the successful prosecution of the war. No Russian delegate would probably be sent, but it was known to the Allies that Russia desired from the Allies a new declaration of the objects of the war; this M. Cambon thought quite unnecessary, as the object of the war was to beat Germany; all other objects could be discussed after that. . . .

'M. Cambon then reviewed conditions in Great Britain, France, and Italy:

'Great Britain could be relied upon to continue the war; she had suffered less than France, had not been invaded, and was ready to make greater sacrifices. . . .

'The prospect of losing Venice (he thought it would be lost) would unite the nation [Italy] as nothing else could and consequently might turn out a blessing in disguise; the col-

lapse of the army was due to Italian Socialist propaganda acting in collusion with German agents.

'In France there were elements in favor of a peace on any terms; these elements were composed principally of the minority group of the Socialist Party and of a small number of financiers whose operations were hampered by the continuation of the war; the bulk of the nation, however, especially the army and the peasants, would refuse to return to the *status quo* before war after losing two million men, not to speak of the destruction of property in the invaded territory. Any Government, M. Cambon said, that attempted to negotiate a peace of this kind could not stand for twenty-four hours.

'In view of the fact that the French and British were sending eight divisions to Italy, no further progress on the Western Front could now be expected; he saw nothing else but for the populations of the Allied nations to wait patiently until the spring when the arrival of sufficient American troops would enable a victorious offensive to be made, which he thought would be successful before the autumn, as he had reason to believe that the Germans were running short not so much of foodstuffs but of raw material for the manufacture of munitions and artillery.¹ He terminated his remarks by saying that the nation which first asked for an armistice would be the defeated one; it had always been so in history.

'Lord Bryce came next. He desired to get my opinion regarding a plan which he and his colleagues have submitted to the British Government suggesting the appointment of a commission to formulate plans for machinery to ensure peace after the war. I was sorry to tell him that the President felt it was best not to have a cut-and-dried agreement, but was in favor of a flexible understanding so that those concerned could get together and formulate plans to meet any emer-

¹ M. Cambon seems to have been the one responsible official willing to prophesy Allied victory in 1918.

gency. He admitted there was much to be said in favor of this. I asked him to submit his views in writing and I promised to discuss it with the President when I returned to Washington.

'November 14, 1917: . . . Lord French followed. He was exceedingly cordial and invited me to ask him any questions I desired. What I wished to know was his opinion of the proposed Supreme War Council. He was enthusiastic in his support of it and hoped I would recommend a United States representative for it.

'He spoke well of General Wilson and of the move to make him a member of the Supreme War Council. . . .

'My old friend, Sir William Tyrrell, was another caller. The British Government have given Tyrrell a task somewhat similar to the one I have undertaken for the United States; i.e., gathering data and preparing a case for the peace conference. Tyrrell has not lost his perspective. He has the same logical outlook as before the war. I can understand how deeply such a man regrets the madness of the hour and his impotence to stop it. . . .

'It is needless to go into the exchange of our views as to what the peace conference should do, because we were entirely of one mind. He looks upon it as I do — as a good opportunity which may be lost because of the grasping, selfish interests ever ready to use such occasions for their own and their country's aggrandizement. . . .

'I found Lansdowne¹ of a peculiarly pacific turn of mind. He condemned . . . the folly and madness of some of the British leaders. He thought it was time for the British to realize that in the settlement they need not expect to get what he termed 'twenty shillings to the pound.' He believes that definite war aims should be set out — aims that are moderate

¹ Marquess of Lansdowne, formerly British Foreign Secretary, who during the Balfour Ministry had negotiated the entente with France in 1904.

and that will appeal to moderate minds in all countries. He specifically set forth five or six things he thought necessary to be done and, strangely enough, Conservative that he is, we scarcely disagreed at all. [He advocated] a more liberal sea policy, bordering on the plan for the freedom of the seas, which indeed he was good enough to say he had obtained from me during my last visit here. He thought it would be necessary to give Germany an assurance as to our future economic policy which would not in any way restrict German trade. He was moderate in all his ideas. . . .

'Lansdowne is a great gentleman . . . not merely in intellect and character, nor from having for a background an ancient and distinguished lineage, but in manner and in that intangible and indefinable air which comes as a gift from the Gods.

'*November 16, 1917:* We dined with the Lord Chief Justice and Lady Reading. The other guests were the Prime Minister and Mrs. George, Sir William and Lady Wiseman. After the ladies left the table, the Prime Minister, Reading, Sir William, and I discussed the general situation. I desired to find what was in Lloyd George's mind regarding peace terms. . . . I find it will be useless to try to get either the French or British to designate terms. Great Britain cannot meet the new Russian terms of 'no indemnities and no aggression' and neither can France. Great Britain at once would come in sharp conflict with her colonies and they might cease fighting, and France would have to relinquish her dream of Alsace and Lorraine. . . .

'I determined not to push him further for a statement of peace terms, but concluded to wait until I return to Washington and advise the President to do it. We are not embarrassed by any desire for territory or commercial gain, therefore we are in a better position to outline peace terms than any of the other belligerents.

'*November 18, 1917:* The First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir

Eric Geddes, conferred with me for an hour and a half. He has a fresh and vigorous personality. We went over naval matters in detail. . . . I was interested in what he had to say about the submarine situation. It happens they bagged four yesterday, perhaps two more. It is the biggest haul they have had in any one day since the war began. He explained how they were overcoming the menace; how many they had caught to date; how many submarines the Germans had; how many were in northern waters and how many in southern, and how many were in commission at one time.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

LONDON, November 18, 1917

The following is short résumé of general political condition:

Russia: Kerensky and other more responsible officials urge Allies to make an offer of peace, basis no annexations or indemnities. They believe Germany would not accept and this would help to solidify Russia. They do not believe Germany would make separate peace with Russia owing to danger of socialistic infection, but they believe Germany will take Petrograd and near provinces in the spring. They claim this would suit German purposes better because demobilization of Russian army would produce anarchy and total stoppage of supplies.

The situation in Rumania is serious and they may be compelled to make a separate peace because of inability to get food from Russia.

The Italian situation at the present moment is better. If the line holds until the 26th there is a good chance that it may hold permanently. To-morrow will be rather an anxious day here, but I think nothing serious will happen.¹

EDWARD HOUSE

¹ Referring to the parliamentary crisis.

'November 19, 1917: . . . The Greek Prime Minister, Venizelos, followed. He came with the Greek Minister and his Military Attaché, Colonel Phrantzès. I had arranged for Crosby and Cravath to come to talk of the economic situation with Venizelos. When they came in I had gotten Venizelos to talking of the military situation and he was explaining what he thought the Allies should do. Crosby asked whether he had any assurance that the Allies would continue to hold Saloniki, stating that he had reasons for asking the question. . . . Venizelos replied that if the Allies did not hold Saloniki he might as well resign as Prime Minister, send for Constantine, and let the Germans take Greece. . . .

'Then came Brailsford, who was followed by Spender, of the *Westminster Gazette*, who in turn was succeeded by Hirst, of the *Economist*, and Lord Loreburn. It was rather an afternoon with the Liberals. I explained the President's position and mind upon pending questions. It is always a pleasure to confer with Loreburn, for our minds run nearly parallel. . . .

'November 20, 1917: The Prime Minister and Lord Chief Justice took dinner with us. We had a long and intimate talk afterward. . . . I pinned George down to British war aims. What Great Britain desires are the African colonies, both East and West; an independent Arabia, under the suzerainty of Great Britain; Palestine to be given to the Zionists under British or, if desired by us, under American control; an independent Armenia and the internationalization of the Straits. . . .

'I told George and Reading that in my opinion it was not altogether certain that Great Britain would not have done better without allies. If she had fought Germany alone, she would have accomplished just what she has now accomplished; that is, she would have held the seas, destroyed German commerce, and taken all the German colonies. Since it would have been impossible to have fought on land, Germany would have been compelled to have faced a battle at sea and

her fleet, in all probability, would have been destroyed. The cost to Great Britain of such a war would not have been one tenth the cost of the present war in which she has had to create and maintain an enormous army, and has had to finance her allies. She could not have reached conclusions with Germany, nor could Germany have reached conclusions with her, but she would have come out of it much the better of the two. However, if this had happened, the sympathy of the world might have been with Germany rather than with Great Britain because of the power Great Britain would have exercised upon the seas — a power which each nation might have thought would some day be directed against itself.

'November 21, 1917: The most interesting happening of my day was a visit to the Admiralty. Jellicoe showed me his war maps, charts, etc. . . . He explained the strategy of the war on the seas. He showed me where the new mine fields are being placed across the Straits of Dover. He also had a chart showing the convoy system. Each flotilla is noted and its exact position known each day. Jellicoe spoke highly of Benson, for whom I have a warm regard. It is Benson who has insisted upon their making a further attempt to close the Straits of Dover. . . .

'Jellicoe endeavored to explain, without my questioning him, the matters which have been uppermost in American minds as to the prosecution of a more vigorous war. He convinced me that it was impossible to attack the submarine bases at present. . . .¹

'I went from the Admiralty to No. 10 Downing Street, where the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, and I conferred for an hour and a half. At the Cabinet meeting to-day they discussed two questions which they could not decide because they desired our opinion first. One was regarding Rumania

¹ See Sims, 'How We Nearly Lost the War,' *World's Work*, March, 1927.

and Russia. There is a strong element in the Cabinet who wish to recognize Kaledin, leader of the Cossacks in Southern Russia, by advising the Rumanians to coöperate with him. I thought at most they could not go further than to advise Rumania to coöperate with whatever Allied fighting forces were nearest them. I strongly urged not mentioning names. . . .

‘The other question which had arisen in the Cabinet, and which *all* of them seemed to favor, was that Great Britain should publicly declare that East Africa must never again be under German rule. The idea here was that if such a statement was made, the natives would join the British against Germany. They now fear Germany may sometime govern them again. It is said that the Germans mistreated the natives and they hate them, but they are afraid to take any action. The Cabinet thought that by making this statement, and by sending an expeditionary force of two divisions, they would settle the war in East Africa during the winter.

‘I also strongly advised against making this statement. I thought the moment inopportune and Great Britain would be placed in a false light. They asked if it would embarrass us in the United States. I thought it would. I counseled doing nothing at present, but to leave the matter open for future discussion. The military importance of it was not sufficient, I thought, to overcome the moral question involved. . . .

‘We then went into the question of war aims. Maps were brought and Mr. Balfour started in with his ideas of territorial division. . . . I thought what we agreed upon to-day might be utterly impossible to-morrow, and it seemed worse than useless to discuss territorial aims at this time. . . .

‘What I thought was necessary and pertinent at this time was the announcement of general war aims and the formation of an international association for the prevention of future wars.’

In the mean time the members of the American Mission were concluding their conferences on problems of coördination. 'They are working steadily,' wrote House to Wilson on November 9, 'and are doing more in a day than such bodies usually do in a week.' But there were many weeks' arrears to be made up, and although it was easy to exchange information, it proved difficult to decide economic policy, especially in view of the political and military crisis which naturally attracted the main energy of the War Cabinet. Minor questions could be settled, but the separate conferences were largely useless when it came to decisions upon major policies affecting several departments. 'Had the Supreme War Council been functioning,' wrote General Bliss, 'at the time of its arrival, the American Mission would have found its work easier. As it was, the members had to obtain their information piecemeal from various representatives of the different Governments, put it together and reconcile conflicting views as best they could.'¹ As House wrote on November 19, 'General Bliss is unable to give any satisfactory answers to the questions being put to him about the movement of our troops until he knows what shipping is to be set aside for American military purposes.' For the settlement of such large questions there was no machinery nor had any joint conference been devised. Nor had the Americans received the information they required as to the priority of Allied needs.

Notwithstanding the extent to which his attention had been caught by the parliamentary crisis, the Prime Minister agreed to push the work of coördination so that the British and Americans might be in complete understanding before the meeting of the interallied conference at Paris. Northcliffe and Reading, who had arrived from the United States, were entirely at one with House in believing that the main

¹ Bliss, *op. cit.*, 7.

purpose of the American Mission must not be forgotten because of the general military and political crisis.

'November 13, 1917: [Conference with Lloyd George.] I emphasized the lack of coördination existing at present and urged that something be done at once to bring it about. George agreed to this, and to-morrow some action will be taken . . . in that direction.

'Northcliffe has arrived from the United States and came at once to see me. He is pessimistic as to conditions here and optimistic over conditions in America. . . . Strangely enough Reading, just as he did the last time I saw them both in New York, followed Northcliffe. I saw him only a moment, but suggested that he help in every way possible to bring about a better coördination. Reading's influence with Lloyd George is greater perhaps than any other man's in England.

'November 15, 1917: We now have both Reading and Northcliffe, Lloyd George's closest friends, working to help the Prime Minister to coördinate the work we have in hand. Northcliffe delights in this. He is as eager as a hound on a trail.

'Lloyd George is to preside at a meeting to be held at No. 10 Downing Street. It is to take place in the same room in which the British Cabinet declared war against the United States under the administration of Lord North.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

LONDON, November 15, 1917

After consultation it has been decided to postpone the Paris conference for another week. It is necessary to know whether Italy will stand or fall and to allow the French to form a new ministry and have a short time in office before we meet. Otherwise the conference would be futile.

I shall therefore remain here until towards the end of next week. . . .

The entire situation is critical.

EDWARD HOUSE

LONDON, *November 16, 1917*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Northcliffe has been splendid. . . . The Prime Minister has repeatedly offered him a seat in the Cabinet, which he has refused. He did not propose to relinquish the right to criticize when he thought it necessary. . . .

With this combination of Wiseman, Reading, and Northcliffe, things are now being accomplished with more rapidity than I have ever experienced here.

The Prime Minister came to see me yesterday to urge that I consent to a postponement of the Paris Conference. . . .

The postponement will not change our home-coming, which I have set for December 5th, 6th, or 7th from some port in France. I find that it would be impossible to do the things necessary and have the Commission finish their work before that date.

I cannot tell you how splendidly and cordially the Commission are working together, and what a fine impression they have made here.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Not the least of the aid which Northcliffe gave came from his newspapers, which published statements of Tardieu and of Northcliffe himself on conditions in the United States, in which they demanded 'swift improvement' in methods of managing the war, and emphasized the need of complete coöperation.'

'An Interallied organization . . . is indispensable,' wrote

Tardieu. 'When each of the Allied Governments sends its missions to ask the aid of Americans, the United States gains the impression that affairs in Europe are in chaos. There should be at once a Council of the Allies, which, with full knowledge of the situation after a careful study of all the circumstances, military and political, should transmit to the American Government *en bloc* the requirements of the various nations filtered, correlated, and justified in indisputable arguments, and proportioned to the capacity of production in the United States and the tonnage available for transport accommodation at sea. Then the United States, in full confidence of union among the Allies, can formulate its requirements for submission to Congress.'

Lord Northcliffe spoke with even greater frankness and vigor. He took the opportunity offered him by Lloyd George's request that he assume charge of the Air Ministry, to attack publicly what he regarded as aspects of inefficiency in British war administration, and to demand close co-operation with the efforts of America, the energy of which he praised warmly.

*Lord Northcliffe to Mr. Lloyd George*¹

DEAR PRIME MINISTER:

. . . The spirit of the men and women of Great Britain is clearly as eager and splendid as ever. We have, in my belief, the most [efficient?] army in the world, led by one of the greatest Generals, and I am well aware of the fine achievements of many others of our soldiers, sailors, and statesmen, but I feel in the present circumstances I can do better work if I maintain my independence and am not gagged by a loyalty that I do not feel towards the whole of your administration.

¹ *New York Times*, November 16, 1917. [Cabled from London, November 15.]

I take this opportunity of thanking you and the War Cabinet for the handsome message of praise sent to me as representing the five hundred officials of the British War Mission to the United States, many of them volunteers and exiles. Their achievements and those of their ten thousand assistants deserve to be better known by their countrymen.

The fact that their work is not known is due to the absurd secrecy about the war which still is prevalent. Everything these officials are doing is known to our American friends, and, of course, to the Germans.

I trust I make no breach of confidence in saying that some of the documents which have passed through my hands as head of the Mission are such as, if published, would greatly increase our prestige in the United States and hearten our people at home.

May I also take this opportunity of giving warning about our relations with that great people from whom I come. We have had the tragedy of Russia, due partly to lack of Allied propaganda to counteract that of the Germans. We have had the tragedy of Italy, largely due to that same enemy propaganda. We have had the tragedies of Serbia, Rumania, and Montenegro. There is one tragedy which I am sure we shall not have, and that is the tragedy of the United States.

But from countless conversations with leading Americans I know that unless there is swift improvement in our methods here the United States will rightly take into its own hands the entire management of a great part of the war. It will not sacrifice its blood and treasure to the incompetent handling of the affairs of Europe.

In saying all this, which is very much on my mind, believe me, I have none but the most friendly feeling toward yourself and that I am greatly honored by your suggestion.

Yours sincerely

NORTHCLIFFE

The effort for greater vigor carried on by the Northcliffe Press combined with the dynamic leadership of Mr. Lloyd George led to the desired emphasis upon the economic problems, without the solution of which military success was impossible.

'Now that the main outlines of an Allied Council are settled,' said *The Times* on November 17, 'the Cabinet are rightly giving first place to ensuring the success of the American Mission. The conversations between heads of departments are culminating in what in effect is a personal meeting of Governments. Colonel House, who for this purpose is himself virtually the Government of the United States, has had more than one discussion with the Prime Minister during the last two days, and his colleagues have hardly had a leisure moment. Unfortunate as it is in some respects that the visit of the Mission should coincide with political excitements both here and in Paris, there is now good reason for confidence that it will inaugurate a new and most hopeful chapter in the history of the war.'

On November 20 the joint conference of which House had written to the President was held between the technical members of the American Mission and the British War Cabinet. Colonel House was not present, possibly because he wished to emphasize by his absence the fact that it was primarily a meeting to consider technical problems. Admiral Benson spoke for the American Mission.

'It is a very significant occasion,' said Lloyd George in his welcome to the American delegates, 'were it only for the place where the meeting takes place. I do not want to rake up the unpleasant past, a past especially unpleasant for us though not for you. It was in this room, I believe, that Lord North engineered some trouble for America, but a great deal

more trouble for himself. It is a great source of delight and satisfaction that in this very room where we committed a cardinal error, which has ever since been a lesson to us, a lesson which has borne fruit in the British Empire such as it is, that we should have representatives of your great country here to concert common action with us for the liberties of the world.

'This is purely a business gathering. You have come over to this country to do business, and I have heard from inquiries I have made from various departments how hard you have been working during the few days you have been here to transact your business with the various departments with which you are concerned. . . . All the things which are wanted for the efficient conduct of the campaign are urgent, because, naturally, the sooner you are ready the sooner it will be over. But there are one or two things which are more urgent than others. After a good deal of consultation with my colleagues and our military and naval advisers, I should put man-power and shipping as the two first demands on your consideration.'¹

Mr. Lloyd George then proceeded, with all his genius for summarization, to lay bare the plight of the Allies, sparing nothing of the importance of the Italian defeat and the Russian Revolution, which made the necessity of American aid vital.

'The Prime Minister frankly stated that the sooner the Republic can send over the largest number of troops the better. He was anxious, he said, to know how soon the first million could be expected in France. America has promised to launch 6,000,000 tons of shipping during the coming year. Here again time is of the essence of their usefulness. Our

¹ *New York Times Current History*, July, 1925. The entire *procès-verbal* of the Conference is there published.

shipping is practically all engaged in war work for ourselves and for our Allies. We cannot hope to have more available, even if the submarine danger does not grow worse, until the American programme begins to come into effect. Air service is another matter in which the Allies may safely count upon American help. We are also reluctantly compelled to rely very largely upon the United States and upon Canada to replenish our food supplies, and Mr. Lloyd George felt bound to assure his hearers that the "most drastic" restrictions on consumption "are about to be imposed" upon us all. On the other hand, he hopes that American assistance in tightening the blockade will enable us to make the enemy even more uncomfortable than they are.'¹

At last America was learning what she sought, where and how she could aid most and earliest. As the leader in *The Times* next morning declared, there was not 'any question of America's determination to throw her full weight into the struggle which she has entered. . . . All she wants to know is just where this weight will tell most.' Men, ships, air planes, food, a strict embargo — such was the order in which the needs of the Allies were placed. The programme was still general, but the Americans now knew, as they had not known before, where the greatest urgency lay and just how serious was the crisis which had to be met.

Furthermore, at Rapallo an important step had been taken in the direction of general unity of action. If the new Supreme War Council could be strengthened at the approaching Paris conferences, an effective instrument of Allied victory would at last be developed.

¹ London *Times*, November 21, 1917.

APPENDIX

CREATION OF THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL

DECISIONS OF A CONFERENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
BRITISH, FRENCH, AND ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS

I

The representatives of the British, French, and Italian Governments assembled at Rapallo on the 7th November, 1917, have agreed on the scheme for the organization of a Supreme War Council with a Permanent Military Representative from each Power, contained in the following paragraph.

SCHEME OF ORGANIZATION OF A SUPREME WAR COUNCIL

II

(1) With a view to the better coördination of military action on the Western Front a Supreme War Council is created, composed of the Prime Minister and a Member of the Government of each of the Great Powers whose armies are fighting on that front. The extension of the scope of the Council to other fronts is reserved for discussion with the other Great Powers.

(2) The Supreme War Council has for its mission to watch over the general conduct of the war. . . .

(3) The General Staffs and Military Commands of the armies of each Power charged with the conduct of military operations remain responsible to their respective Governments.

(4) The general war plans drawn up by the competent military authorities are submitted to the Supreme War Council, which, under the high authority of the Governments, insures their concordance.

(5) Each Power delegates to the Supreme War Council one Permanent Military Representative whose exclusive function is to act as technical adviser to the Council.

(6) The Military Representatives receive from the Government and the competent military authorities of their country all the proposals, information, and documents relating to the conduct of the war.

(7) The Military Representatives watch day by day the situation of the forces, and of the means of all kinds of which the Allied armies and the enemy armies dispose.

(8) The Supreme War Council meets normally at Versailles, where the Permanent Military Representatives and their Staffs are established. . . .

III

The permanent Military Representatives will be as follows:

For France,	General Foch
For Great Britain,	General Wilson
For Italy,	General Cadorna

RAPALLO
November 7, 1917

CHAPTER IX

THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL

Unity of control in the conduct of military operations in a given theatre is essential to success.

General Bliss' Memorandum of November 25, 1917

I

THE conversations between the American War Mission and the representatives of the British War Cabinet, held in the historic room in Downing Street on November 20, might be regarded, as an article in *The Observer* suggested, as 'the effective focus of the whole world-wide energies of the English-speaking peoples.' But they were merely preliminaries to the more important conversations of all the Allies that were arranged at the French capital. 'While we write the scene is changed to Paris. There, with the full participation of the United States, is being held an Allies' Conference by far the most thorough, momentous, which has yet taken place. . . . By disunity the Western Allies have thrown away chance after chance, but at last the stars have met in their favour.'¹

The historian may raise the question whether the immediate specific results of the Paris conferences equaled this journalistic promise. But it is certain that Allied leaders had come to realize that closer coördination of effort was the single alternative to defeat. This realization marked the turning-point of the war; and if this month of November, 1917, might with some justice be called the darkest hour, it was not far from the dawn. Allied unity was not completed at this time either in the economic or military field. But much of the machinery was planned which ultimately achieved the necessary coördination.

¹ The London *Observer*, November 25, 1917.

Two main conferences were called, the one at Paris, the other at Versailles. The first was the general Interallied Conference, attendance at which was the original purpose of the House Mission. It was composed of representatives of all the Allies, who held their opening session on Thursday, November 29, in the Salon de l'Horloge of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the Quai d'Orsay. It was the same room in which fourteen months later the plenary sessions of the Peace Conference were to be called. In the number and dignity of the delegates as well as in the mere formality of the two sessions, there was much to suggest the Peace Conference, although the later and more august assembly was never able to rival the severe brevity which characterized this gathering. The personnel was largely the same, for the Governments of the principal Powers were destined to last through the war, and the Peace Conference itself could hardly display a more distinguished list of delegates. Eighteen nations were represented, from Belgium to Siam, a galaxy of Prime Ministers, Foreign Secretaries, Commanders-in-Chief and Chiefs of Staff, Admirals, Ambassadors, shipping experts, and food controllers.

As proved to be the case later at the Peace Conference, the plenary sessions of the Interallied Conference were chiefly decorative. The real work was accomplished at the small committee meetings of the experts, where the principles and mechanism of coöperation were outlined. According to Mr. Grasty, correspondent for the *New York Times*, an important contribution of the American delegates was their successful insistence that the Interallied Conference should not become a debating society for the great orators of the Allies, but should immediately resolve itself into a series of small workable and working committees.

The second of the general conferences was the Supreme War Council, which held its initial session at Versailles on December 1, representing France, Great Britain, Italy, and

the United States. If the purpose of the general Interallied Conference was primarily to provide coördination in matters of finance, supply, shipping, embargo, that of the Supreme War Council was to create an organization capable of coördinating military effort viewed in the light of general policy. Two questions had to be answered. The first concerned the composition and powers of the Council, which as outlined in the Rapallo Agreement were satisfactory neither to the Americans nor to the French, and were regarded with suspicion by an important group of British military experts. The second question concerned the war-plan for the approaching year. What steps should be taken to meet the threatened German offensive on the Western Front; how much effort should be expended in assistance to Italy and Greece; how much emphasis should be laid upon Allenby's operations against the Turks; what could be done to bring Russia back into the alliance?

II

The American Mission crossed the Channel on November 22, and during the week that followed, even before the first formal session of the Interallied Conference, they went far toward settling with their French colleagues the bases of economic coördination. For Colonel House, the most important immediate problem was the settlement of the composition and functions of the Supreme War Council. He discovered as soon as he reached France that criticism of the Rapallo Agreement was acrid, and he feared lest the disagreement that threatened to develop between the French and British Governments should interfere materially with plans of coördination. House sympathized with the French demand for unified military control. At the same time he appreciated keenly the political difficulties of Mr. Lloyd George.

The British Prime Minister insisted that the Supreme War

Council must be under political control, since it was impossible to separate problems of general policy from those of military strategy; it was just this separation, he contended, which left the military forces under the control of commanders who had a national and not an Allied point of view, and which accounted for the waste and failures of the preceding years. Hence, according to the Rapallo Agreement, the Council was headed by the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers, and the military representatives were subordinated to the political.

Mr. Lloyd George, moreover, insisted upon separating the Supreme War Council from the Chiefs of Staff, partly because of his unwillingness to appoint as military representative on the Council the British Chief of Staff, whom he regarded as largely responsible for the strategy which had cost the British army appalling losses in the two big battles of 1917. His choice was Sir Henry Wilson, whose 'remarkable natural gifts were not excelled in the British army; his experience was wide, his mind quick and resourceful, his courage conspicuous; especially he was an intimate friend of Foch and much trusted by the French Staff — a happy augury for the new coöperation. The Prime Minister and Sir William Robertson were men of incompatible temperaments, and their collaboration was perpetually hindered by mutual suspicion. Sir Henry Wilson, on the other hand, was a man whom Mr. Lloyd George understood and valued, for he had many qualities akin to his own — unflinching optimism for one thing, and a talent for explicit statement rare among tongue-tied soldiers.'¹

It is not difficult to understand the factors that led Mr. Lloyd George to subordinate the military aspect of the Supreme War Council and to refuse to appoint to it the British Chief of Staff. But the French insisted that the Council as organized by the Rapallo Agreement did not

¹ Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, iv, 173.

provide for effective military coördination, since it left the Chiefs of Staff outside; and the position of the military advisers on the Council was anomalous, since they were divorced from their own staffs, subordinated to the political members, and deprived of any executive powers. The French would naturally have liked a single command to be exercised by a French general. But the British would not listen to such a suggestion. 'In all the conferences of that time,' wrote General Bliss, 'and up to the great disaster four months later, any suggestion as to a Commander-in-Chief only developed the belief that it was quite impossible.'¹

If a generalissimo was out of the circle of practical possibilities for the moment, the Americans were none the less anxious to achieve virtual unity of military control. Neither General Pershing nor General Bliss, according to House's report, believed that this could be secured by the Rapallo plan unless it were amended.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, November 23, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I foresee trouble in the workings of the Supreme War Council. There is a tremendous opposition in England to Lloyd George's appointment of General Wilson. Neither Sir William Robertson, Chief of Staff, nor Sir Douglas Haig have any confidence in him, and they and their friends look upon it as a move to put Wilson in supreme command.

The enemies of Lloyd George and the friends of Robertson

¹ *Foreign Affairs*, December 15, 1922, p. 9. The author of *Fragments d'histoire*, who is usually well-informed, states (*Le Commandement unique: Foch et les armées d'occident*, 188) that Colonel House asked definitely for the appointment of Marshal Joffre as generalissimo. It is certain that House did not conceal his personal preference for the single command; but it is equally certain that he realized the futility of demanding it at this time, and there is nothing in his papers to show that he ever suggested Joffre in this connection.

and Haig believe that George wants to rid himself of these generals and supersede them with Wilson. They claim that Wilson is not a great general, but is a politician and one that will be to George's liking.¹

The French want a 'Generalissimo' but they want him to be a Frenchman. This, too, would meet with so much opposition in England that it is not to be thought of. Any Government that proposed it would be overthrown.

I have had long conferences with Bliss and Pershing on the subject, and I think they see the danger as I do. I am trying to suggest something else which will give unity of control by uniting all involved rather than creating dissension.

I have just had a conference alone with Clemenceau. Later without my saying a word upon the subject, he practically repeated the opinion that I have expressed to you above concerning the Supreme War Council. He is earnestly in favor of unity of plan and action, but he thinks as I do that the plan of Lloyd George is not workable, and for reasons somewhat similar to those I have given.

He has nothing in mind and says that he dares not formulate a plan because it might be looked upon with suspicion. He wants us to take the initiative and he promises that we can count upon him to back to a finish any reasonable suggestion that we make. . . .

He has put his time at my disposal and asks me to come

¹ House is merely reporting opinion. His own judgment of Sir Henry Wilson was, that of all the British officers he was best suited to serve as military representative on the council, both because of his ability and because of his cordial personal relations with the French.

House's letter to the President does not do justice to the point of view of Sir Henry Wilson, whose diaries indicate that both his and Mr. Lloyd George's plans were not based upon a desire to oust Sir William Robertson, but upon the conviction that only through an organization superior to the Chiefs of Staff could the war be won. How far this view should be regarded as correct is a matter upon which opinions differ and will probably continue to differ.

at my pleasure unannounced and says the door will always be open.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

General Bliss seems to have agreed with Mr. Lloyd George that the Rapallo plan was sound in so far as it left general supervision of the conduct of the war to the political leaders and was 'in accord with the military principle that war is but a continuation of political policy in a new form.'¹ But like General Pershing he was convinced that in a given theater of operations, such as the Western Front, unity of military control was essential to success and, in default of a generalissimo, that it could be achieved only through a purely military council with executive powers. The plan which he drafted with House and which they presented to the French thus eliminated the political members of the Supreme War Council and gave to the military members executive rather than merely advisory powers.

Memorandum on Unity of Control

PARIS, November 25, 1917

'1. Unity of control in the conduct of military operations in a given theater is essential to success.

'2. To ensure real efficiency, this unity of control must be effected through a purely military council, it being assumed that one or more of the principal Allied nations may be unwilling to place their military forces under a single Commander-in-Chief.

'3. It is believed that the Supreme War Council should be composed of the Commanders-in-Chief of the principal national forces in the field on the front over which the unity of control is necessary, together with the Chiefs of Staff of

¹ Bliss, in *Foreign Affairs*, December 15, 1922, p. 6.

those same national forces or officers designated by these Chiefs of Staff and representing them.

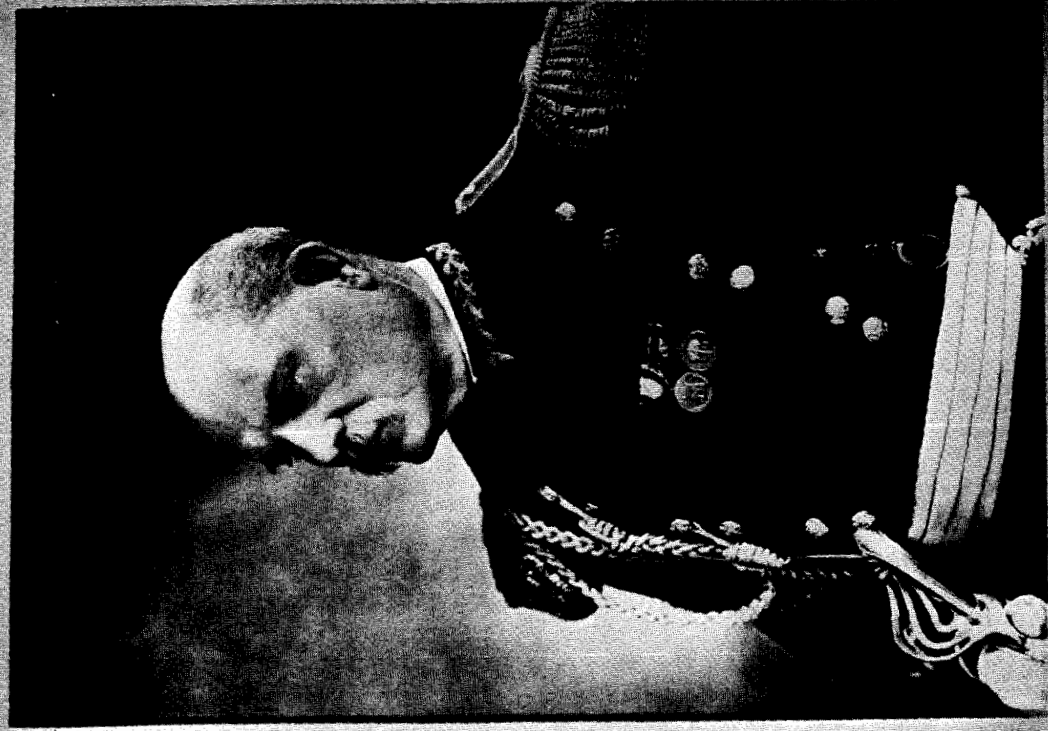
'4. To ensure the prompt execution of the will of this Supreme War Council, there must be one man to carry this will into effect. This man must be the President of the Supreme War Council, chosen by the other members and having power to execute their will.'

We may ask whether, if this plan had been put into effect and if General Foch had been chosen as executive officer, the military disasters of 1918 might not have been avoided or lessened. It is interesting, at any rate, to note that the functions which General Foch was given in April, 1918, of 'coordinating the action of the Allied armies on the Western Front,' were almost exactly those which Bliss and House outlined in November for the President of the Supreme War Council.

A decade later General Bliss, writing at Washington on June 14, 1928, made the following comments on the memorandum which he and House presented to the French:

'This was one of those "groping" memoranda, written when we were trying to feel our way through a very hazy matter, and doubtless would not have been written a little later.

'The American Mission landed in England on November 7, 1917, — the day on which at Rapallo Messrs. Lloyd George, Painlevé and Orlando created the Supreme War Council. No one fully understood it, not even its creators. Military men, and most others who thought at all about it, believed that it would be a sort of Aulic Council, making and directing military plans, — in short, another step to disaster. Moreover, the French believed that it was a British scheme to get control of the French armies, and the British thought the same about the French. . . . Painlevé's govern-



To Col. E. M. Anderson from his friend and fellow worker
Dexter C. Adams

General, Chief of Staff, U. S. Army
A grouping of our services together on the American Mission to
the Inter-Allied Conference in Paris, and on the Supreme Allied Council
at Versailles, October 29—December 15, 1917.

YASRI LINDAORI

ALP. BOA. IPH

ment fell; Lloyd George said that his government was saved only by the adhesion, at the last moment of the British crisis, of President Wilson to the Agreement of Rapallo. I was influenced by the general military opinion. In my report to the President on December 17, 1917, I strongly urged that he make his adhesion to the Supreme War Council contingent on the appointment of an Allied Commander in chief, — I believing that with such an Allied commander the Supreme War Council would practically cease to operate. I did not then realize (and I don't think that any one else did) that the S.W.C. would not interfere in matters of military control but would only harmonize Allied governmental policies, which military commanders in the field could not do. None of us realized what the real functions of the S.W.C. were to be until the first important meeting in January. Until that time (at any rate, at the time of the attached memorandum) I was trying to find a way by which its possibilities for harm could be minimized. This appears in Par. 2 of the attached memorandum. My general idea in it was that *unless* the Allies could agree on a single commander in chief, the only thing was to compose the Council of the National commanders; let them agree on every operation in which two or more nations were to be expected to give mutual assistance, and then let one of them have power to execute their will. This was a way of "beating the devil around the stump"; for, evidently this man would, for all practical purposes of the particular campaign, be a commander in chief.'

The Americans understood, of course, that their proposal would encounter strong opposition. The British military leaders would naturally object to the executive powers of the President of the Supreme War Council, who would become practically Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies. The proposal also called for the inclusion in the Council of the Chiefs of Staff, to which Mr. Lloyd George was irrevocably

opposed. None the less it seemed worth while to put the scheme forward, especially since the contribution of the United States to Allied man-power was likely to be more important than any one had imagined. Both the British and French made it plain that without such contribution the military danger in the approaching spring would be serious. In London, General Bliss had discussed the matter with Sir William Robertson, and thus reported his conversation to Colonel House:

‘I showed him,’ said Bliss, ‘that by the month of May next, including troops now in France, we could, with the facilities now at our disposal transport not more than 525,000 men, including non-combatant forces; that without additional tonnage we could not supply even that number of men. . . . He expressed grave apprehension at this statement.

‘He told me that he doubted whether Italy could be held in the war during the coming winter; and that should she remain in it would require the presence of considerable troops from the English and French forces on the Western Front. . . . He said that the French man-power was going down. . . . He added that the Russian situation was such that the probability had to be faced at any moment for the withdrawal of perhaps thirty or forty German divisions from that front and transferring them to the Western Front. . . . The general impression left on my mind by his statement of the case was that a military crisis is to be apprehended if we cannot have in France next year by the end of spring a very much larger force than now seems possible.’¹

In their interviews with Bliss and House, the French were

¹ ‘The British military men,’ wrote General Bliss on June 14, 1928, ‘insisted that the issue of the war would be determined in 1918 and that if America could not at least double the effort she hoped to make by the end of May, 1918, the Allied cause was lost.’

quite as pessimistic as Robertson and more specific. They insisted that an American army of a million would be necessary by the summer of 1918, although it would not be used except for defensive operations.

If the United States were to furnish such tremendous addition to Allied man-power, they could fairly ask for influence in determining the military organization of the Allies. Bliss and House were further encouraged by the attitude of Clemenceau and Pétain, who in the conference of November 25 gave general approval to the American scheme of a military executive council.

Memorandum of Conversation of Colonel House and General Bliss with M. Clemenceau and General Pétain

PARIS, November 25, 1917

'... M. Clemenceau said that he would get straight to business and discuss the subject of the conference, to wit, the effective force of the French army in its relation to the arrival of American troops. He then requested General Pétain to make a general statement.

'General Pétain began by saying that there are now 108 divisions of competent French troops at his disposition, including all troops on the immediate front and those which are held in reserve. He said that the French losses had been approximately 2,600,000 men, killed, died of wounds, permanently incapacitated, and prisoners. This is in addition to all men on the lines of communication and in the general service of the rear. Eight of these divisions, by about the beginning of the new year or soon thereafter, will have been transferred to northern Italy, leaving 100 for service in France. As these divisions are not more than eleven thousand men strong, each, this will give him a disposable force of not more than eleven hundred thousand men. He stated that the English have in France and Flanders sixty divisions,

which, as their divisions approximate twenty thousand men each, gives them a force of approximately twelve hundred thousand men.

'He further stated that the English with this force of twelve hundred thousand men are occupying a front of about 150 kilometers, and M. Clemenceau then added that the French with their eleven hundred thousand men were occupying about 500 kilometers.

'General Pétain estimated that on the German front there was an equal number of troops, but that there were no means of determining with accuracy how many disposable men the latter had in the rear. He thought it possible that the Germans might be able to transfer from the Russian front as many as 40 divisions if they were not held there by active operations on the part of the Russians and Rumanians. . . .

'General Pétain, in reply to the question as to how many American troops he desired to have available at a fixed date, replied that as many as possible should be there as early as possible, but that they must be soldiers and not merely men. It being explained to him how desirable it was that we should have an approximate definite number by a fixed date in order to make our negotiations with those who must provide the necessary tonnage, he stated that we must have a million men available for the early campaign of 1919, with another million ready to replace and reënforce them. Asked how many we should have in France for a campaign in 1918, he said that this was answered by fixing the number for the campaign of 1919, since in order to have this number for the latter campaign they would have to arrive at a fixed rate from this moment and extending throughout the year 1918; the number that would thus have arrived at any fixed date in the year 1918 was all that he would ask for that date. He explained that for the campaign of 1918 he would utilize the American troops in holding those parts of the line on which he would not make an offensive, thus relieving the French

troops now there and making the latter available for an offensive elsewhere. In order to carry out this plan, he stated that we should move troops to France at the rate of two divisions complete per month with corresponding service of the rear troops, until about the first of May, when the rate should be increased to three divisions a month and continue thus through the calendar year.

'It will be noted that at this rate, including the four divisions now in France, there would be there at the end of the year a total of thirty divisions. Since the American division as now organized consists of 27,000 men, these thirty divisions should be equivalent to seventy-three French divisions of 11,000 each.

'The discussion of this subject having terminated, Mr. House then asked the question as to how far M. Clemenceau and General Pétain accepted the organization and functions of a Supreme War Council as proposed by Mr. Lloyd George. In reply, both of them expressed non-concurrence in it. General Pétain strongly expressed the view that the Council must have executive power and the right to exercise this power promptly. He did not think that this power existed or could be exercised in a council formed as proposed by Mr. Lloyd George. Asked by Mr. House as to whether a workable Supreme War Council could be formed and composed of the Commanders-in-Chief of the armies on the Western Front, together with the Chiefs of Staff of those armies, the latter constituting a Committee on Strategy, he replied that this could be done were it not for the fact that there would be still no one person to carry into execution the will of this military council. Being asked by General Bliss whether this executive official might not be the President of the Council, to be chosen by the members thereof and with power only to carry into execution the will of the Council, he replied that this could be done and being done such an arrangement would have his approval. He stated, however, that while, in

planning an offensive a considerable time beforehand, there would be time for careful consideration and expression of the will of the Council, there might be emergencies requiring such prompt action that this executive officer could not be expected to do more than quickly consult the other members and then give very prompt orders.

'Being asked whether M. Clemenceau and General Pétain gave their approval of this general plan with the distinct understanding that it eliminated the Prime Ministers and other political representation of the various Allied countries, they both stated that it was so understood by them. . . .'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 26, 1917

The conference with Clemenceau and Pétain yesterday resulted in a clear understanding as to the military situation. They gave us information about the number of fighting men left in France and what would be necessary from us. If we send over a million actual fighting men by the autumn of 1918, they will continue to use their men for offensive operations and use ours for defensive purposes until then.

Pétain believes that whatever Supreme War Council is created should have a president or executive officer to execute its decisions. This is sure to meet with English opposition. What is your opinion of it? The English arrive to-morrow night, and on Wednesday Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and I will have a conference.

EDWARD HOUSE

President Wilson's reply to Colonel House's request for instructions as to what plan he should advocate was general and left the matter to House's discretion. The President cabled that after a conference with Secretary Baker he thought it best to say that he favored 'the most effec-

tive methods obtainable' whether directed by one man or not.¹

On November 27 the British representatives arrived in Paris. Colonel House immediately arranged for an interview with Mr. Lloyd George and set himself for the effort to persuade him to accept the American plan for a military council with an executive officer. The British Prime Minister was cordial, but he did not conceal the difficulties which stood in the way of his approval. Not the least of these difficulties was the strong sentiment in Great Britain against putting British troops under the control of a foreign commander, which would have been the practical effect of the American suggestion. House finally agreed that if the Council could be made purely military in composition and left with executive powers, it would not be essential to include the Chiefs of Staff. 'It would be better to have the Chiefs of Staff,' wrote House, 'but since he is so thoroughly committed to Wilson and since the appointment of Wilson will mean Lloyd George's trouble and not ours, no one should complain.' The Prime Minister admitted that his chief objection to the American plan arose from its inclusion of the Chiefs of Staff and he promised to consider the compromise. But the next morning he decided that he could accept no change in the Rapallo Agreement. It was essential, he felt, that the Supreme War Council should be under political control, and if the Chiefs of Staff were excluded it would be useless and confusing to give executive powers to the military members.

An extract from the diary of Sir Henry Wilson, who came over from London with Mr. Lloyd George, indicates that the Prime Minister was convinced that the Rapallo plan was the only feasible one and that if that fell through there would be no Supreme War Council.

'Lloyd George is angry,' wrote Sir Henry on November 27,

¹ Wilson to House, December 1, 1917.

'and says that he will have a row with Clemenceau to-morrow, and if Clemenceau does not give in he [Lloyd George] will go straight back to London. Lloyd George certainly must show his teeth. It is intolerable if arrangements come to at Rapallo one week can be upset the next.

'Lloyd George realizes perfectly that his own future rests on the success of the Supreme Council, and he also is clear in his mind that unless we have it we shall lose the war. Clemenceau will give in to-morrow. He is in no position to quarrel with Lloyd George.'¹

Thus, early in the morning of November 28 the British Prime Minister told House that he could agree to no change in the Rapallo Agreement, that the Chiefs of Staff must be excluded and the political complexion of the Council emphasized. He asked House to tell Clemenceau that, unless the French accepted the Rapallo Agreement as binding, there was nothing for him to do but return to London.

Colonel House wrote as follows of his conference with Clemenceau:

'I was with the French Prime Minister at half-past nine. . . . Clemenceau agreed to yield to Lloyd George as to the Chiefs of Staff, but said with a sardonic smile, "It vitiates the entire plan. What I shall do is to put on a second or third rate man instead of Foch, and let the thing drift where it will." . . .

'I remarked that it was hard enough to fight the Germans and we had best not begin fighting among ourselves, and if Lloyd George insisted upon such a Supreme War Council as had been suggested . . . we would have to yield because of his difficulties at home. The differences between George, Robertson, and Haig make it impossible to carry out the general desire for complete unity of military action.

¹ Callwell, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, II, 32.

'I convinced Clemenceau that we had better, for the moment, . . . not do anything to aggravate the situation for him [Lloyd George].'

Thus the composition of the Supreme War Council and its functions were settled according to the Lloyd George formula, and the military representatives on the Council remained simply advisers to the main political body. In his memoirs, M. Painlevé intimates that had he remained in power the military committee would have formed an actual interallied staff, which would have been headed by General Foch in command of the Franco-British reserves, a plan which was attempted the following February.¹ But the papers of Colonel House, as quoted above, indicate clearly that, given the difficult situation in which Mr. Lloyd George found himself, no further step toward unification of interallied control could have been taken at this time. It is hardly likely that where M. Clemenceau and Colonel House failed to alter the British attitude, M. Painlevé could have succeeded.²

The military committee, at all events, was a strong one, for Clemenceau appointed not the 'second or third rate man' he had threatened, but Foch's Chief of Staff, General Weygand, who was proved in France and later in Poland to possess strategic qualities of the highest order. Great Britain was represented by Sir Henry Wilson, as Mr. Lloyd George planned, until February when, following Sir William Robert-

¹ *Comment j'ai nommé Foch et Pétain*, 290.

² Sir William Robertson believes (*Soldiers and Statesmen*, 1, 221) that 'the real attitude of Mr. Lloyd George differed considerably from the account which M. Painlevé gives of it.' That account, which presents the British Prime Minister as entirely in accord with Painlevé's desire to give General Foch virtual control at this time, is quite inconsistent with the impressions of Colonel House. It should be observed that just as soon as Mr. Lloyd George judged the political situation to be ripe for the proposal, January 30, 1918, he himself advocated granting executive powers to the military representatives under the presidency of General Foch and giving to them control of the general reserve of thirty divisions.

son's resignation, he became Chief of Staff. Italy was represented by Cadorna, who had the advantage of having commanded the Italian army and the disadvantage of having lost much of it. The United States was represented by General Bliss. Although deprived of the opportunity to coördinate strategy on the Allied fronts, the military committee collected at Versailles a mass of information and elaborated certain plans which ultimately proved of the utmost assistance to General Foch as Commander-in-Chief.

III

In the mean time preparations were made for convening the Interallied Conference, the importance of which was emphasized by the Allied Press in rather extravagant phrases. Colonel House regarded the plenary session, to which delegates of all the Powers at war with Germany were invited, with a mixture of indifference and apprehension. The actual work of coördination had been and would be accomplished by the technical experts in their committee meetings, and not by the chiefs of state in solemn conclave. There was some danger, perhaps, that the plenary session would provoke time-consuming debate on the more delicate topics which, if discussed in public, would tend to divide rather than to unite the Allies.

'November 27, 1917: Following some remarks we had on the subject, Clemenceau told a mutual friend that he had about decided to open the Conference with not more than three sentences. He will virtually say: "Gentlemen, we are at war, let us proceed to work." I sent word to him that this would be the most dramatic incident of the Conference, and I hoped he would hold to his intention. . . .

'I said to Lloyd George that Clemenceau would probably make a speech of not more than two or three sentences in opening the Conference and perhaps he [Lloyd George]

would offer a resolution that speeches be dispensed with, that committees be appointed, and the Conference get down to immediate business. . . . He saw the danger of having speeches made at the Conference. If they are made, the Russian question will be ventilated and many indiscreet things said which might make the Conference an instrument for evil rather than good. We should get down to work at once, having already agreed upon the committees to be appointed.

'November 28, 1917: [Conference with Clemenceau.] I asked about the Interallied Conference. Clemenceau's face twisted into a curious smile and he shrugged his shoulders. We are both of the opinion that it is useless to call all the experts and delegates who are here into a general meeting. . . .

'I do not wish it to be understood that I do not approve the general purpose for which this Conference is called, for the war can be won only by a coördination of all the Allied resources. What Clemenceau objects to is the spectacular manner in which it was called. All the men on our Mission, and those on the other Allied Missions, could have met quietly and coördinated the work to be done without such a meeting as is planned, and which will be filled with political leaders bent upon airing their opinions. . . .

'Clemenceau telephoned Pichon ¹ that I was on the way and said any understanding we reached he would abide by.

'Pichon thought it would be best to invite every one in at the beginning and then segregate the members of the Conference into sections or committees, and to keep down general discussion in order to prevent friction. He agreed, too, to let all the Allied Ambassadors, all the French Cabinet, and practically every one else who desired to sit in, do so. . . .

'Went to the Foreign Office at six o'clock. Lloyd George, Balfour, Orlando, Sonnino, Clemenceau, and Pichon were

¹ Stéphane Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

present at the meeting. We discussed the procedure for to-morrow's conference. . . .

'Pichon thought committees could be formed by to-morrow afternoon. I replied that our members on the committees could be selected within ten minutes after we returned to the hotel.

'I took Balfour back to the Crillon, and he put Sir Eric Drummond in touch with Gordon, and in a few minutes he and Drummond had the committees arranged.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 28, 1917

I am having frequent conferences with the French and English Prime Ministers and we are reaching conclusions upon many matters.

The Conference itself to-morrow will not be important, for there will be representatives of all Allied Powers and the discussions must necessarily be of a general and not very intimate character. Such a large conference was a mistake and has many elements of danger. Our main endeavor now is to get through with it without any mishap.

The Supreme War Council will probably meet at Versailles on Saturday. That, too, has been largely divested of its power for service by Lloyd George's insistence that General Wilson shall sit on it instead of the Chiefs of Staff and commanders in the field, as Clemenceau, Pétain, Bliss, and I had agreed. This is because of his disagreement with Robertson and Haig. I suppose that he does not feel strong enough to depose them and is therefore using the Supreme War Council idea to supplant them in another way.

EDWARD HOUSE

'November 29, 1917: The Interallied Conference took place this morning at ten o'clock at the Foreign Office. It went

absolutely as scheduled. It was an imposing gathering. The Prime Ministers, Foreign Secretaries, Ambassadors, Army Chiefs of Staff, Navy heads, etc., etc., of the Allied forces were brought together in one place for the first time. . . .

'After Clemenceau had read a short address of a few lines, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs made exactly the speech we agreed upon yesterday, and the Conference immediately adjourned and the different sections went into executive session. It was dramatic and unusual. . . . I feel sure there has never been a conference of such importance with so little said and which was so promptly closed. I have never seen a more surprised set of delegates. Even the British were but partially aware of how drastic the curtailment of speech was to be. It was exactly eight minutes from the time Clemenceau rapped the Conference to order until it was adjourned.'

Clemenceau's speech was indeed a model of brevity.

'In this, the greatest of all wars,' he said, 'we are brought together by the sentiment of supreme solidarity in order to achieve upon the battlefield the right to a peace truly worthy of mankind.'

'In this splendid gathering of hopes, duties, and determination, we are accordingly ready for every sacrifice which may be demanded by an alliance that can never be broken by intrigue nor weakness.'

'The noble spirit which animates us must be translated into action. The order of the day is work. Let us get to work.'

IV

During the days that preceded and followed the opening session of the Interallied Conference, while the experts of the War Mission were engaged in their technical committee

work, Colonel House was busied with a multitude of conversations, some personal, some political, all of them calculated to give him information for the use of the President. 'A perfect whirlpool,' he wrote on November 30. 'Constant conferences with Lloyd George, Balfour, the two Japanese Ambassadors, Baron Chinda of London and his confrère here [Matsui], General Pershing, Horodyski, Shulski, the Liberian Minister, General Bliss, Admiral Benson, and the different members of the Mission.' He discussed with Joseph Willard, Ambassador to Spain, the peace feelers which Germans were sending through Madrid. With Tardieu and Clementel he talked over the plans to threaten Germany with an economic embargo after the war as a means of bringing her to reasonable terms.¹ He listened to General Foch's report on the military situation. 'He has just returned from Italy and tells me that the Italian line will hold where it is now until spring. He said: "It is again glued together."'

With Clemenceau, Pétain, and Pershing, Colonel House talked over the conditions under which the American troops in France could bring the most useful assistance. House recognized immediately the ability of the French Prime Minister.

'I may change my mind before I leave Paris, but it seems to me now that Clemenceau is one of the ablest men I have met in Europe, not only on this trip but on any of the others. There can be no doubt of his great courage and his unusual ability. . . . He said if the Americans do not permit the French to teach them, the Germans will do so at great cost

¹ 'They were surprised to learn,' wrote House, 'that I had already discussed this question with the President and had suggested the same procedure some weeks ago, and that it was probable the President would mention it in his forthcoming address to Congress.' On December 4, Mr. Wilson included in his Message the following sentence: 'It might be impossible, also, in such untoward circumstances, to admit Germany to the free economic intercourse which must inevitably spring out of the other partnerships of a real peace.'

of life. . . . General Pétain spoke frankly about the American army in France. He thought that the troops should go into the French army in companies and battalions and receive their training in that way. He had made a memorandum of subjects he wished to discuss with me. . . .¹

'Pershing discussed the French and British desire to have our troops go into their ranks for training. He thought the situation might require it, but he was of the opinion that if the American troops went in, very few of them would ever come out, and that it would be foolish to expect to build up a great American army by that method. He was very fair and open-minded about this.'

In the mean time Admiral Benson had reached at least tentative conclusions as to the part that should be played by the United States Navy during the coming spring. It was agreed that the plan for attacking the German fortified ports, 'destroying the hornets' nest,' as Mr. Wilson had called it, was not feasible, although the more westerly submarine bases, such as Ostend and Zeebrugge, might be raided. The American suggestion for a mine barrage in the North Sea was approved. What the Allies most ardently desired was the greatest possible number of destroyers for convoy duty, since upon the safe transportation of a large American army would depend all the military plans for 1918.

v

All these discussions Colonel House evidently hoped would be crystallized into a definite plan at the session of the Supreme War Council which was opened at Versailles on December 1, under the presidency of M. Clemenceau.

'At 9.45 General Bliss and I,' wrote House, 'started for Versailles. The Supreme War Council was held in the

¹ The Pétain Memorandum is printed in the appendix to this chapter.

Trianon Palace Hotel, and Clemenceau and Orlando were already there when we arrived. Clemenceau and I went upstairs for a conference and to outline a programme before the Council convened. Before Lloyd George came, Clemenceau showed considerable excitement concerning the relative lengths of the British and French lines on the front, declaring that an adjustment must be made and that he would not permit the British to evade the issue. He said he would resign from the French Ministry if an adjustment satisfactory to France was not made.¹ At that point Lloyd George came in and the three of us agreed upon a programme.

'First, we discussed the length of the lines which France and Great Britain were to hold on the Western Front. I did not commit myself on this, stating it was a matter for them to determine among themselves, since the United States as yet had no line.²

'We next discussed Italy and our war policy there. Then came Greece, and later, Rumania.

'After this private conference was finished, we descended to the larger conference room. . . .

'General Bliss and I agreed not to take any positive position, but to listen and get information. We feel that it is not in good taste to do more at this time, since we have no men on the firing line. When our army is here in numbers, then it will be another story. Questions of general policy, finance, munitions, and all economic problems we feel at liberty to take an active part in, but as to military plans,

¹ According to Sir Henry Wilson's diary, M. Clemenceau some days later told him that unless the British took over to Berry-au-Bac he would resign. 'The old man was difficult,' wrote Wilson. 'He raged against the English, and then fastened on Haig and in a minor degree Robertson.' Callwell, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, II, 41.

² This discussion continued through the winter. Clemenceau and Foch desired the British to extend their front to Berry-au-Bac. Pétain was content with Barisis on the left bank of the Oise, to which village General Gough's Fifth Army took over during January.

other than naval, it seems best to remain in the background and listen.'

The French Prime Minister opened the session with a speech, the substance of which was much more in accord with the particular ideas of Mr. Lloyd George than those of M. Clemenceau. According to the plan outlined, each Government should secure the opinions of its own General Staff and transmit them without delay to the permanent military advisers of the Council, who after studying the military situation as a whole should make recommendations as to the military operations to be undertaken in 1918. He drew special attention to the situation in Russia, in Italy, and in the Balkans, to the prospective coöperation of the American forces, to the question of tonnage and shipbuilding and their effect upon man-power available for the armies. He reminded the military advisers not to lose sight of the fact that the war had become largely one of exhaustion and that even if Russia had succumbed, at any rate for the present, both Turkey and Austria were not far from a collapse. Then came an allusion to the favorite strategical plan of Lloyd George. M. Clemenceau suggested that perhaps Prussian militarism could best be overcome by first crushing Germany's allies, and reserving the crushing of Germany herself for a culminating effort when the whole of the Allied forces could be concentrated against her. He also emphasized the international character of the military committee of the Council, reminding the military advisers that their task was to study the problem before them from the point of view of the Allies as a whole and not as representatives of separate countries and to submit their recommendations in a collective form.

To such an extent the creation of the Supreme War Council was a step, although a hesitating step, towards unity of military purpose. At least one definite achievement of value was secured when the Council proceeded to pass a series of

resolutions, according to which the separate Governments agreed to furnish the military advisers with full information of a general political and departmental character; the resolutions provided also that the General Staffs and the Ministries of War, the Ministries of Marine and Shipping, the Foreign Offices, the Departments of Munitions, Aviation, Finance, and the like, of the separate Governments should furnish all information that might aid the studies of the military advisers of the Supreme War Council. Thus if the new body did not result in immediate unity of military control, it at least provided for the centralizing and correlating of information.

The remainder of the session was taken up with a rather desultory discussion, regarding the amount of assistance needed by Italy, and the situation at Saloniki, of which, said Clemenceau, 'we know very little, or at any rate what we do know is not very favorable.' M. Venizelos entered to explain the situation in Greece, and, giving the delegates rather a lengthy historical exposition as to background, was brought to realities by Sir William Robertson's terse question: 'How many divisions can you give us?' It was agreed that Greece had not received the assistance she might have expected (Lloyd George spoke of the 'unintelligence' of the treatment meted out to her), and a resolution was passed promising study of the Balkan military situation and advances of food, military equipment, and money. 'I hope,' said Lloyd George to M. Venizelos, 'that you will go back to Greece with a good heart.'

Altogether the Supreme War Council at this session passed eight resolutions, of which four concerned the securing of information for the military advisers, the others providing for investigation of the military problems connected with the Italian, Belgian, and Balkan fronts.¹ It was obviously necessary that such investigation should be made before recom-

¹ Text of resolutions is given in the appendix to this chapter.

mendations for action could be drafted. Nevertheless Colonel House could not escape a sense of disappointment that Allied conferences seemed to result in academic study rather than definite plans.

'December 1, 1917: While a good many subjects were brought before the Conference, not one, I think, was brought to a conclusion. I can understand quite readily why Germany has been able to withstand the Allies so successfully. She has no superior ability, but she has superior organization and method. Nothing is buttoned up with the Allies; it is all talk and no concerted action. The changes of Government are partly responsible, but lack of coördination and decision are the chief obstacles. . . .

'Clemenceau, Pétain, and Bliss did more in our conference of last week than was done at the Supreme War Council, for we at least determined how many American soldiers should come to France, when they should come, and how to get them here. We also planned a real Military War Council. . . .

'Lloyd George and Reading dined alone with me. We had a pleasant evening together. They were both in good form and George was happy over the conclusion of the Conference. Just why he was happy, excepting that the Conference had adjourned and he was returning to England, is more than I can fathom, for certainly we have not done one half of what should have been done. The Supreme War Council has taken up but few of the matters which properly should have come before it, and instead of sitting for one morning it should have sat for a week.'

VI

The Allied Governments were careful to picture the Paris Conference as strictly a war council, and the various suggestions that emanated from irresponsible pacifists were sedulously quashed. In this President Wilson was thoroughly in

accord with the European Allies. Now that the United States had entered the war there was no one who took a stronger stand than he against an inconclusive peace which would leave Germany's imperial power intact. In a speech at Buffalo, shortly after the departure of the House Mission, he made plain his conviction that the only way to end the war was to defeat Germany.

'What I am opposed to,' said Wilson, 'is not the feeling of the pacifists, but their stupidity. My heart is with them, but my mind has a contempt for them. I want peace, but I know how to get it and they do not. You will notice that I sent a friend of mine, Colonel House, to Europe, who is as great a lover of peace as any man in the world, but I didn't send him on a peace mission yet. I sent him to take part in a conference as to how the war was to be won, and he knows, as I know, that that is the way to get peace if you want it for more than a few minutes.'

Nevertheless the question of peace negotiations was raised at Paris, and, as always, revolved around the possibility of detaching Austria from the German alliance. Ever since the peace proposal of the Pope, in August, there had been talk of secret peace negotiations, none of which, however, had been taken very seriously by the Allied Governments. A note of the British Ambassador at the Vatican, to the effect that Great Britain could not answer the Pope's proposal until Germany made clear her intentions with regard to Belgium, was understood in Germany to represent a tentative offer. Germany proceeded to lay down conditions, which were transmitted to the Spanish Minister in Belgium and from Madrid were passed on to London. Mr. Balfour had immediately cabled to Colonel House the sense of the proposal and asked him to obtain the President's opinion as to how it should be treated. Mr. Wilson approved a cable

which House had drafted for Balfour, to the effect that the British could not discuss the matter without consulting the other Allies, and 'as so many insincere efforts for peace have already been put out semi-officially, you could not even consult your co-belligerents until a more definite proposal is made.'¹ A reply in this sense, after being approved by the Allied Ambassadors in London, was returned and the affair languished.

At the same time Germany was endeavoring to initiate secret negotiations through Baron Lancken, German High Civil Commissioner in Belgium, who made the suggestion that he hold conversations with no less a person than Aristide Briand, former Prime Minister. Briand was personally convinced that the overtures proceeded from a responsible source, probably from the Kaiser, and he told the French Government that he would be willing to attempt the mission. He made it plain to the agent bringing the suggestion from Lancken that no Frenchman would even think of undertaking conversations without an agreement among all the Allies and without knowing definitely that Germany was entirely disposed to concede Alsace-Lorraine to France; he had received the intimation within a fortnight that Germany thus understood the conditions of discussion.

In a letter to Ribot, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Briand laid the apparent willingness of Germany to make broad concessions before the French Government; he was himself so far convinced of German anxiety for peace that he offered to undertake unofficial negotiations which would not bind the Government, but which would determine definitely whether this was a serious proposition or a trap. Ribot, however, was suspicious, and the representatives of the other Allies, as well as Mr. Lansing, to whom the sense of Briand's

¹ Balfour to House, October 5, 1917; House to Wilson, October 5, 1917; Wilson to House, October 7, 1917. Reference is made to the proposal in *The Ordeal of a Diplomat*. 167-68, by Nabokoff, Russian Chargé in London.

letter was communicated, declined to follow the matter up.¹

In the mean time negotiations had been in progress between an Austrian and a French representative of the General Staff, which the Allied politicians watched with rather more interest; they hoped for the possibility of a separate peace with Austria, however firm they might be in their determination to make no peace with an unbeaten Germany. These Armand-Revertera negotiations had been begun during the summer, and were still in progress when the Clemenceau Ministry came into power. The new Premier told Armand to 'listen but to say nothing.' The Italians were naturally opposed to any conversations with Austria, for it was at the expense of Austria that they hoped to fulfill their war aims.

- To Lloyd George the thought of detaching Austria was always attractive, and he seized the opportunity offered by the informal conferences at Paris to broach it to his colleagues. Colonel House indicated mild approval, although he was not enthusiastic. He was ever willing to investigate any method which might end the war, provided it did not leave German militarism in political control and made possible the establishment of an international organization capable of maintaining a just settlement. He agreed with Briand that it was a mistake not to have gone more thoroughly into the Lancken proposals. He did not have much confidence, however, in the plan of separating Austria from Germany, and he was beginning to approach the view he later held firmly, that a solid peace could not be made so long as the Hapsburg Empire remained.

'November 29, 1917: After lunch, Lloyd George asked to see me again. He proposed that we should find out what Austria's peace terms are. Austria has made several ad-

¹ Ribot, *Lettres à un ami. Souvenirs de ma vie politique*, 289-97.

vances to the British, who have insisted that the terms be put in writing. George asked if I would back him if he insisted that this latest offer of Austria should be probed. I cheerfully acquiesced. . . . A conference was held in Pichon's room with Clemenceau, Pichon, de Margerie, representing France; Lloyd George, Balfour, and Addison representing Great Britain; Orlando and Sonnino representing Italy. . . .

'George precipitated the discussion by making a vehement argument in favor of investigating the Austrian peace feeler. Sonnino at once resented this and, for a moment, it looked as if there would be a first-class row. I backed Lloyd George as I had promised. . . . We finally got Sonnino and Orlando to consent to the proposal.

'We were in conference for something like two hours and a half. . . . George made an able argument, every word of which I endorsed, but it was done too precipitately. If we had first seen Clemenceau and gotten him in line, and then talked with Sonnino alone, the matter could have been settled in a few minutes and without causing any feeling. At one time it looked as if the Latins would line up against the Anglo-Saxons, but finally Clemenceau came over on our side and Sonnino and Orlando succumbed.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 30, 1917

Yesterday afternoon at a conference of the Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries of England, France, and Italy in which I sat, England was authorized to instruct her representatives in Switzerland to ascertain what terms Austria had to offer for a separate peace, which she has indicated a desire to make. . . .

This action was taken because of the probability of Russia soon making a separate peace.

EDWARD HOUSE

'December 1, 1917: Lloyd George and I walked together from the Foreign Office to the Hotel de Crillon. He was full of the proposed peace with Austria. . . .

'After dinner we [House, Lloyd George, and Reading] took up the question of Reading going to Switzerland to meet a representative of the Austrian Government to discuss the making of peace with Austria. . . . Reading thought it would not do for him to go because every one would wonder what the Lord Chief Justice of England was doing in Switzerland. . . .'

All plans for peace negotiations with Austria were doomed to failure, regardless of the ability of the negotiators. Instead of Lord Reading, General Smuts was sent to Switzerland, where he met the former Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to Great Britain, Count Mensdorff. Their conversations were quite inconclusive. The Austrian Government was sincerely anxious for peace; the Dual Monarchy had nothing to gain and everything to lose by the prolongation of the war. But it sought a general peace including Germany; it was unable even if it had been willing to separate its fortunes from those of the German Empire. Austria was equally unprepared for the sacrifices which the Allies, especially Italy, demanded. Negotiations in one form or another continued into the following spring, but at no time did they indicate a serious chance of a successful outcome.¹

VII

Equally abortive was the effort made by Colonel House to persuade the European Allies to issue a joint statement of war aims, which would weaken German propaganda and help the Allies to maintain friendly relations with Russia. Such a step, he maintained, was the more necessary because of the Bolshevik peace proposals and the increasing demand on the

¹ See below, Chapter XII.

part of liberal and labor elements in Allied countries for an assurance that the war was not being continued for imperialistic ends. The letter of Lord Lansdowne to the *Daily Telegraph*, published on November 29, summarized this feeling.¹

On December 3, Colonel House had a long conversation with Aristide Briand, in which the French statesman developed the thesis that the Allies were losing an opportunity to weaken Germany in the moral sense and also to define the essentially just conditions on which peace might be made. Briand was no defeatist, and was always convinced that the war must end by the breaking of German military power. But he wished to use brains as well as force.

Germany, he told Colonel House, had prosecuted the war both from a military and an ideological point of view; as regards the latter, she had shown greater intelligence than the Allies by constantly keeping before her people the one idea that she was fighting to prevent her economic extinction and to preserve her territory from dismemberment. She had neglected no opportunity to impress upon her people that they must continue to fight, because if the Allies were successful the condition of the German people would become one of abject servitude, through an economic domination over Germany and by the obligations which the people would be obliged to assume in the enormous financial burden placed upon a dismembered Germany.

It was necessary, said Briand, that their war aims should be formulated by the Allies in a concrete form, so that they

¹ Lord Lansdowne argued that negotiations might be attempted with Germany on the basis of certain guarantees, which he believed would enable the German liberals to overcome the imperialists; that the Allies were not seeking the annihilation of Germany as a great power; that she should be left the choice of her own form of government; that the Allies did not plan to destroy her commercial future; that they would, after the war, consider the questions connected with the freedom of the seas; that they would enter an association to settle disputes by peaceful methods. See above, p. 232, Colonel House's interview with Lansdowne.

could say to Germany: 'Here are our war aims, this is what we are fighting for; if you are willing to accept them we will have peace to-morrow.' He developed at some length his belief that a declaration of this kind, properly spread among the peoples of the Central Empires, would result in their urging or even compelling their Governments to undertake peace negotiations.

Colonel House was thoroughly in accord with the principle of Briand's suggestions. Only by a clear statement of revised war aims could the moral power of German defense be weakened. More positively it was important for Allied peoples to realize that the problem of the future settlement was different now from what it had been at the time the secret treaties were contracted. 'The future security of the world depended less upon juggling with boundaries than upon the destruction of Germany's power of offense. If the evil thing in Germany remained, no adjustment of territory would safeguard civilization; if it disappeared, such adjustment fell into its proper place as a means towards the greater end, to be applied with the concurrence and good will of the whole world.'¹ House had already written to President Wilson from London of his hope that for such reasons the Allies would agree upon a joint statement of liberal war aims.²

But House found that Mr. Lloyd George was committed too far to the British Conservatives to join enthusiastically in a plan for a liberal restatement of war aims, and at Paris the atmosphere was wholly unsympathetic. Clemenceau had undertaken his Ministry with the motto, '*Je fais la guerre,*' and feared lest such a manifesto on war aims might be regarded as a suggestion of pacifism. The Italians were dogged in their opposition and in their insistence upon the Treaty of London. Colonel House thus discovered that all he could hope for was to prevent any announcement of an imperial-

¹ Buchan, *op. cit.*, iv, 156.

² House to Wilson, November 11, 1917.

istic nature, and to secure, perhaps, a mild general restatement of war aims, not so liberal as he had desired, which might serve to reassure the Russians. He was also able to prevent the formulation of a policy, demanded by certain groups among the French and British, of assisting the anti-Bolshevik factions in Russia; a policy, he believed, which would merely unite war-weary Russia behind the faction that offered peace.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 25, 1917

... I am refusing to be drawn into any of their [Allied] controversies, particularly those of a territorial nature. We must, I think, hold to the broad principles you have laid down and not get mixed up in the small and selfish ones.¹

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 28, 1917

There have been cabled over and published here statements made by American papers to the effect that Russia should be treated as an enemy. It is exceedingly important that such criticisms should be suppressed. It will throw Russia into the lap of Germany if the Allies and ourselves express such views at this time.

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 30, 1917

I intend to offer this resolution for approval of the Inter-allied Conference:

¹ Comment by Sir William Wiseman on this cable: 'If that had only been followed at the Peace Conference!'

'The Allies and the United States declare that they are not waging war for the purpose of aggression or indemnity. The sacrifices they are making are in order that militarism shall not continue to cast its shadow over the world, and that nations shall have the right to lead their lives in the way that seems to them best for the development of their general welfare.'

If you have any objections please answer immediately. It is of vast importance that this be done. The British have agreed to vote for it.

EDWARD HOUSE

President Wilson immediately replied, cabling his endorsement of House's proposal. The paraphrase of his cable runs as follows:

Paraphrase of Wilson's Cable to House

WASHINGTON, December 1, 1917

The resolution you suggest is entirely in line with my thought and has my approbation. You will realize how desirable it is for the Conference to discuss terms of peace in a spirit conforming with my January address to the Senate.¹ Our people and Congress will not fight for any selfish aims on the part of any belligerent, with the possible exception of Alsace-Lorraine. Territorial aspirations must be left for decision of all, at Peace Conference, especially plans for division of territory such as have been contemplated in Asia Minor.² I think it will be obvious to all that it would be a fatal mistake to cool the ardor in America.

Colonel House found it impossible, however, to persuade the Conference to agree upon even the mild resolution he

¹ The speech of January 22, 1917.

² These plans were crystallized in the secret treaties of 1915, 1916, and 1917: the Sazonoff-Paléologue Agreement, the Sykes-Picot Treaty, the Treaty of Saint-Jean de Maurienne.

had drafted. They were not ready to resign the hopes of territorial acquisitions. The Italian delegates, in particular, regarded the most general statement as dangerous, since it might imply that the Allies were released from the promises they had made Italy in 1915.

'November 30, 1917: Baron Sonnino was as difficult to-day as he was yesterday. He is an able man, but a reactionary. . . . If his advice should carry, the war would never end, for he would never consent to any of the things necessary to make a beginning toward peace. . . .

'It was primarily a discussion as to what statement should be sent Russia. Balfour read a despatch from the British Ambassador at Petrograd, strongly recommending that the Allies release Russia from her promise to continue the war, giving his reasons for thinking this would be good policy. This brought violent opposition from Sonnino and a somewhat milder objection from Clemenceau. We finally sent for the Russian Ambassador here and asked his opinion. He decided against such a reply as the British Ambassador at Petrograd suggested, but recommended practically what I had proposed. It was finally decided to ask the Russian Ambassador to draw up a memorandum of what attitude he thought we should take and report to-morrow.

'I shall push to a conclusion to-morrow or next day my suggestion that this Conference state the Allied war aims, in some such terms as I outlined in my cable to the President.

'I feel a deep sympathy for the soldiers and sailors of the Allied nations who are dependent upon those of us here to give proper direction to the cause for which they are fighting. We are not doing all we could, and I realize it every time we meet in conference. . . . There is so little thought of aiding the military situation by diplomacy of a sane and helpful sort.

'December 1, 1917: The Lord Chief Justice and I had a long discussion on the Lansdowne letter and its effect upon the

British political situation. I thought Lloyd George was making a mistake in not insisting upon the resolution regarding a statement of our war aims. He could take the wind out of the sails of his opponents at home if he would join in pressing the Conference to do what seems to me so necessary at this time. . . . I called his attention to the lack of any [diplomatic] programme. The conferences we have with Clemenceau and Orlando are not fruitful of results, and the reason is that George and I never reach Clemenceau beforehand. It is perfectly hopeless trying to get Sonnino into anything progressive or constructive. . . .

'In our conference to-day various matters came up. The principal one was the resolution I had proposed. The Russian Ambassador was present and brought in several resolutions, any of which he thought would be of value to the Russian situation. Lloyd George tried to embody a part of what the Russian Ambassador said and all of what I had proposed. . . . It seemed to suit George, but it did not suit me. Sonnino then tried his conservative hand, and all the Conference approved excepting myself. I stated that in no event would the United States sign it; that they might draw up a resolution to suit themselves and sign it, but that the United States must rest just where we were now, that is, upon the broad constructive and progressive statements which the President had from time to time made.

'This threw the resolution in the "scrap-heap" because every one there knew that without the support of the United States it would be less than useless.'¹

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, December 2, 1917

There have been long and frequent discussions as to Russia, but the result has not been satisfactory to me. I

¹ See appendix to this chapter for text of proposed resolutions.

wanted a clear declaration along the lines of my cable to you of Friday. England passively was willing, France indifferently against it, Italy actively so. They were all willing to embody what I suggested if certain additions were made to which I could not agree. It was decided finally that each Power should send its own answer to its Ambassador at Petrograd, the substance of each answer to be that the Allies were willing to reconsider their war aims in conjunction with Russia and as soon as she had a stable government with whom they could act.

The Russian Ambassador at Paris believes it of great importance that you send a message to Russia through Francis¹ or otherwise, letting them know of the disinterested motives of the United States and of its desire to bring a disorderly world into a fraternity of nations for the good of all and for the aggrandizement of none.²

EDWARD HOUSE

From the inability of the Interallied Conference to agree

¹ American Ambassador to Russia.

² It is not certain that Mr. Wilson received this cable before he finished his Message to Congress delivered on December 4. The following passage in that Message corresponds closely to the statement which the Russian Ambassador wished the President to send. 'The wrongs,' said Mr. Wilson, 'the very deep wrongs committed in this war will have to be righted. That of course. But they cannot and must not be righted by the commission of similar wrongs against Germany and her allies. . . . Statesmen must by this time have learned that the opinion of the world is everywhere wide awake and fully comprehends the issues involved. . . . The congress that concludes this war will feel the full strength of the tides that run now in the hearts and consciences of free men everywhere. Its conclusions will run with those tides.'

'All these things have been true from the very beginning of this stupendous war; and I cannot help thinking that if they had been made plain at the very outset the sympathy and enthusiasm of the Russian people might have been once for all enlisted on the side of the allies, suspicion and distrust swept away, and a real and lasting union of purpose effected. . . . The Russian people have been poisoned by the very same falsehoods that have kept the German people in the dark, and the poison has been administered by the very same hands. The only possible antidote is the truth.'

upon a restatement of the war aims of the Entente in a liberal sense sprang the Fourteen Points. Colonel House was convinced that before the war ended, a definite and a liberal basis of peace should be agreed upon, partly as a means towards ending the war, partly to ensure a liberal peace. If the Allies would not formulate such a basis, he hoped that it would be undertaken by Wilson.

On December 1 he cabled the President, 'I hope you will not think it necessary to make any statement concerning foreign affairs until I can see you. This seems to me very important.' On the copy of the cable is endorsed in his own hand, 'I sent this cable to the President because I had in mind his making a statement giving our war aims. I tried to get this done at Paris, but failed. The next best thing was for the President to do it.'

Almost the first subject which House broached upon his return to Washington was this, and within three weeks the Fourteen Points were drafted.

APPENDIX

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO COLONEL HOUSE BY GENERAL PÉTAINE
[Translation]

December 6, 1917

Training of the American Army

It is necessary to hasten the training of the American army, both in the United States and in France, for the purpose of rendering its coöperation more rapid.

a) *In America*

General Pétain is prepared to send to the United States, if it should be necessary, supplementary Infantry instructors experienced in warfare.

An analogous measure for Artillery does not seem applicable by reason of the complications which the transportation of war material to the United States would involve. Artillery training must therefore take place in France. It is for that reason that it is necessary that the first group of divisions transported should include artillery.

b) *In France*

The training of the Companies, men, officers and subalterns, seems to be going well. The only thing lacking is the practice which can only be acquired in the sector.

Practice can rapidly be obtained at good advantage if the American army would, for a very short time, waive their feeling of national pride and depend completely upon the experience of the French army. Such practice would be the fruit of slower and more costly efforts if, desirous of flying too soon with its own wings, the American army gains its apprenticeship by receiving the lessons which the enemy will not fail to give it.

If the first of these methods is adopted it will be necessary:

For the Company

1. To continue its training at the rear — in contact with large French units and not by means of isolated instructors, as General Pershing had proposed;

2. To place the American army in a sector, not all at once in large units, but by fractions composed of: Regiments of Infantry, Groups of Artillery, . . . placed in the frame (*cadre*) of a large French unit.

This would be the case for each unit, for several weeks, up to the date when every one: chiefs of the units, frames (*cadres*), and men from the ranks, should have acquired the necessary experience.

For the frames [Cadres]

To have the general officers, Superior and of the Staff, whose training should be as complete as possible, execute numerous and prolonged periods of exercise, either before the arrival of their troops in France, or during the time that their troops are in the sector, under the conditions mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Conditions of Effective Coöperation of the American Army

This will take place with the maximum of speed if the dispositions above indicated are carried out.

American units of aviation, isolated units, could thus enter into action as soon as possible without waiting until the training of the large units is considered completely terminated. There are two reasons why this should be the case:

1. *Military*

All of the Allies should put the maximum of their forces into line as soon as possible to meet the Russian failure;

2. *Political*

French public opinion, however great its admiration for the effort of the United States, would understand with difficulty why the effective manifestation of this effort should take so long in coming.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL

December 1, 1917

(1) They instruct their permanent Military Advisers to examine the military situation and to report their recommendations as to the future plan of operations:

(2) In order to provide the Supreme War Council with the material for their examination the Governments represented undertake;

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(a) To supply the Supreme War Council with all such information of a general political and departmental character as is available for the war discussions of their own Cabinets or War Committees. This will include decisions of the Cabinets and War Committees relating to matters connected with the conduct of the War.

(b) To instruct their Ministries of War and General Staffs to furnish the permanent Military Advisers with their views and policy, with frequent regular statements of the order of battle and dislocation of their own and Allied Forces, and immediate notification of transfers of larger Units from one theatre of operations to another; with frequent regular statements of the order of battle and dislocation of enemy forces, with the reports embodying their conclusions as to enemy man-power, material and enemy conditions generally, and with immediate notification of important transfers and concentrations; with regular reports as to the strength of their own forces and memoranda on man-power situation and prospects; with regular reports of the existing and prospective position in regard to war material, and Military transportation. Commanders of the forces on the various fronts will in order to save time, repeat their daily communiqué direct to the Supreme War Council. Their more important Reports, as well as those of Heads of Military Missions and Military Attachés will be forwarded to the Supreme War Council through the respective General Staffs. The whole of the above information to be furnished with the least possible delay, in order that the Military Representatives shall be able to discuss the questions that will be raised at the Supreme War Council with a precise and up-to-date knowledge of the general military situation, and in complete touch with the views of their own Military Authorities.

(c) To instruct their Ministries of Marine (Admiralty) and Shipping to furnish the Supreme War Council with reports memoranda and appreciations bearing on the general condition of the War, and more particularly on problems affecting the transportation of troops and supplies.

(d) To instruct their Foreign Offices to supply the Supreme War Council with a general appreciation of the diplomatic situation at the present time, and henceforward to furnish regularly, and in the most expeditious manner possible, full information, whether received by despatch or telegram, on all diplomatic matters in any way connected with the War.

(e) To instruct their Departments dealing with Munitions, Aviation, Man-Power, Shipbuilding, Food (Stocks, Production and Distribution) and Finance, to furnish all the information necessary to enable the Supreme War Council to appreciate the situation from these respective points of view;

(3) In order to facilitate the reception and distribution of the information referred to above, each Section of the Supreme War Council will comprise a Permanent Secretarial Staff:

(4) The Permanent Secretarial Staffs of the respective Countries will, in concert, organize a Joint Secretarial Bureau for the production and distribution of the notices, agenda, protocols, and procès verbaux of the meetings of the Supreme War Council and for such other collective business as it may be found desirable to entrust to it.

The Italian Front

(5) The Supreme War Council instruct its permanent military advisers to study the immediate situation on the Italian front from the offensive as well as the defensive point of view, and to report to it as soon as possible, at any rate, within the next fortnight. The permanent military advisers are directed to make their requests to the Governments concerned for all the information they require, and the representatives of the respective Governments undertake to arrange that the information shall be furnished at once.

The Transport Problem. (a) General; (b) as affecting the Italian front.

(6) The Supreme War Council decide that it is desirable that the whole question of Inter-Allied Transport by sea and land shall be examined by a single expert, who shall report to it on the subject at the earliest possible date. It agreed that, if the British Government can spare his services, Sir Eric Geddes should be designated to carry out this investigation, and that, in the first instance, he shall examine the transportation problem as affecting the Italian and Salonika situations.

The representatives of the respective Governments undertake to give instructions to their technical experts and administrators to collaborate with Sir Eric Geddes, or, if his services cannot be made available, with such other expert as may be mutually agreed upon.

The Belgian Army

(7) The Supreme War Council instruct their permanent military advisers to examine and report on the utilization of the Belgian Army, and authorize them to apply to the Belgian Government, on their behalf, to furnish a report on the state of Belgian man-power.

The Military Situation in the Balkans. The Supply of Greece.

(8) The Supreme War Council decide:

(a) To recommend to their respective Governments that the food and other essential requirements of Greece, the promised military equipment, and the necessary means for transporting the same shall be supplied as a matter of military urgency.

(b) That its permanent military advisers shall follow up the question of the supply and equipment of the Greek Army.

(c) That its permanent military advisers shall study and report on the military situation in the Balkans, on the basis of information to be furnished by the Governments concerned.

(d) That the Governments concerned shall make the necessary financial advances to enable Greece to mobilize not less than nine divisions, and the Supreme War Council further requests the financial delegates of France, Great Britain and the United States of America to make, at once, the necessary arrangements for supplying Greece with the sum of 700,000,000 Francs, in the course of the year 1918, so as to clear off arrears amounting to 175,000,000 Francs, and to enable Greece to mobilize immediately not less than nine divisions.

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DRAFT RESOLUTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO RUSSIA

December 1, 1917

Proposition by M. Maklakoff

The Allied Conference, since there is in Russia no regular, effective Government recognized by the nations, addresses itself to all the citizens.

The Conference desires that every one in Russia should know that the Allies are determined to finish this war to the end but without any idea of conquest. Brought into the war by the odious militarism of Germany, they are fighting defensively and to assure peace upon the firm foundation of popular liberties. With this in mind, they will proceed to a revision of war aims together with Russia, so soon as there shall be a Government aware of its duties to the country and defending the interests of the country and not of the enemy.

Alternative proposition combining proposals by M. Maklakoff and Colonel House

The Conference of Paris — while affirming the willingness of the Allies to pursue without relaxation the struggle against the common enemy until the establishment of a definite peace founded on the right of nations to liberty — regrets that the absence in Russia of a regular Government recognized by the nation has not enabled it to submit in common to an exhaustive examination of the objects of the War.

Nevertheless, the Allies and the United States declare that they are not waging war for the purpose of aggression or indemnity. The sacrifices they are making are in order that the sword shall not continue to cast its shadow over the world, and that nations shall have the right to lead their lives in the way that seems to them best for the development of their general welfare.

CHAPTER X

THE ADJUSTMENT OF EFFORT

If this war is to be won, better team work between the Allies must be effected.

Report of Colonel House to President Wilson, December 14, 1917

I

THE Interallied Conference held its second and final plenary session on December 3, like the first purely formal in character and devoted to the brief reports of the expert committees. It was notable on the personal side in that it listened to one of the few speeches ever delivered by Colonel House, who had been asked by M. Clemenceau thus to close the Conference. He restrained his impulse to issue a public plea for a liberal revision of war aims, and limited his address to a couple of short paragraphs. 'I am writing something harmless,' he confessed to his diary.¹ 'I wish I could say what I would really like to say, but I do not dare to do so. More would be lost than could be gained. . . . I have determined to wait until my return and ask the President to say with all the authority back of him what ought to be said at this time.'

On the evening of December 6 the American Mission

¹ As delivered the speech fulfilled its purpose. Colonel House said:

'M. Clemenceau, in welcoming the delegates to this Conference, declared that we had met to work. His words were prophetic. There have been coördination and unity of purpose which promise great results for the future. It is my deep conviction that by this unity and concentrated effort we shall be able to arrive at the goal which we have set out to reach.

'In behalf of my colleagues I want to avail myself of this occasion to thank the officials of the French Government, and through them the French people, for the warm welcome and great consideration they have shown us. In coming to France we felt that we were coming to the house of our friends. Ever since our Government was founded there has been a bond of interest and sympathy between us — a sympathy which this war has fanned into passionate admiration. The history of France is the

slipped quietly out of Paris,¹ was taken to Brest by a circuitous route, and the following day embarked upon the *Mount Vernon*, to face the labors that awaited them in the United States. 'Colby said to-day,' wrote Colonel House on December 7, 'as the shores of France faded into the mist, "We have been so used to potentates and kings that the first thing we should do upon arrival in the United States is to take a week's course at Child's Restaurant, sitting on a stool, and getting down again to our own level." He thought also it would aid us in getting back to normal to take an upper berth on the midnight train from Washington to New York.'

The reference to 'potentates and kings' does not suggest the real achievements of the American War Mission. The conferences into which the technical experts had entered proved to be far more than a mere exchange of information. They had resulted in the drafting of a specific programme of economic coördination and established the machinery that was to put it into effect. It is difficult to overstate the significance of this accomplishment. 'Nations remember only the high spots of wars,' writes the High Commissioner for Franco-American Affairs. 'What did they grasp of the tragic period of 1917-18? The Rumanian disaster, Caporetto, the British Fourth Army, the Chemin des Dames.

history of courage and sacrifice. Therefore the great deeds which have illuminated the last three years have come as no surprise to us of America. We knew that when called upon France would rise to splendid achievement and would add lustre to her name. America salutes France and her heroic sons, and feels honored to fight by the side of so gallant a comrade.'

¹ 'Of all the mole-like activities of Colonel House,' wrote Mr. Grasty in the *New York Times* on January 22, 1918, 'the climax was his departure. . . . Only two persons knew the hour set for departure and where the party were going — the Colonel and the naval commander in charge [Commander Andrew F. Carter]. . . . Perhaps the Colonel had made a quiet bet with himself on his ability to take the party of fifteen or twenty persons out of the most conspicuous setting in Paris without anybody being the wiser.'

Were those the decisive events of the great struggle? No! The essential things were the problems of transportation, rotation of shipping and submarine sinkings, the financial problem, the problems of coöperation. Any shortcoming in the adjustment of effort, any breakdown in the machinery of supply, might have left our soldiers weaponless.¹ It was in such terms that Colonel House judged the achievements of the Interallied Conference.

'The good the Conference has done,' he wrote while still in Paris, 'in the way of coördinating the Allied resources, particularly the economic resources, can hardly be estimated. Heretofore, everything has been going pretty much at sixes and sevens. From now there will be less duplication of effort. What the United States can do better than Great Britain, France, or Italy we will do; what they can do better will be largely left to them. No one excepting those on the inside can know of the wasted effort there has been. This Conference may therefore well be considered the turning point in the war even though the fortunes of the Allies have never seemed so low as now.'

For such an adjustment of war effort the American experts were chiefly responsible; they regarded it as their function to enforce it upon the Allies, who had thus far, among themselves, failed in the American sense to bring the concentrated weight of their resources to bear in the struggle against Germany. The necessities of the situation were forcibly expressed in the following letter of Mr. Paul D. Cravath, legal adviser to the War Mission.

¹ Tardieu, *France and America*, 224.

Mr. Cravath to Colonel House

PARIS, December 6, 1917

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

... There has been a ghastly lack of coördination between the Allies throughout the war both as to military and political action, resulting in an incalculable waste of lives and effort. While it seems to be generally recognized that, as the result of the collapse of Russia's military effort and the disaster in Italy, there is greater need than ever for a close and sympathetic coördination of the efforts of Great Britain, France, and Italy, very little real progress has thus far been made in accomplishing that result. This is due, in great measure, to the apparently ineradicable mutual suspicion and differences in temperament and method between the British and the French. The relations with Italy are complicated by her own peculiar ambitions in the war which make full coöperation between her and France and England very difficult.

My observations lead me to believe that the recent conferences in Paris would have accomplished very little in the direction of the arrangements for coördinated effort had it not been for the presence of the American delegates and their patient but firm insistence upon conclusions being reached while the conferences were together. It would be difficult to overstate the good which you and your Mission have thus accomplished although the work of forcing effective coördination has only begun.

I am convinced that there cannot be an effective organization and coördination of the efforts and resources of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy for the winning of the war until the United States is represented here on the ground by an important representative in every department of effort with the capacity and authority to make prompt decisions in consultation with the home Government and to force an agreement between the British,

French, and Italians on the important questions both political, economic, and military, which will constantly arise. Indeed I think there should be duplicate organizations for London and Paris each headed by an able man supported by an adequate staff. . . .

The British and the French realize the need of the active intervention of the Americans and will welcome it.¹ Indeed one is startled by the almost universal feeling among the statesmen of both countries that they must look to the United States for the leadership and energy which are necessary for the winning of the war. We therefore have not only the power to enforce our decisions but there is a willingness to accept them. This is a terrible responsibility that our entrance into the war has forced upon us but it must be accepted to the limit if the war is to be conducted effectively. . . .

With best wishes, I am as ever

Very sincerely yours

PAUL D. CRAVATH

The Americans themselves, so far as their national organization was concerned, yielded to the necessity of centralization despite their general repugnance to it, and they demanded the same of the Allies in the international organization. They vested control in the various boards that ruled American industrial life with an iron despotism.

'These domineering controllers of the economic and intellectual life of the United States,' wrote Tardieu, 'left a bad taste in the mouths of many citizens; yet they were the price of victory. Thanks to their control, a market glutted with orders, a market in which unbridled competition had led to an insane increase in prices, was reduced to order within a few weeks, with equality of treatment for all

¹ This conclusion does not entirely coincide with M. Tardieu's opinion.

and a general fall in prices. Every need of America, every need of Europe, was satisfied. Demand here and supply there were adjusted to one another. Government, taking over factories and regulating transportation, became the absolute master of all production and distribution. An undreamed-of America was being created for the purpose of war.

'This new America imposed the same law of uniformity upon its associates. . . . When Americans fall in love with an idea, even if their enthusiasm does not last, it is always intense. In 1917 and 1918, they had a passion for the organization of interallied war machinery, the weight of which was not always borne gladly by Europe. McAdoo did not succeed in forcing absolute financial unity, although with Northcliffe and myself he had drawn up plans for it, and doubtless the debtors lost more than the creditors. But in every other field the Americans finally had their way. After America's entry into the war, the interallied boards in London and Paris, boards of control for steel, wood, oil, wheat, food, shipping, assumed their definite form and produced their best results. After four years of experiment and dispersion, control reached something in the nature of perfection towards the end of 1918. Had the war lasted another year, the machinery would have been running with incredible smoothness.'¹

The historian disposed to wax ironical would probably observe that one great problem had been settled not by human ingenuity but rather by the force of events. The chief anxiety of the Allies in the summer of 1917 had been whether the United States could advance the credits that seemed necessary; their chief disappointment had been the unwillingness to promise the monthly half-billion desired. Mr. McAdoo would make no promises until Allied demands

¹ Tardieu, *France and America*, 234.

were coördinated. But by the end of the autumn the Allies no longer could use the credits which the United States was willing to advance, for the reason that the materials to be purchased by the Allies in America were not available. As Lord Reading had foreseen, a limit was placed upon Allied loans not by American incapacity to lend, but because the American market was unable to supply the tremendous demands for materials of both the American and Allied armies. You cannot spend money when the articles you want to buy are lacking.

This fact robbed of much of its significance the creation, immediately after the Paris Conference, of the Interallied Council on War Purchases and Finance. This council represented the nearest possible approach to the American Treasury's solution of the problem of confusion in Allied demands for financial aid. Sitting in London and Paris, under the presidency of the American representative, Mr. Crosby, it was designed to coördinate purchases by the Allies, to serve as a clearing house for information as to Allied needs for funds, and to develop a unified policy relating to loans that might be made to the Allies by the United States. It worked in coöperation with the Supreme War Council and other interallied councils.

As a result of the Paris Conference there were also created an Interallied Munitions Council, an Interallied Petroleum Conference, an Interallied Food Council, an Allied Maritime Transport Council. The Munitions Council was not effectively organized until the following summer, but the others came into active operation early in 1918. The Food Council, composed of the representatives of the food controllers of the Allied countries, was designed primarily to allocate stocks of food and prepare transport programmes. The Maritime Transport Council, seated in London, was to supervise the general conduct of Allied transport, and to obtain the most effective use of tonnage, while leaving each

nation responsible for the management of the tonnage under its control. Various other organs of interallied coöperation developed afterwards, as special needs became obvious.

Apart from the creation of such new interallied mechanism, the Paris Conference led to general agreements in the vital questions of blockade, naval coöperation, man-power, and tonnage. The Chairman of the War Trade Board, Mr. Vance McCormick, had carried on a long series of conversations with Lord Robert Cecil, British Minister of Blockade, and the French and Italian representatives.

'In general it may be said,' wrote Mr. McCormick, in his report, 'that the conferences in London and Paris cleared the ground of all technical misunderstandings. The blockade authorities of the four countries understand each other from the point of view of commodities, industry, trade and exchange. Any question that may arise in these directions will from now on be trivial and easily settled by cable. There remain only questions of policy, which change with the progress of the war, and under these circumstances, future negotiations ought to be greatly simplified as compared to those of the past. The hearty coöperation afforded us in London by Lord Robert Cecil and in Paris by Minister Lebrun, and their respective staffs, make possible a much closer coördination of our work, and a better understanding with our Allies upon all blockade matters.'

As to naval affairs, the Paris Conference resulted in the creation of the Interallied Naval Council, designed 'to insure the closest touch and complete coöperation between the Allied fleets.' Its membership included the Allied Ministers of Marine and their chiefs of naval staffs, and flag officers representing the United States and Japan. This promised much for the future, but the conversations of Admiral Benson led to decisions of more immediate impor-

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E. W. House whom I feel honored in calling my friend
W. Benson

ADMIRAL BENSON

YSAARU IITBACRIM

AMERICAN

tance. In his secret memorandum for Colonel House he summarized them as follows:

'Decision to send division of battleships to join British Grand Fleet immediately. Tentative agreement to send entire Atlantic Fleet to European waters in the spring provided conditions warrant such action. A joint decision to undertake with the British the closing of the North Sea by establishing and maintaining a mine barrage. An assurance by the British Government that the Straits of Dover will be efficiently closed, and that steps will be taken immediately with this object in view. Decision upon a definite plan of offensive operations in which our forces will participate in the near future. . . . Agreement entered into with British Admiralty which permits the officer commanding the U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters to attend the daily morning conference in the Admiralty. An agreement to have three of our officers detailed for duty in the planning section of the British Admiralty in order to secure closer coöperation and in order that we may have full information at all times as to just what plan of operations the British Admiralty may be considering. . . .'¹

Admiral Benson did not conceal his admiration of the accomplishments of the British Navy. 'I was particularly

¹ Admiral Benson makes the following comment, June 16, 1928: 'The above were the result of numerous conferences between officials of the B.A. and myself. I was to find no suggestion had come from that side in these important points. It was absolutely necessary to close the Straits of Dover before planting the barrage across the North Sea. The British stated they could not get the anchors to hold on the slimy bottom of the Dover Straits. I suggested they cast large heavy blocks of concrete with long sharp spikes extending beneath them; these spikes would then stick down into the bottom and hold the blocks to which the lines for holding the mines could be made fast. Much to my surprise, as late as my visit in November, 1917, German submarines were still passing in and out through the Straits of Dover. This was stopped, and the barrage, of which we planted eighty-two per cent in the North Sea, practically bottled up the German submarine.'

impressed,' he wrote, 'with the magnitude of the task that had been undertaken by the British Navy in order to accomplish their purposes and with the success which their efforts were meeting. I was also very much impressed with the energy and zeal displayed by all British naval officers with whom I came in contact.'

II

Whatever hopes for the future were stimulated by the programme drafted by the Paris Conference, the reports of the American War Mission indicated only too plainly the serious character of the immediate situation. All the members of the Mission were impressed by the exhaustion of Europe and the need of extraordinary exertions on the part of the United States, if defeat were to be averted. Colonel House, while praising the work of the Mission, was not optimistic as regards the plans for military coördination and stated frankly that 'unless a change for the better comes, the Allies cannot win.' Admiral Benson and General Bliss agreed that a supreme crisis was to be expected in the approaching spring, the outcome of which would depend largely upon the winter efforts of the United States and the influence we might exert in the direction of improved co-ordination. The confidential reports of all three were expressed in rather serious tones.

Report of Colonel House

[Excerpt]

... If this war is to be won, better team work between the Allies must be effected. As now conducted there is great loss of energy and resources. Duplication is going on in some directions — in others men and money are being wasted.

The Central Powers are not overmatched, because their resources are perfectly mobilized and under single control.

The individual German soldier is perhaps not so good as the English, but the German military machine is superior to that of either England or France. The difficulties under which the English and Americans have to fight are a great handicap. Not only have they wide distances from which to gather their forces and maintain them, but these difficulties are enormously enhanced by having to create and maintain a huge army in a foreign land amongst a people with different habits, customs and prejudices.

The diplomatic end of such an undertaking is nearly as great as the military end, and General Pershing is beginning to realize this.

Unless a change for the better comes the Allies cannot win, and Germany may. For six months or more the ground has been steadily slipping away from the Allies. . . .

The English and French are insistent that our troops should be placed amongst theirs as soon as they come over. The argument is that it would give them better and quicker training, and would also help them [the English and French] withstand the great German drive which they believe is imminent. The drive, I think, will be made, and every possible help should be given them to withstand it, for if it is successful the war on land will have finished. On the other hand, they are asking us to do what the Canadians and Australians have refused to do. If once we merge with them we will probably never emerge. The companies and battalions placed with them would soon be mere fragments. Then, too, if they are placed in such a position they will not get along well with either the English or French and will never get credit for the sacrifices they make. It can, I think, be taken for granted that this plan would be the most effective immediate help we could give the French and English, but it would be at great cost to us.

We found the morale of the people high in England. The more fortune goes against them the steadier and more

determined they are to win. In France the morale was also good. There were no signs of weakening. In England the people are more sober than on my last visit. London is gloomy. There was a lack of bustle that I had never seen before and indications of depression. Every one seems now to realize what this war means, and the blitheness of former years has given way to grim determination. Food, gasoline and other useful commodities are being conserved. In France it is otherwise. Paris is normal in appearance. The streets are lively — the people cheerful, and food, gasoline, etc., are plentiful. . . . I was told that if restrictions were placed upon the French people they would rebel. That the only way they could be kept going at the top notch was to let them have their way in this direction. . . .

The Supreme War Council as at present constituted is almost a farce. It could be the efficient instrument to win the war. The United States can make it so, and I hope she will exercise her undisputed power to do it.

In conclusion I wish to record my appreciation of the individual work of the Members of this Mission. Whatever success it has had as a force for good is due to them. In all my experience of men I have never known better and more intelligent team work. There has been no confusion of purpose — no slacking in the pursuit of the objects to be obtained and there has been absolutely no personal differences or friction to retard their work. They have been amenable to both advice and suggestion and have left the impression in England and France of men of great ability and of equally great modesty. They have had to do with their opposites having the rank of Cabinet Ministers but no one who conferred with them for a moment doubted they were conferring with their equals.

E. M. HOUSE

U.S.S. Mount Vernon
December 14, 1917

Report of Admiral Benson

[Excerpt]

... I believe that no time should be lost nor should any effort be spared to assist all the Allies at the earliest possible date and to the utmost extent by any means which will help towards the prosecution of the war.

'In order for us to efficiently render assistance to the allied cause in keeping with our resources and expressed determination, a logical administration of tonnage having in view the defeat of Germany is imperative. It matters not what flag any ship or ships may sail under provided they are engaged in carrying out well-defined plans for the accomplishment of the above purpose which meet with the approval of the several governments concerned.

W. S. BENSON

Chief of Naval Operations

On Board U.S.S. Mount Vernon
14 December, 1917

Report of General Bliss

[Excerpt]

... A military crisis is to be apprehended culminating not later than the end of next spring, in which, without great assistance from the United States, the advantage will probably lie with the Central Powers.

This crisis is largely due to the collapse of Russia as a military factor and to the recent disaster in Italy. But it is also largely due to the lack of military coördination, lack of unity of control on the part of the allied forces in the field.

This lack of unity of control results from military jealousy and suspicion as to ultimate national aims.

Our allies urge us to profit by their experience in three and a half years of war; to adopt the organization, the types of

artillery, tanks, etc., that the test of war has proved to be satisfactory. We should go further. In making the great military effort now demanded of us we should also demand as a prior condition that our allies also profit by the experience of three and a half years of war in the matter of absolute unity of military control. National jealousies and suspicions and susceptibilities of national temperament must be put aside in favor of this unified control, even going, if necessary (as I believe it is), to the limit of unified *command*. Otherwise, our dead and theirs may have died in vain. . . .

To meet a probable military crisis we must meet the unanimous demand of our allies to send to France the maximum number of troops that we can send as early in the year 1918 as possible. There may be no campaign of 1919 unless we do our best to make the campaign of 1918 the last.

To properly equip these troops so that we may face the enemy with soldiers and not merely men, we should accept every proffer of assistance from our allies, continuing our own progress of construction for later needs, but accepting everything from them which most quickly meets the immediate purposes of the war and which will most quickly enable us to play a decisive part in it. This should be the only test.

To transport these troops before it is too late we should take every ton of shipping that can possibly be taken from trade. Especially should every ton be utilized that is now lying idle, engaged neither in trade nor in war. The Allies and the neutrals must tighten their belts and go without luxuries and many things which they think of as necessities must be cut to the limit. Every branch of construction which can be devoted to an extension of our shipbuilding programme, and which is not vitally necessary for other purposes, should be so devoted in order to meet the rapidly growing demands for ships during 1918. The one all-absorb-

ing necessity now is soldiers with which to beat the enemy in the field, and ships to carry them.

TASKER H. BLISS
Chief of Staff

On Board U.S.S. Mount Vernon
14 December, 1917

III

Such were the reports which Colonel House brought back from Paris. Their essence was contained in the mutual agreement that the United States must supply the men and the supplies lacking in Europe; the Allies would equip those men with their own surplus supplies and would find boats to help carry them. The War Mission landed in New York on Saturday, December 15.

Colonel House to the President

U.S.S. Mount Vernon
December 15, 1917

DEAR GOVERNOR:

We expect to land this afternoon and if convenient to you I will take the 11.08 Monday morning, reaching Washington at 4.40 P.M.

I have had the Mission working all the way over on reports for their respective Departments and a summary for your information and that of the State Department. These are ready and go forward along with my own to Washington by Gordon to-night.

I hope you will find that the Mission has been successful and well worth while.

Looking eagerly forward to being with you again, I am

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

To this the President replied with a telegram: Delighted that you are safely back. He added that he looked forward

'with the utmost pleasure' to seeing House on the following day and hoped that he would stay at the White House.¹

Mr. Wilson was apparently chiefly interested in the plans for unity of military control and the possible development of the Supreme War Council. As he later explained to House he could not agree to send over the large American army that was needed unless he had guarantees that it would be utilized in the most efficient manner possible, regardless of national susceptibilities.

'December 17, 1917: I came to Washington to-day,' wrote House in his diary. 'I drove to the White House first, intending to leave my bags and go on to Janet's [Mrs. Gordon Auchincloss], but I found the President in his study waiting for me. We had a conference which lasted from five until seven o'clock. . . .

'I gave the President a report of my activities in London and Paris and he seemed deeply interested. I shall not go into detail, but I recommended that he send General Tasker H. Bliss over as soon as he could make ready to act as our Military Adviser in the Supreme War Council. I explained the formation and working of that Council and how inefficient it had been made because of [the] determination to eliminate the British Chief of Staff and the General Commanding in the Field.

'In reply to his query as to how matters could be remedied, I thought it would be necessary to wait until we had a force on the firing line sufficient to give us the right to demand a voice in the conduct of the military end of the war.'

The President then took up the advisability of sending an American political representative to sit in the Council with the Prime Ministers, and expressed his determination to send over Colonel House within a month or so. He added that he

¹ Wilson to House, December 16, 1917.

could not send any one else. Quick decisions would be necessary and a representative must be there who would not have to refer every detail back to the President.

This decision Wilson did not carry out until the following autumn, when he sent House over as his personal representative in the Supreme War Council.¹ On the other hand, arrangements were made for despatching General Bliss immediately, as Military Adviser, so that he was able to attend the important meeting of the War Council at the end of January.

The President was evidently much impressed by General Bliss's arguments for the need of unified military control, even if it meant unified command. A short time later M. André Tardieu, returning from France, discussed the question with Wilson.

'In January, 1918,' writes M. Tardieu, 'on my return from Paris, where, in order to continue my work in America, I had refused a portfolio in the Clemenceau Cabinet, I had the following conversation with President Wilson about the Supreme Command. The President, to whom I pointed out the difficulties attendant upon such a measure, replied: "You will have to come to it, just the same. What does Mr. Clemenceau think?" "He is thoroughly in favour of it," I said. "Whom does he suggest?" asked the President. I answered, "General Foch." By his influence on England, Mr. Wilson from that moment never ceased to pave the way for the decision reached in March, 1918.'²

There was another aspect to the question of the efficiency of the new plans for interallied coöperation. Could the United States make good the promises which the American War Mission had made providing for American men and

¹ See below, Volume IV, Chapter III.

² Tardieu, *France and America*, 235.

supplies? 'We and our allies each know,' said the *Newark News*, on January 3, 'what we are to do to play our part in the coördinated plan. . . . Now it is up to us democratic peoples to show that we can be more efficient in voluntary co-ordination than the Central Powers. . . . A plan is worth only what is made of it. It is a beginning and only a beginning.'

If the United States was to play its part efficiently there would have to be an immediate speeding-up and smoothing-out of the work of the war boards. Both in Europe and in America there was much pessimism. Colonel House received from the French and British constant reminders of the need of man-power and tonnage. They began with an explicit note from M. Clemenceau, setting down in clear terms the understanding reached by the military leaders as to the number of troops to be sent and the need of severe restriction of exports in order to make possible their transport. Other messages emphasized the need of materials, or of shipbuilding, or of letting the American forces go into the line in small units, as part of the French or British forces.

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, December 6, 1917

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

At the moment of closing the Allied Conference I beg to emphasize the dominant idea, always in our minds while drafting our programme, which compels the Allies 'to restrain their imports in order to liberate the most tonnage possible, in view of the transport of American troops.' The Government of the Republic feels that immediate coöperation between the Allies must be vigorously exercised at the moment of establishing a joint programme of imports, and that they must bear in mind the absolute necessity of reserving the tonnage indispensable for the transport to the Western Front of the American contingents.

The French Government made known to the members of

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*Au Colonel House,
Bien cordial souvenir,*

J. A. H.
3.7.14.

MARSH LITTON

APR 1964

the Conference of Maritime Transport that it estimated as follows the absolute minimum of American troops which ought to be transported to France:

For the present:

Two divisions a month — or 60,000 men.

Beginning with the month of April:

Three divisions a month — or 90,000 men.

Without counting the elements of Armies and the various services which would be in addition.

Which would make of troops to be received:

From now to the first of April	240,000	combatants
From first April to the end of 1918	810,000	“
Total	1,050,000	“

Mr. Colby¹ has been informed of the enclosed memorandum of General Bliss communicating the unanimous opinion arrived at by:

General Bliss — Chief of Staff of the American Army;

General Pershing — Commanding the American Expeditionary Corps;

General Robertson — Chief of Staff of the British Army;

General Foch — Chief of Staff of the French Army;

according to which 24 divisions are to be brought to France before the end of June, 1918.

While leaving to the experts the care of calculating the tonnage necessary to effectuate the transport of these contingents, the French Government adopts entirely the conclusions of this memorandum.

Please receive, Dear Colonel House, the expression of my sentiments of high consideration.

CLEMENCEAU

Sir William Wiseman to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

December 15, 1917

The most urgent problem at present is man-power to secure our Western line against the formidable German at-

¹ As representative of the Shipping Board.

tacks which may be expected through the winter. When these have failed, the military party will have lost the great temporary prestige which they now hold, and a strong Liberal reaction may be looked for. It is vitally important that the United States come to the assistance of the Allies with manpower immediately; that United States troops now in France should take their place by companies in the line with our men, as suggested to you in Paris, and also that reinforcements should be hurried from America at all costs. The next few months will be critical.

WILLIAM WISEMAN

Mr. Lloyd George to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *December 15, 1917*

Having regard to Russian situation and the fact that both guns and troops are being rapidly transferred from the Eastern to the Western Front, the Cabinet are anxious that an immediate decision should be come to in regard to the inclusion with the British units of regiments or companies of American troops, an idea which was discussed with you at Paris. In the near future and throughout the earlier months of next year the situation on the Western Front may become exceedingly serious, and it may become of vital importance that the American man power available in France should be immediately used, more especially as it would appear that the Germans are calculating on delivering a knockout blow to the Allies before a fully trained American army is fit to take its part in the fighting.

LLOYD GEORGE

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *December 17, 1917*

We are receiving information from very trustworthy source to the effect that the United States shipbuilding pro-

gramme for 1918 is not likely to exceed 2,000,000 tons. You will realize from our discussions here and in Paris, which were conducted on basis that United States would produce 6,000,000 tons — afterwards increased to 9,000,000, how serious a view the War Cabinet take of this news. The American ship-building programme is absolutely vital to the success in the War. May I urge that immediate steps be taken to ascertain the real situation in respect to shipbuilding as all depends upon estimate being realized.

LLOYD GEORGE

*M. Tardieu to M. de Billy*¹

[Cablegram]

PARIS, December, 1917

Make the American Government understand that we are about to enter upon an extremely difficult period. A heavy German attack on our front with reënforcements brought from Russia is almost certain before the end of the winter. Our army was never in better condition, nor was its morale ever higher. Lay stress upon that; it is the absolute truth. But for France to hold without risk of surprises, we need men, cereals, gasoline, and steel. So the United States must make a great effort at once. 1. Hasten the arrival of troops. 2. Get wheat to the docks and apply to war transport 500,000 tons of shipping taken from commandeered vessels. 3. Take from Standard Oil eight or ten tank steamers. Load steel on all troop transports. See Colonel House. Give him this cable. Tell him that I am convinced that the issue depends on the next six months.

TARDIEU

IV

Anxious weeks followed the return of the American War Mission, for the strain of the emergency programme neces-

¹ Tardieu, *France and America*, 232.

sitated by Allied demands almost broke down the United States war organization while it was still in embryonic form. A letter to Colonel House from Mr. Thomas Nelson Perkins, representative of the War Industries Board on the War Mission, indicates the intensity of the crisis. It is typical of many others.

Mr. Perkins to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, *January 15, 1918*

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

... In spite of the fact that many people are saying and writing substantially what I have in mind, I am going to inflict a letter upon you about the situation here as I see it, in the hope that you will see it in the same way, and will be able to do something about it which I obviously cannot.

I do not suppose that I begin to know or appreciate as you do the seriousness of the situation to-day. I do know, however, that the situation on the Western Front is so critical as to cause those who know best grave anxiety. I do know that the authorities in England and France regard it as vital that we should get a large number of men into France for service in the near future. I know that there are certain materials which we have got to furnish to the British and the French in order that they may be in a position to make the effort which they have got to make if they are going to hold the German army.

I believe that our failure to do what is expected of us by the French army may have a disastrous effect upon the French morale, so that our failure will not only deprive our allies of the physical help which they need, but it may also demoralize, perhaps seriously, their own forces.

In spite of the danger which my reason tells me may exist that the Germans may win the war within the next six or eight months, I do not believe that they will. My guess is that they will make a supreme effort and be unable to push

it through, and that after they have exhausted themselves by their supreme effort the war will wear down to another period of deadlock, which will last until either we are able to amass in France a force sufficient to make an overwhelming effort, or there comes a civilian break on one side or the other which will bring about an end of the war.

In addition to a German victory, I believe that there is another danger that is worthy of consideration, and that is the danger that the people of some of the countries exhausted by the state of war may overthrow the Governments, so that the world will be facing, to a greater or less extent, the conditions which now exist in Russia. I believe that the longer the war lasts the greater is this danger. I don't think that this danger is going to materialize, but I don't think it is wholly impossible.

On both accounts I think it is most essential that we should do everything in our power to bring the war to a successful conclusion at the earliest possible moment.

I think that the contribution that the President has made, in seeing as no other national leader has done, the underlying principles of the struggle, and in calling attention to and emphasizing those principles, has been a great contribution. But this contribution is not enough unless it is backed by the physical contribution of men and materials. Our allies may be crushed; and even if they are not, the value of the contribution will be lessened because it may come to be regarded as the vision of a dreamer at the head of a nation which is incapable of effective practical work.

When we come to consider the situation here from the point of view of practical work, the results so far are not satisfactory. . . .

Obviously it is no time for indiscriminate criticism. Criticism in such a time as this is only excusable for constructive purposes, to ascertain whether changes are necessary, and then try to see what needs to be remedied and how.

That the situation has been bad there can be no question. That if the country should really know how bad the situation has been there might be a serious revulsion of feeling, seems to me probable.

Now the question is, what is to be done?

The two great things which seem to me lacking are:

1st. An organization; and

2nd. An understanding of the seriousness of the problem that is facing us.

To-day there is no body or person in our Government whose function it is to decide what is the practical plan of the Government. . . .

In addition to a body to determine what is to be done, I am also satisfied that there should be a body whose job it is to supply the needs as formulated by the first body. The most efficient supply department in the world, however, can be of no real use unless there is somebody to determine what is to be supplied.

Yours very truly

THOMAS N. PERKINS

[Added in longhand:] Can you do anything about this? We are talking — Time is passing — Time is very much of the essence — Practically every one I see has the same view. . . . Can't the good work be pushed?

The process of centralizing responsibility, through which a real organization was finally developed, is not fully revealed by the papers of Colonel House. His connection with it consisted largely in his bringing to the President's attention the gist of such letters as the above. In the end, despite delays and mistakes, the chief needs of the Allies were met and America was able to contribute her share to the common victory.

'All my life,' writes André Tardieu, 'I shall remember the

United States as it then was. A vast war machine, quickened by patriotism; its soul aflame; one hundred million men, women, and children with every nerve strained towards the ports of embarkation; chimneys smoking; trains rushing through the warm nights; women in the stations offering hot coffee to troops on their way to the front; national hymns rising to heaven; meetings for Liberty Loans in every church, in every theatre, at every street corner; immense posters on the walls, "You are in it, you must win it." Immense and unhopd for achievement which despite the extremity of our peril and the righteousness of our cause had demanded weeks and months of preparation. In order to understand one another, to adjust both principles and their application, it had been necessary to adapt, to explain, to coördinate. The triumph of this adjustment spelled success. Haphazard methods would have meant failure.' ¹

¹ Tardieu, *France and America*, 238.

CHAPTER XI

THE FOURTEEN POINTS

The President wishes me to let the Prime Minister or you know that he feels he must presently make some specific utterance as a counter to the German peace suggestions. . . . We have so far been playing into the hands of the German military party . . .

Colonel House to Mr. Balfour, January 5, 1918

I

THE positive importance of the American War Mission in Europe, as the preceding chapter indicates, is to be found in the effect it had upon the war effort of the United States. It made plain the necessity of speeding American production and training American troops; it led to the creation of the various interallied councils which provided for proper coordination between the needs of the Allies and the capacity of the United States to supply them.

Negatively the Mission was of equal historical importance, since by its very omissions it led to the Fourteen Points. Historians have often wondered why Wilson chose to make the speech of the Fourteen Points at the particular moment he selected. According to the evidence in the House Papers, it was because the American Mission failed to secure from the Interallied Conference the manifesto on war aims that might serve to hold Russia in the war and result in an effective diplomatic offensive against the Central Powers. Complete diplomatic unity between the Allies and the United States would have formed the most useful weapon in such a policy. Because of the failure to achieve this unity at Paris, President Wilson was compelled to undertake the diplomatic offensive on his own responsibility.

‘What is still lacking,’ wrote House at the close of the Interallied Conference, ‘and what this Conference has not

brought about, is intelligent diplomatic direction. It is disappointing to come to a gathering of this sort and not find an appreciation of the needs of the hour. We should have formulated a policy here as broad, as far-reaching, and as effective as the coördination of our military, naval, and economic resources has been. It should have been a world-appealing policy and one which would have shaken Germany behind the lines.'

Immediately after his return from Paris, Colonel House discussed this topic with the President. On December 18, in the study of Mr. Wilson in the White House, he recounted his effort to persuade the Allies 'to join in formulating a broad declaration of war aims that would unite the world against Germany, and would not only help to a solution of the Russian problem but would knit together the best and most unselfish opinions of the world. I could not persuade them to do this and now it will be done by the President.'

Mr. Wilson lost no time in deciding that, in default of an interallied manifesto, a comprehensive address by himself might prove to be the moral turning-point of the war just as the coördination of war boards and policies was likely to be the military turning-point. 'We did not discuss this matter more than ten or fifteen minutes,' wrote House in his diary on December 18. The Bolsheviks were already negotiating for a separate peace, and it was impossible not to return some sort of reply to their demand for a logical statement of why the war should continue. Germany must not be allowed to pose as the victim of Allied imperialist aspirations. It was important also to pledge, if possible, the Allied Governments to the principles of a settlement which would justify the sacrifices of the war and maintain the enthusiasm of the liberal and labor circles in Great Britain and France. On December 13 the Manchester *Guardian* published the texts of the secret

treaties released by the Bolsheviks, thus disclosing the character of Allied ambitions in 1915. Some corrective was necessary.

President Wilson was the man best qualified by position and ability to state the moral issues involved in the war in such a way as to meet effectively the sentiment of protest that was rising in liberal and labor circles and was actively expressed in Russia. He represented lovers of peace all over the world. He was the chief of the nation which controlled the balance of economic forces. His prestige had been greatly enhanced by the American War Mission to Europe and the American demand for the organization of military and industrial efforts. The following letter from the President of the University of Virginia illustrates the confidence he inspired in thoughtful Americans.

President E. A. Alderman to Colonel House

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.,
December 18, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have just been reading the account of the results of your latest mission to the allied countries. I cannot refrain, as a citizen of the Republic, from sending you my word of deep admiration and appreciation of the thorough-going, statesman-like fashion in which you have carried forward this great business. The moral ascendancy of our country has stood forth boldly through all the uproar of the times, and it now seems clear, through the great purposes of the President and your own well-directed service, that a certain leadership in practical achievement is likely to come to us that may be the deciding factor in forcing the decision in the interests of freedom and self-government. The great task before us is to preserve our national will to win the war and to protect our Allies against social collapse and the dangers incident to a lessening capacity for resistance and resolution. Then we shall win, and

after that we may conceive of peace in terms of enduring justice and wisdom.

I thought the President's letter to the Pope the high-water mark of his papers in its breadth and dignity and beauty; but I think his latest message to Congress, both in what it said and left unsaid, in what it intimated and suggested, a very close second to that remarkable document.

I recall the peaceful voyage of 1914 that we made together in the *Imperator*, while the German plans were being laid, and I have watched with ever-increasing pride your great work for the nation in this time of trial and sacrifice.

Faithfully yours

EDWIN A. ALDERMAN

By appearing before all the belligerents as spokesman for the liberals and peace-loving folk, Wilson brought to the Allies factors of political strength which in the end helped towards victory in a degree not always appreciated by those who think that wars are won by cannon and by blockades alone. The approaching campaign of 1918 would test the morale of Allied peoples as nothing before. Not merely men and ships, but an absolute conviction of the justice of their cause would be essential to a firm defense.

Once decided upon the necessity of a formal restatement of war aims, the President asked House to collect and arrange the materials for his address, in collaboration with the group of experts who since September had been gathering data for use at the Peace Conference. At the time of the return of the House Mission from Europe, the Inquiry was still little more than a central committee aided by a few well-known authorities upon geographic, economic, and legal questions. But this committee was always master of the facts which had been collected, and preserved an invariable objectivity in its analysis of the surging and conflicting issues that arose from those facts. Hence when House returned from Washington

and intimated that Wilson was planning to deliver after Christmas what might prove the most important speech of his career, the Inquiry was able to produce within the space of a few days a complete territorial programme. General propositions were reduced to formulæ, the critical territorial issues were isolated, and recommendations drafted in accord with the principles which Wilson was known to approve. In all-day and all-night sessions statistics were gathered and simplified, and illustrative maps constructed, as justification for the recommendations that were made.

Some of these data House took with him on December 23, when he went to Washington to spend Christmas. The basic report of the Inquiry, which Wilson had before him when he constructed his speech, House brought down on a second visit, on January 4. This report was divided into two main sections. The first outlined the general diplomatic situation and the points that ought to be emphasized in the proposed diplomatic offensive against Germany: Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary, it was suggested, ought to be handled sympathetically; Germany should be threatened with economic penalties after the war unless she were willing and able to furnish guarantees that she had renounced imperialist policies: 'This is our strongest weapon and the Germans realize its menace. Held over them it can win priceless concessions.' The Western Allies should be encouraged: '(1) by an energetic movement for economic unity of control; (2) by utterances from the United States which will show the way to the Liberals in Great Britain and in France, and therefore restore their national unity of purpose. These Liberals will readily accept the leadership of the President if he undertakes a liberal diplomatic offensive, because they will find in that offensive an invaluable support for their internal domestic troubles; finally (3) such a powerful liberal offensive on the part of the United States will immensely stimulate American pride and interest in the war, and will assure the

administration the support of the great mass of the American people who desire an idealistic solution. Such a liberal offensive will do more than any other thing to create in this country the sort of public opinion that the President needs in order to carry through the programme he has outlined.'

The second portion of the Inquiry Report consisted of a statement of terms on eight territorial issues: Belgium, Northern France, Alsace-Lorraine, Italian frontiers, the Balkans, Poland, Austria-Hungary, Turkey. It concluded with a paragraph noting that out of the existing anti-German alliance was developing a League of Nations: 'Whether this League is to be armed and exclusive, or whether there is to be a reduction of armaments and a cordial inclusion of Germany, will depend upon whether the German Government is in fact representative of the German democracy.'

The sources of information necessary to an exact understanding of political currents in Europe were hard to come by in time of war; hence there was much in the report that revealed an ignorance of European conditions. But in the main lines the Inquiry recommendations were sound. At all events they represented the policy Wilson had already determined upon and embodied the principles of liberals in this country and abroad. These principles, as expressed in the Fourteen Points, were not original with either the Inquiry or President Wilson. The Inquiry simply performed the spade-work of collecting opinions and facts in a convenient form for the consideration of the President, indicating the trend of opinion which seemed to be most clearly supported by the facts. President Wilson evaluated them in the light of what he believed to be practical idealism and clothed them in convincing phrase. The speech was great partly because of Wilson's genius for exposition, partly because it caught the shift of inarticulate opinion and expressed it with the authority of the President's high station. 'The President's words,' said the New York *Tribune* after the speech, 'are the words of a hundred million.'

II

The recommendations of the Inquiry Mr. Wilson studied with care, especially those relating to the settlement of territorial issues, discussed them with Colonel House, and wrote shorthand annotations on the margin of the report, some of which with slight alterations he later embodied in his speech. He also went over a mass of memoranda supplied by European representatives, which House brought down to Washington on the evening of January 4.

'I did not reach the White House until nine o'clock,' wrote House. 'They had saved dinner for me, but I touched it lightly and went into immediate conference with the President concerning the proposed message to Congress on our war aims. . . .

'We were in conference until half-past eleven, discussing the general terms to be used, and looking over data and maps which I had brought with me, some of which the Peace Inquiry Bureau had prepared.'

The President decided that he would frame his speech with three special purposes in mind. First, as an answer to the demand of the Bolsheviks for an explanation of the objects of the war, such an answer as might persuade Russia to stand by the Allies in their defense of democratic and liberal principles according to which, as Wilson insisted, the peace settlement must be framed, and which would be trampled under foot by a victorious Germany. Second, as an appeal to the German Socialists, who had begun to indicate their suspicion that their Government was not really waging a war of defense, but rather one of conquest totally inconsonant with the Reichstag resolution of July. Third, as a notice to the Entente that there must be a revision in a liberal sense of the war aims which had been crystallized in the secret treaties. The President was especially disturbed by the Treaty of

London and the arrangements made for the partition of the Turkish Empire.

Mr. Wilson was aware of the extent to which Great Britain and France were committed to Italy by the Treaty of London.¹ It was important to make plain that the United States was pledged to principles that conflicted directly with that treaty in so far as it assigned foreign nationalities to Italian sovereignty. On this question there was no discussion between Colonel House and the President, and the latter wrote on the margin of the Inquiry Report the sentence which became Point IX. 'Readjustment of the frontiers of Italy along clearly recognized lines of nationality.'² This was in effect a denial of the claim of Italy to control the Adriatic and the German-speaking Tyrol as expressed in the Treaty of London.

The opposition of the President to the division of the Turkish Empire as outlined in the treaties of 1915, the Sykes-Picot Treaty, and the Treaty of Saint-Jean de Maurienne, was equally definite. A note in House's diary as early as the preceding August indicates that the terms of these treaties were common property, even before they were published by the Bolsheviks. 'They know in Turkey,' wrote House, 'of the secret treaties which the Allies have made among themselves, in which they have cheerfully partitioned Turkey.' Another entry, of October 13, refers to a conference with President Wilson: 'He thought he should say that Turkey should become effaced and that the disposition of it should be left to the peace conference. . . . I added that it should be stated that Turkey must not be partitioned among the belligerents, but must become autonomous in its several parts according to racial lines. He accepted this.' Further, on December 1, while House was at Paris, the President cabled him a warning to protest against the arrangements to parti-

¹ See above, Chapter II.

² In the speech, the word 'recognized' was altered to 'recognizable.'

tion the Turkish Empire.¹ He now decided, as in the case of Italy, not to make any reference to the treaties, but simply to lay down a general principle which might be used later to oppose imperialistic aspirations. Evidently he had changed his mind about the need of effacing Turkey, for he wrote on the margin of the Inquiry Report: 'The Turkish portions of the present Turkish Empire must be assured a secure sovereignty and the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule must be assured full opportunity of autonomous development.'²

After marking four other territorial points contained in the Inquiry Report, the President decided that he would postpone until the next day the task of drafting definitely his general recommendations and settling the order in which they should be presented. On the following morning, Saturday, January 5, as soon as he had completed his routine correspondence, he called House into his study and began the final outline of his speech and the arrangement of his definite points. Later he expressed regret that he was not able to include all that seemed necessary in thirteen points, his favorite number.

The record of the historically momentous conferences between Wilson and House, in which the Fourteen Points were drafted, is set down in House's diary. It is unfortunate that, if available information is correct, the President himself did not make notes of the conversation. Mr. Wilson kept no regular diary and doubtless did not regard this conference as more significant than many others he had with House. The Colonel's record was dictated carefully, and the accuracy of his diary notes in general is attested at every point where they can be checked; there is every reason to accept his ac-

¹ Wilson to House, December 1. See above, Chapter IX.

² In the speech the President added a clause to guarantee the freedom of the Dardanelles. He also reemphasized the autonomy desirable for the nationalities by substituting the words 'absolutely unmolested' for 'full.' He further changed 'must' to 'should.' See below, pp. 329, 332.

count as exact. It is important to remember, however, that House is writing as a diarist with no thought of later publication; the reader should not be misled by the diary form of the narrative into the supposition that House was leading the conversation.¹

'Saturday was a remarkable day,' wrote Colonel House. 'I went over to the State Department just after breakfast to see Polk and the others, and returned to the White House at a quarter past ten in order to get to work with the President. He was waiting for me. We actually got down to work at half-past ten and finished remaking the map of the world, as we would have it, at half-past twelve o'clock.'²

'We took it systematically, first outlining general terms, such as open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, removing of economic barriers, establishment of equality of trade conditions, guarantees for the reduction of national armaments, adjustment of colonial claims, general association of nations for the conservation of peace. Then we began on Belgium,

¹ Dr. Isaiah Bowman as executive officer of the Inquiry had first-hand knowledge of the events leading up to the speech of the Fourteen Points, and has been good enough to read and criticize this chapter. As a commentary upon the House-Wilson conferences, the following paragraph from a letter of Dr. Bowman is interesting:

'I still have the feeling that the report of the House-Wilson conferences is curiously one-sided. We have H.'s diary but not W.'s. We have H.'s opinion of how much he helped W., but not W.'s opinion. No one can doubt that H. (during the period of the World War) was the wisest counselor that ever a President had. This because of the *temper* of H. no less than the temper of W. H.'s mind is like a sleeve valve: no friction! His thoughts come clearly to one, through simple words directly spoken. This is not craft but art and genius. Yet W. too had an altogether extraordinary character: he was a genius, a very great man. I wish you could bring this out a little more by a phrase or a sentence here and there, not just by a peroration. It would make H. a still greater figure to have it clearly shown how great was the man he served, and in my opinion it would give a higher judicial quality to the account.'

² Naturally the time consumed in 'remaking the map of the world,' represents merely the time necessary to phrase conclusions which the President had reached after many months of thought.

France, and the other territorial adjustments. When we had finished, the President asked me to number these in the order I thought they should come. I did this by placing the general terms first and territorial adjustments last. He looked over my arrangement and said it coincided with his own views, with the exception of the peace association which he thought should come last, because it would round out the message properly and permit him to say some things at the end which were necessary.

'In discussing these questions I urged, and made a strong argument for, open diplomacy. I said there was nothing he could do that would better please the American people and the democracies of the world, and that it was right and must be the diplomacy of the future. I asked him to lay deep stress upon it and to place it first.¹

'I then suggested the removal, as far as possible, of trade barriers.² He argued that this would meet with opposition,

¹ This appears as Point I in the speech: 'Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind.'

² On October 27, 1917, House had written to the President: 'I feel very strongly that something should be done at the Peace Conference to end, as far as practicable, trade restrictions. They have been and must continue to be a menace to peace. With tariff barriers broken, with subsidies by common consent eliminated, and with real freedom of the seas both in peace and in time of war, the world could look with confidence to the future.'

'There should be no monopoly by any nation of raw materials, or the essentials for food and clothing.'

'You announced in your Mobile speech the doctrine that no territory should ever again be acquired by aggression, and this doctrine is now generally recognized throughout the world. If you can now use your commanding position to bring to the fore this other doctrine which is so fundamental to peace, you will have done more for mankind than any other ruler that has lived.'

'If you write such a message as we talked of, I hope you will think it well to say that the worst thing that could happen to Germany would be a peace made by a government that was not representative. That such a peace would inevitably lead to economic warfare afterwards — a warfare in which by force of circumstances this Government would be compelled to take part.'

Mr. Wilson, in his December Message to Congress, had already closely

particularly in the Senate. Nevertheless I thought that since the document was to be a readjustment of world conditions, it would not be a complete structure unless this was in it. The two great causes of war were territorial and commercial greed, and it was just as necessary to get rid of the one as it was the other. He made no argument against this, and proceeded to frame a paragraph to cover it.¹

'I then suggested a discussion of the freedom of the seas. He asked my definition of this term. I answered that I went further than any one I knew, for I believed that in time of both war and peace a merchantman should traverse the seas unmolested. He agreed to this, and the paragraph as framed read something like this: "Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war."

'After the message had been entirely written and he had read it over three or four times, wondering how England would receive this particular paragraph, I suggested that he add to it that "the seas might be closed by international action in order to enforce international covenants." The President seized this suggestion with avidity and added it. I gave as my reason for this that I had discussed the matter in England and I believed with this addition it might be acceptable to them.²

followed the suggestion contained in the last paragraph of House's letter. See above, p. 159.

¹ This appears as Point III in the speech: 'The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.'

² This paragraph, which finally became Point II in the speech, read: 'Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.'

For Colonel House's definition of the 'freedom of the seas,' see Volume I, p. 408.

House was wrong in his belief that British opinion would be favorably

'One of the points we discussed was the reduction of armaments. He played with this some time before he could get it into its present form, which satisfied us both.¹ I need not go into the difficulties of that question because they are apparent to any one who has tried to work out something satisfactory.

'We had less trouble with the colonial question. At first it was thought he might have to evade this entirely, but the President began to try his hand on it and presently the paragraph which was adopted was acceptable to us both, and we hoped would be to Great Britain.²

'We took up Belgium, and that paragraph was written without difficulty.³ Then a long discussion followed on France and whether Alsace and Lorraine should be touched upon. I was in favor of not mentioning it specifically, if it were possible not to do so, therefore at first he put in, "All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored." We left it there and went on to other territorial readjustments, but came back to it time and again. The Presi-

affected by the addition of the last phrase. The feeling against the words 'freedom of the seas,' which had been so consistently chanted by the Germans, was strong, and this was the one point which provoked general objection in Great Britain.

¹ The paragraph appeared as Point IV in the speech: 'Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest points consistent with domestic safety.'

² This appeared as Point V in the speech: 'A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.'

³ As Point VII, it read: 'Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.'

dent convinced me that it was necessary to say something about it, since the message was so specific as to other nations, and I could see he was right. I suggested then that it should read: "If Alsace and Lorraine were restored to France, Germany should be given an equal economic opportunity," and it was written this way and remained so until Monday morning.

'On Monday, after we had eaten lunch, the President said, as we were walking toward his study, "The only thing about the message that worries me is in regard to Alsace and Lorraine. I am wondering how that will be taken." I replied that it was practically the only point that disturbed me and I suggested that we try our hands on it again. As it was, I was afraid it would suit neither France nor Germany. I thought he might leave out the economic part and put in the assertion that it had been for fifty years a cause of unrest in Europe, and that a just settlement of the question was as much in the interest of Germany as it was to the balance of the world.

'He then wrote the paragraph as it now stands with the exception that he had "*must* be righted" instead of "*should* be righted," as I thought best.¹

'We then went into a discussion of where "should" and where "must" should be used, and he agreed that where there was no difference as to the justice of a question the word "must" ought to be used, and where there was a controversy the word "should" was correct. He went through the entire message and corrected it in this way. He wondered whether that point would be caught. I thought it was certain it would be.

¹ The final text of this paragraph, which became Point VIII in the speech, read: 'All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.'

'My argument was this: The American people might not consent to fight for the readjustment of European territory, therefore in suggesting these readjustments, with the exception of Belgium, the word "should" ought to be used.'

President Wilson studied the paragraph upon Russia with particular care, for in a sense the Russian situation formed the chief *raison d'être* of the speech. The Bolsheviks had made their armistice with Germany, but it was not yet plain that they could agree on terms of peace. Lenin and Trotsky were not entirely at one, the former insisting that peace must be signed on any terms, in order to hasten the world revolution; the latter evolving a formula of 'no peace, no war,' which he believed would do more than anything to make plain the aggressive imperialism of the Germans, while it would save the Russian proletariat from continuing a war for the benefit of Entente imperialism. The power of the Bolsheviks, moreover, was still uncertain. America and the Allies must be careful not to strengthen it by an appeal to faction. Above all it was necessary to insist upon American friendliness to Russia and upon the unselfishness of American war aims. House showed to Wilson a telegram he had received from the Russian Ambassador, who since the Bolshevik Revolution no longer represented the party in power at Moscow, but whose understanding of the situation was tolerant and broad. It was this telegram, which he had received the previous month, that had influenced House to make his original suggestion of a restatement of Allied war aims.

Ambassador Bakhmetieff to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, November 30, 1917

Although Lenin's Government, which seized control by force, cannot be regarded as representing the will of the

Russian nation, the appeal which it addressed to the Allies in proposing an armistice cannot remain unanswered; for any evasion on the part of the Allies in the matter of peace will simply strengthen the Bolsheviki and help them to create an atmosphere in Russia hostile to the Allies. Any formal protest against Lenin's policy or any threats will have the same effect; they will simply aggravate the situation and aid the Maximalists to go to extremes. . . .

BAKHMETIEFF

With this in mind House had consulted with Bakhmetieff before coming to Washington and what Wilson wrote, so far as its content went, approximated the draft of the Ambassador. The Colonel's account of the discussion with Wilson continues:

'I read him a sentence that I had prepared regarding Russia, which I had submitted to the Russian Ambassador, who thoroughly approved. I said that it did not make any difference how much the President resented Russia's action, the part of wisdom was to segregate her, as far as we were able, from Germany, and that it could only be done by the broadest and friendliest expressions of sympathy and a promise of more substantial help. There was no argument about this because our minds ran parallel, and what he wrote about Russia is, I think, in some respects the most eloquent part of his message.¹

¹ This appeared as Point VI in the speech: 'The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest coöperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.'

'He spent some time on Poland. I gave him the memorandum which the Polish National Council in Paris had given me, containing a paragraph which they wished the Interallied Conference to adopt, but which was refused. We read this over carefully and both concluded that it could not be used in full, but the paragraph as framed came as near to it as he felt was wise and expedient.¹

'After the Turkish paragraph had been written, the President thought it might be made more specific, and that Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and other parts be mentioned by name. I disagreed with this, believing that what was said was sufficient to indicate this, and it finally stood as originally framed.'²

III

No essential changes were made by President Wilson in his Fourteen Points after the Saturday morning session with House, except in the case of Alsace-Lorraine. Apparently the sole Point upon which he desired outside criticism was that relating to the Balkan settlement, concerning which the opinion of the head of the Serbian Mission in Washington was sought. In drafting this Point the President avoided specific recommendations, perhaps because he recognized the difficulty of understanding the complex issues in that region and felt compelled to seek refuge in rather vague generalities. Point XI, as he drafted it, ran as follows:

¹ Point XIII in the speech: 'An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.'

² Point XII in the speech: 'The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.'

'Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro to be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relationships of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality. International guarantees to be entered into of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of all the Balkan states.'¹

This paragraph was generally regarded by students of the Balkan problem as the weakest spot in the entire speech of the Fourteen Points. The resounding phrase 'by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality' really meant nothing, for in the Balkans such lines are nonexistent. The Inquiry Report, whether or not its specific recommendations would have proved wise, was at least nearer realities.² Perhaps because Wilson realized the

¹ The President made slight changes in phraseology in this paragraph before delivering his speech. The final form was: 'Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan States to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan States should be entered into.'

² The Inquiry Report read as follows:

'No just or lasting settlement of the tangled problems confronting the deeply wronged peoples of the Balkans can be based upon the arbitrary treaty of Bucharest. That treaty was a product of the evil diplomacy which the peoples of the world are now determined to end. That treaty wronged every nation in the Balkans, even those which it appeared to favour, by imposing upon them all the permanent menace of war. It unquestionably tore men and women of Bulgarian loyalty from their natural allegiance. It denied to Serbia that access to the sea which she must have in order to complete her independence. Any just settlement must of course begin with the evacuation of Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro by the armies of the Central Powers, and the restoration of Serbia and Montenegro. The ultimate relationship of the different Balkan nations must be based upon a fair balance of nationalistic and economic considerations, applied in a generous and inventive spirit after impartial and scientific inquiry. The meddling and intriguing of Great

weakness of this paragraph he sought outside advice; it came to him in direct and critical form.

'The paragraph about Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro,' wrote House, 'is interesting inasmuch as the President asked me to submit it to Vesnitch, head of the Serbian Mission to this country and Serbian Minister at Paris. He wished to get Vesnitch's reaction on it. . . .

'I sent for Vesnitch to meet me at Gordon's home, as I did not think it advisable to have him come to the White House. . . . He totally disagreed with what had been written and said it would not satisfy Serbia. He also said that peace should not be made at this time and that the discussion of peace should be frowned upon. I told him that since Russia, Germany, Austria, and Great Britain were actually discussing peace it was not worth while to argue as to whether a discussion was advisable or not; therefore I asked him to set forth concretely what he would suggest in preference to what I submitted to him. He wrote with some difficulty, underneath the paragraph which the President . . . had framed, the following:

Powers must be stopped, and the efforts to attain national unity by massacre must be abandoned.

'It would obviously be unwise to attempt at this time to draw frontiers for the Balkan states. Certain broad considerations, however, may tentatively be kept in mind. They are in brief these: (1) that the area annexed by Rumania in the Dobrudja is almost surely Bulgarian in character and should be returned; (2) that the boundary between Bulgaria and Turkey should be restored to the Enos-Midia line, as agreed upon at the conference of London; (3) that the south boundary of Bulgaria should be the Ægean Sea coast from Enos to the gulf of Orfano, and should leave the mouth of the Struma River in Bulgarian territory; (4) that the best access to the sea for Serbia is through Saloniki; (5) that the final disposition of Macedonia cannot be determined without further inquiry; (6) that an independent Albania is almost and certainly an undesirable political entity.

'We are strongly of the opinion that in the last analysis economic considerations will outweigh nationalistic affiliations in the Balkans, and that a settlement which insures economic prosperity is most likely to be a lasting one.'

*This is what
the President
wrote and sent
- written to Vesnitch
Vesnitch added in
his own handwriting
what he thought
should be said -
M.H. Jan. 5/18*

Roumania, Serbia, and Montenegro to be evacu-
ated; occupied territories restored; Serbia ac-
corded free and secure access to the sea; and
the relationships of the several Balkan states
to one another derterulized by friendly counsel
along historically established lines of allegi-
ance and nationality. International guarantees
to be entered into for the political independence
and territorial integrity of all the Balkan
states.

PHILADELPHIA

*There will and there can be in Europe any
lasting peace with the conservation of actual
Austria-Hungary. The nations kept in it, as
well Serbians, Croats and Slovenes, as
Czechs and Slovaks, as Romanians, and the
Greeks will continue to combat the German
and Magyar domination.*

*In the direction of Bulgaria, Serbia stands
firm on the Treaty of Bucharest. The Allied
Powers have guaranteed to her this position.
etc. It will be morally and materially*

WILSON'S DRAFT OF POINT XI OF THE FOURTEEN POINTS, WITH VESNITCH'S NOTATION

YRABUJ IUTBACREB

ABP.BDA.IB9

“There will and there cannot be in Europe any lasting peace with the conservation of actual Austria-Hungary. The nations kept in it, as well Serbians, Croats and Slovenes, as Tchecs and Slovaks, as Rumanians and Italians, will continue to combat the German-Magyar dominations. As to Bulgaria, Serbia stands firm on the Treaty of Bucharest. The Allied Powers have guaranteed to her these frontiers. It will be morally and materially impossible to get so rapidly an understanding of Balkan nations, which is of course desirable, and which may come. Bulgarian treachery can and shall not be rewarded. I sincerely believe that serious negotiations for the peace at this moment of the war would mean the complete failure of the policy of allies and a grave collapse of the civilization of mankind.”

‘Vesnitch gave me a history of the Balkans, particularly that of Serbia, and I had to check him, saying I had an engagement with the President.

‘The President was rather depressed at this first and only attempt to obtain outside opinion regarding the message. . . . I advised him not to change the paragraph in the slightest, and to go ahead as if no objection had been made, and this he did.’

It is rather surprising that the insistence of M. Vesnitch that a permanent settlement could not be secured so long as Austria-Hungary continued to exist did not lead to longer discussion between the President and Colonel House. The Serbian envoy was by no means alone in his opinion. Many authorities in France and Great Britain regarded the problem of the Austrian nationalities as the *fons et origo mali*. These authorities believed that it was necessary to face it squarely, just as they emphasized the moral and material aid which the subject nationalities, if properly encouraged, might bring to the Entente through revolution.

President Wilson had two alternative policies before him

He might proclaim war to the death upon the Hapsburg Monarchy and promise complete liberation to the Czechoslovaks, Poles, South Slavs, and Rumanians. He would thus bear assistance to a revolution that might end in the Balkanization of the Danube regions, but which would in the mean time go far to undermine the strength of the Central Powers. Or he might proclaim the right to 'autonomy' of the subject nationalities, which, however, should remain in some sort of federal union under the Hapsburg Crown. The peril of splitting up territories economically interdependent would thus be avoided at the same time that the self-government of the nationalities was assured.

The second alternative was chosen by the President. In common with the leading statesmen of western Europe, he believed that the political union of Austro-Hungarian peoples was a necessity, and he seems to have felt that once freed from German domination, the Hapsburg Monarchy would prove a beneficial force. Colonel House was of this opinion.¹ The Inquiry Report advised Wilson to pursue the rather tortuous course of threatening the existing Hapsburg Government with nationalist uprisings and at the same time showing it a means of safety through a refusal to accept German control in foreign policy.² 'Austria-Hungary is in the position where she must be good in order to survive.'

President Wilson in his speech of the Fourteen Points did not threaten the integrity of the Hapsburg Empire. Point X simply stated: 'The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous

¹ See above, Chapter VI, House to Wilson, August 15, 1917: 'On a basis of the *status quo ante*, the Entente could aid Austria in emancipating herself from Prussia.'

² 'Our policy must therefore consist first in a stirring up of nationalist discontent and then in refusing to accept the extreme logic of this discontent which would be the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary.'

development.' This was, indeed, as far as the leaders of the Entente wished to go. Mr. Lloyd George, at the same time, renounced any threats against the existence of the Hapsburg Empire. 'Though . . . the break-up of Austria-Hungary,' he said, 'is no part of our war aims, we feel that, unless genuine self-government on true democratic principles is granted to those Austro-Hungarian nationalities who have long desired it, it is impossible to hope for the removal of those causes of unrest in that part of Europe which have so long threatened its general peace.'

It is important to remember that the statesmen of the time were compelled to base their policy upon inadequate and frequently contradictory sources of information. They still believed in the possibility of preserving the union of Austro-Hungarian peoples and liberating the Hapsburg Empire from German control. But as it turned out the speeches of Wilson and Lloyd George were quite without avail. Whether the Dual Monarchy stood by Germany in her defeat or deserted her, it was doomed. As Czernin himself confessed, 'Austria-Hungary's watch had run down.'¹

'We could have gone over to the enemy,' wrote Czernin. 'We could have fought against Germany with the Entente on Austro-Hungarian soil, and would doubtless have hastened Germany's collapse; but the wounds which Austria-Hungary would have received in the fray would not have been less serious than those from which she is now suffering; she would have perished in the fight against Germany, as she has as good as perished in her fight allied with Germany.'

The Entente was determined upon the defeat of Germany, and once this was accomplished the break-up of Austria-Hungary became inevitable. The solution of federal autonomy some years before might have settled the Hapsburg

¹ Czernin, *In the World War*, 37.

problem, but it was now too late. The disintegration of the Dual Monarchy had already gone so far that Austria-Hungary could no longer be held together except by a girdle of German bayonets. A realization of this fact would conceivably have hastened the end of the war, for instead of discussing such projects as 'autonomy' and 'self-government,' which irritated and discouraged the rebellious Slavs, American and Allied leaders might have launched the revolution which they could not prevent, and profited by it. As it was, the work of propaganda conducted by Northcliffe and Steed, with the coöperation of Masaryk and the South Slav leaders, which ultimately ate into the morale of the Hapsburg armies, was delayed, and assistance which might have proved invaluable to the Entente in the moment of supreme danger in the spring of 1918, was left on one side.

IV

On the very day that President Wilson was drafting his speech of the Fourteen Points, Mr. Lloyd George delivered an equally comprehensive but quite independent statement of war aims to the Trades Union Congress.¹ The Prime Minister, soon after his return from the Interallied Conference of Paris, appreciated the compelling necessity of a pronouncement by the British Government, in view of the Russian situation and especially in view of the memorandum upon war aims issued by the British Labour Conference. Colonel House had been given some intimation that Mr. Lloyd George might find it advisable to meet the increasing demand for an official statement, but he did not realize that

¹ The independence of the speeches of Lloyd George and Wilson is proved by the following documents. The reader should remember, however, that Lloyd George was as anxious to avoid conflicting statements as Wilson. Wiseman wrote: 'House had told Lloyd George in London what Wilson was likely to say.' Thus there was established a basis for a joint declaration of war aims by the Allies, if only the French and Italians had expressed their acquiescence.

he planned to speak so soon. President Wilson agreed that the British Government should be warned of his own address, and on Saturday morning Colonel House sent to Mr. Balfour the following telegram which the President himself drafted.

*Colonel House to Mr. Balfour*¹

[Cablegram]

WASHINGTON, January 5, 1918

The President wishes me to let the Prime Minister or you know that he feels he must presently make some specific utterance as a counter to the German peace suggestions, and that he feels that in order to keep the present enthusiastic and confident support of the war quick and effective here, an utterance must be in effect a repetition of his recent address to Congress² in even more specific form than before.

He hopes that no utterance is in contemplation on your side which would be likely to sound a different note or suggest claims inconsistent with what he proclaims the objects of the United States to be.

The President feels that we have so far been playing into the hands of the German military party and solidifying German opinion against us, and he has information which seems to open a clear way to weakening the hands of that party and clearing the air of all possible misrepresentation and misunderstandings.

EDWARD HOUSE

¹ Endorsement by E. M. H.: 'This is the cable the President and I agreed to send to Lloyd George to-day. The President typed it. Washington, January 5, 1918.'

² The President's Message of December 4, 1917, asking for a declaration of war against Austria.

Mr. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, January 5, 1918

Negotiations have been going on for some time between the Prime Minister and the Trades Unions. The main point was the desire of the Government to be released from certain pledges which were made to the labour leaders earlier in the war. This release is absolutely indispensable from the military point of view for the development of man-power on the Western Front. Finally the negotiations arrived at a point at which their successful issue depended mainly on the immediate publication by the British Government of a statement setting forth their war aims. This statement has now been made by the Prime Minister. It is the result of consultations with the labour leaders as well as the leaders of the Parliamentary Opposition.

Under these circumstances there was no time to consult the Allies as to the terms of the statement agreed on by the Prime Minister and the above-mentioned persons. It will be found on examination to be in accordance with the declarations hitherto made by the President on this subject.

Should the President himself make a statement of his own views which in view of the appeal made to the peoples of the world by the Bolsheviki might appear a desirable course, the Prime Minister is confident that such a statement would also be in general accordance with the lines of the President's previous speeches, which in England as well as in other countries have been so warmly received by public opinion. Such a further statement would naturally receive an equally warm welcome.

BALFOUR

Judging from the tone of the final paragraph of the Balfour cable as well as from the fact that House did not send his cable until the morning of January 5, it seems likely that Mr.

Balfour wrote his message before he received that of Colonel House. At all events the Balfour cable did not reach Washington until Sunday, when it was given to House by Ambassador Spring-Rice. In the mean time the Saturday afternoon papers brought the news of the Prime Minister's statement. For a moment the President considered giving up his speech.

'When George's speech came out in Washington Saturday afternoon,' wrote House, 'the President thought the terms which Lloyd George had given were so nearly akin to those he had worked out that it would be impossible for him to make the contemplated address before Congress. I insisted that the situation had been changed for the better rather than for the worse. I thought that Lloyd George had cleared the air and made it more necessary for the President to act.'

It is of interest historically to emphasize the fact that despite the close similarity in the war aims expressed by Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson, the two statements were drafted absolutely independently. The President read Mr. Lloyd George's speech three days before he delivered his own, but the records of Colonel House show that apart from the point concerning Alsace-Lorraine (as to which he was apparently not affected by the British statement), he made no change in what he had already prepared.¹ Because of the similarity in the British and American manifestoes, the greater seems the pity that the other Allies could not agree to a joint statement which might have led to a united diplomatic front.

v

President Wilson, having finished the exact terms of the

¹ It has been suggested at various times that President Wilson based his Points upon Mr. Lloyd George's speech. Cf. especially an article, presumably by Mr. George Harvey, 'The Genesis of the Fourteen Commandments,' in the *North American Review*, February, 1919.

Fourteen Points on Saturday morning, completed the introductory and concluding portions of his address on the following afternoon. He asked House to come to his study to discuss it as a whole.

'After luncheon Sunday,' wrote House, 'I went to the French Embassy to see Jusserand. He had a number of questions he wished to ask, the answers to which he desired to transmit to his Government. . . .

'When I reached the White House, the President had not finished the conclusion of his message and, since Gregory wanted to see me, I motored to his house and took him for a short drive. When I returned the President was waiting and he read to me the message as a whole. I again congratulated him. . . . I thought it was a declaration of human liberty and a declaration of the terms which should be written into the peace conference. I felt that it was the most important document that he had ever penned, and remarked that he would either be on the crest of the wave after it had been delivered, or reposing peacefully in the depths.

'The point we were most anxious about was as to how this country would receive our entrance into European affairs to the extent of declaring *territorial* aims.

'I suggested to the President that a possible criticism Germany might make was that since the United States refused to permit European nations to interfere in any way with the affairs in the Western Hemisphere, European nations should be equally insistent that the affairs in the Eastern Hemisphere be left to the nations therein. He admitted that this would be probably said; and the reply that he expected to make in that event would be that we were perfectly willing for the same principles to govern in the Western Hemisphere as we had outlined as being desirable for the Eastern Hemisphere.

'He was quite insistent that nothing be put in the message

of an argumentative nature, and once or twice I suggested making an argument in favor of some of the terms, but each time he thought it inadvisable because it would merely provoke controversy. . . .

'The other points we were fearful of were Alsace and Lorraine, the freedom of the seas, and the leveling of commercial barriers. However . . . there was not the slightest hesitation on his part in saying them. The President shows an extraordinary courage in such things, and a wisdom in discussing them that places him easily in a rank by himself, as far as my observations go. The more I see of him, the more firmly am I convinced that there is not a statesman in the world who is his equal.'

The speech of the Fourteen Points was thus completed on Sunday afternoon. On Monday the President made his alteration in the statement regarding Alsace-Lorraine so as to give it a positive and definite character. He then called in the Secretary of State and, upon his advice, made various verbal alterations.

As delivered Tuesday morning, the address came as a surprise. It was known that Mr. Wilson would speak to Congress, but very few persons, even among the Allied diplomats and members of the Cabinet itself, realized what the subject of the message would be. On Tuesday afternoon House met a Cabinet officer ordinarily very well informed. 'I asked him how he liked the President's address. He replied, "What speech do you mean, his message to Congress?" He was dumbfounded when I told him that the President had just delivered what was perhaps the most important utterance since he had been in office.' This reticence was carefully reasoned and was not based upon a mere love of secrecy and surprise; Mr. Wilson met House's objections to it squarely. 'I was in favor,' wrote House, 'of giving notice to the world in Tuesday morning's papers that the President would go

before Congress in order to give America's war aims, my idea being to have the whole world expectant. . . . The President's argument was that in giving out such a notice as I suggested, the newspapers invariably commented and speculated as to what he would say and that these forecasts were often taken for what was really said.'

VI

Rarely in history has a speech dealing with such complicated issues been received with the applause that immediately greeted the Fourteen Points. It drew the approval of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Frank Simonds as well as that of Mr. Morris Hillquit and Mr. Meyer London. President Alderman of Virginia wrote to House: 'The President's message . . . is simply beyond all praise. I dare to think that in the long ages it will take its place among the historic documents, not only of American history, but of world history, in its breadth, and vision, and strength. It strengthens the purpose and nerves the arm of every loyal American. It is leadership of the broadest and noblest type.'

The most striking appreciation of the address came from the New York *Tribune*, which had ever been unsparing in its criticism of the President.

New York Tribune Editorial

'Mr. Wilson's address to Congress yesterday will live as one of the great documents in American history and one of the permanent contributions of America to world liberty. In form as in substance the President's statement is beyond praise; he has spoken what his country felt; he has translated from vague aspiration to clear and definite fact the war aims of his fellow countrymen.

'In a very deep sense Mr. Wilson's words constitute a second Emancipation Proclamation. As Lincoln freed the

slaves of the South half a century ago, Mr. Wilson now pledges his country to fight for the liberation of the Belgian and the Pole, the Serb and the Rumanian. For the long-suffering populations of Alsace-Lorraine and the Italian Irredenta the words of the President of the United States are a promise of freedom after a slavery worse a thousand times than that of the negro. . . . In a sense the President has created, has visualized to a whole world, the rôle of America in the time of supreme tragedy. Without a selfish ambition, without hope or covert thought of selfish advantage, the United States has entered a world war to restore justice, honor, liberty in a world assailed by German barbarism and German ambition. . . .

‘President Wilson has done nothing finer; there is nothing more admirable in American history than his address of yesterday. In a single speech he has transformed the whole character and broken with all the tradition of American policy. He has carried the United States back to Europe; he has established an American world policy and ideal of international policy throughout the civilized world. . . .

‘Leadership, after all, consists in arousing in the millions not a sense of obedience, but a desire to follow. The greatest single merit of Mr. Wilson’s latest address is that it will consolidate a nation behind its Chief Executive and establish in all minds the conviction that of right and with full accuracy and accepted authority he speaks for them. The President’s words are the words of a hundred million. . . . To-day, as never before, the whole nation marches with the President, certain alike of the leader and the cause.’

January 9, 1918.

In Europe approval of the President’s speech was more cautious and less general. So far as it laid down conditions which Germany must meet, the British press was unanimous in its praise and hailed it as ‘another notable contribution in

the drumfire on the enemy's moral position.' The liberal papers spoke of the 'spiritual insight and divination of the greatest American President since Abraham Lincoln.' 'The supreme gift of Wilson to the world,' said the *Star*, 'is the gift of articulating and interpreting its anguished vision of the future.' But even papers ordinarily so sympathetic as the Manchester *Guardian* and the *Westminster Gazette* spoke with doubt and suspicion of Wilson's insistence upon the 'freedom of the seas,' and conservative opinion entered definite reservations regarding the League of Nations. 'Our chief criticism of the President's speech,' said *The Times*, 'is that in its lofty flight of an ideal it seems not to take into account certain hard realities of the situation. We would all rejoice to see some such splendid vision as he beholds clothed in flesh and blood, and we are all working toward it according to our lights, but some of the proposals Mr. Wilson puts forward assume that the reign of righteousness on earth is already within our reach.'

Something of the same skepticism appeared in French comments, although the President's pronouncement upon Alsace-Lorraine was hailed with relief. 'President Wilson's words,' said *La Liberté*, 'will make his name popular to the remotest villages of France.' But in Italy, the speech, in so far as it attracted attention, evoked discontent. In Point IX of the speech, Mr. Wilson called for a 'readjustment of the frontiers of Italy . . . along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.' This by no means met popular nationalist aspirations, and it was in marked conflict with the terms of the Treaty of London.

The Entente Allies did not appear willing officially to accept the Wilsonian programme, and in so far as the speech was designed to win from them a renunciation of the spirit of the treaties, it had no immediate effect. Not until the succeeding autumn were they persuaded, and then only with the greatest difficulty, to approve the Fourteen Points as the basis of the peace settlement.

Nor did the Fourteen Points exercise upon the Russian and German situations the immediate effect for which Colonel House had hoped. The Bolsheviks were quite untouched alike by Wilson's idealistic generalizations and by his specific programme. They remained distrustful and unheeding, suspicious of Entente imperialism and irrevocably hostile to American capitalism. In Germany, the Government, affronted by Wilson's demand for the surrender of Alsace-Lorraine, stood firm for the prosecution of the war and held the support of all but the Socialist press. Even *Vorwärts* questioned Wilson's sincerity and intimated that his purpose was merely 'to deceive Russia about a general peace and lure her once again into the morass of blood of the world war.' Symptoms of unrest appeared among the laboring classes, but they were insufficient to alter the preparations for the great Kaiser's Battle which Ludendorff planned.

The immediate purpose of the speech of the Fourteen Points as a political manifesto was thus not achieved. But its final importance remains. Later events gave to it supreme significance and made of it the formal basis of the peace settlement. Not so much because of the specific conditions that Mr. Wilson laid down, similar as they were to those of Mr. Lloyd George, as because of the spirit that inspired his speech, it became for liberals all over the world something of a Magna Charta of international relations of the future.

'An evident principle,' said Mr. Wilson in the concluding paragraph of his speech, 'runs through the whole programme I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak. Unless this principle be made its foundation no part of the structure of international justice can stand. The people of the United States could act upon no other principle;

and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor, and everything that they possess. The moral climax of this the culminating and final war for human liberty has come, and they are ready to put their own strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion to the test.'

It was the spirit of this paragraph that persuaded liberals in the Entente countries to regard President Wilson as the apostle of the new political order, and the smaller nations to hail him as their champion. It was this same spirit that compelled the Germans to ask whether they might not better accept the guarantees of security offered by Wilson than continue the devastating struggle. In the end it was to Wilson that the German Government turned offering to make peace, and it was upon the distinct understanding that his principles would prevail that they laid down their arms.¹

The speech of the Fourteen Points was important also because of the position which it gave to the proposal for a League of Nations. Mr. Lloyd George, in his statement, approved the project of a League, but without the emphasis of enthusiasm necessary to assure his listeners that the power of the British Government would stand behind it. Mr. Wilson, chief of the Government of the United States, made of it the essential condition of any settlement, and thereby crystallized the hopes of those who looked upon the triumph of the Allies not as an end but merely as a means to an end. A writer whose sense of the practical was keen and whose opportunities for observing the current of events and opinion were unrivaled, thus summarized the situation:

'Thoughtful minds throughout the Alliance were . . . inclined to put the war purpose somewhat as follows: The anti-social, anti-national spirit of Prussianism must be broken in

¹ See below, Volume IV, Chapter VI.

the field, and thus degraded and banished from the world; but security for free development cannot be found merely in the destruction of the enemy, nor can it be won by annexations and adjustments, which involve a perpetual armed wardenship of the marches; it can be found only in the provision of a new international sanction to guarantee by the combined forces of civilization the rights of each unit. It will be seen that the center of gravity had moved a long way from the secret treaties of 1915.

'Hence a League of Nations was the fundamental war aim; the rest were only machinery to provide a clean foundation for it. Unfortunately this was not fully recognized at the time by any Allied Government save America, and M. Clemenceau went out of his way to declare the conception unbalanced and unpractical. Yet it was the only practical ideal before the world, in the sense that it was the only one which met the whole needs of the case. If a statement of war aims was meant to solidify the Alliance and drive a wedge between Prussianism and the German people, then a sound internationalism must be the first item in the programme. It offered the Allies an enduring union, based on coöperation instead of rivalry; it offered the German people security for their rights of possession and development so soon as they discarded their false gods; it offered a world weary of strife some hope of a lasting peace.'¹

To those who felt thus, the emphasis that Wilson laid upon 'a general association of nations,' in his speech of the Fourteen Points, guaranteed the leadership for which they were waiting. The speech pointed the way towards the great positive achievement of the Paris Peace Conference. Because of it there stands at Geneva a tablet thus inscribed: 'A la mémoire de Woodrow Wilson, Fondateur de la Société des Nations.'

¹ John Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, iv, 156-57.

CHAPTER XII

RUMORS OF PEACE

A just peace is everybody's business.

President Wilson, February 8, 1918

I

At no period of the entire war was the diplomatic situation so confused and difficult as during the first three months of 1918. If it is hard for the historian to disengage the different issues and possibilities, how much more difficult for the political leaders of those days, without the assistance of hindsight and in daily receipt of contradictory information, to formulate and pursue a consistent policy. In Germany and Austria, as in the Allied countries, there was confusion of counsel, hopes of a negotiated peace, grumblings of the working class, mingled with the preparations for the great battles of the spring.

The essential military fact was the withdrawal of Russia from the war, and the opportunity thus given Ludendorff to transfer German divisions to the Western Front, where for the first time since 1914 he might hope to hold the superiority in man-power over the Allies. If Germany could make peace with Russia, he promised that the spring offensive would bring victory over the French and British before the American army could arrive. For the Allies, the problem of man-power with which to repel the German onslaught on the Western Front had become all-important.

The political leaders on each side were in the mean time concerned with the diplomatic factors which might help to turn the tide of military events. While Wilson and the Allies by different methods sought to weaken German morale, the German diplomats strove earnestly for peace with Russia. The Bolsheviks had agreed to an armistice in December,

but the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk did not run a smooth course. Germany had accepted the formula of 'no annexations and no indemnities,' but when the principle was translated into concrete demands it was plain that the Germans planned to separate from Russia the border provinces, to form a belt of client states under German dominion. Indignation reigned in Petrograd, to which the Russian delegation returned for a ten-day conference with the Bolshevik Government. 'We had no illusions,' said Trotsky, 'as to the democratic leanings of Kühlmann and Czernin — we were only too well acquainted with the nature of the German and Austrian ruling classes — it must, nevertheless, be candidly admitted that we did not at that time anticipate that the actual proposals of the German Imperialists would be separated by such a wide gulf from the formulæ presented to us. . . . We, indeed, did not expect such an acme of impudence.'

'We are equally hostile,' said Trotsky on February 10, 'to the Imperialism on both sides, and we do not agree to shed any longer the blood of our soldiers in the defense of the one side against the other. In awaiting the moment — we hope it is near — when all the oppressed working classes of all countries will take in their own hands the authority, as the working people of Russia have already done, we are removing our armies and our peoples from the war. Our peasant soldiers must return to their land to cultivate in peace the field which the Revolution has taken from the landlords and given to the peasants. Our workmen soldiers must return to the workshops and produce, not for destruction, but for creation. . . . At the same time we declare that the conditions as submitted to us by the Governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary are opposed in principle to the interests of all peoples. . . . We cannot place the signature of the Russian Revolution under these conditions which bring with them oppression, misery, and hate to millions of human beings.'

With such a spectacular and futile gesture the Russian delegation left Brest-Litovsk; futile at least so far as the military situation went, since following the rupture of the armistice proclaimed by Germany, the Russians were shortly to be forced to sign the peace and subscribe to even more onerous conditions.

In the mean time the repercussion of the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk had important effects in both Austria and Germany, and combined with the echoes of President Wilson's speeches and with food troubles to precipitate one of the most serious industrial and pacifist manifestations of the war. The movement took the form of a general strike, protesting against the failure to obtain peace with Russia. In Germany, where the strike began on January 28, as many as a million left work, and the range of the strike covered not merely Berlin but Hamburg, Cologne, Kiel, Mannheim, Chemnitz, and many other industrial cities.

In Austria the Foreign Minister, Czernin, and in Germany the Chancellor, Hertling, found themselves compelled to reply specifically to Wilson's speech. They gave their addresses on the same day, January 24, and a comparison of their statements suggests that they had discussed them beforehand. Both accepted with a greater or less degree of enthusiasm the general points in Wilson's speech, such as open diplomacy, the freedom of the seas, the removal of economic barriers, the reduction of armaments, a League of Nations. In the matter of Russia and Poland, Hertling advanced the thesis that this settlement concerned only the states of central and eastern Europe.¹ Matters directly affecting Germany, such as Belgium and the return of the German colonies, Czernin left to Hertling, who was ambiguous as to Belgium and demanded the 'reconstitution of the world's colonial possessions.' Hertling also insisted that

¹ Lloyd George's speech of January 5 had given him an opportunity to make this point.

there could be no question of a dismemberment of Imperial territory (a reference to Alsace), and Czernin promised that Austrians would defend the German pre-war possessions 'as our own.' In the matter of territorial problems affecting Austria, such as Italian, Rumanian, and Serb claims, autonomy for the subject nations, and the details of the Balkan settlement, Hertling left the reply to Czernin, who refused to accept any advice as to the government of Austria-Hungary, and would not even promise to evacuate territories occupied by the Austro-Hungarian armies.

There was, in all this, little basis for a peace of negotiation, for the two disagreed with all of Wilson's concrete propositions, and accepted tentatively only his general principles; the Brest-Litovsk negotiations indicated the slight value that should be placed upon their generalizations. It was something, however, that the state of affairs in the Central Empires compelled both Czernin and Hertling to regard Wilson's Fourteen Points as a basis for discussion. In Czernin's speech, furthermore, there was a warmth of tone indicating a real determination to secure peace if it were possible, which distinguished it from Hertling's rather obvious eagerness to evade the issues, and, as the *Arbeiter Zeitung* pointed out, to discover an alibi for not discussing peace on the basis of Wilson's speech.

Hertling, like Czernin, realized the need of peace with Russia, for on that depended the transfer of German divisions to the West. But a general peace was far from his thoughts. That must be won on the battlefields and must be dictated by Germany; if the victory were less overwhelming than Ludendorff promised, Germany would take her profit out of the East. In the mean time strikes would be suppressed by force and the morale of the people maintained by speeches.

Czernin, on the other hand, sought the general peace as soon as possible, for Austria had little to gain and everything

to lose by the prolongation of the war. On February 5, at a conference in Berlin, Czernin had some violent passages with Ludendorff. The former was in favor of setting down in writing that Austria-Hungary was only obliged to fight for the pre-war possessions of Germany. Ludendorff was bitter. 'If Germany makes peace without profit,' he said, 'then Germany has lost the war.' 'The controversy was growing more and more heated,' Czernin noted, 'when Hertling nudged me and whispered: "Leave him alone; we two will manage it together without him."' ¹ This was in reference to the draft of the Brest Treaty, but it suggests the rift between the pacific Czernin and the German military party.

II

President Wilson watched with interest for any indications of the weakening of the 'will to victory' in Germany and Austria. The whole tone of his speech of the Fourteen Points had been in line with the policy of declaring relentless war upon the German military leaders and peace to the German people, which he had emphasized in his speeches of the previous summer. He would hamstring Ludendorff by encouraging the movement for peace and liberal reform in Germany and Austria, if it could be done without weakening the determination of the Allies to fight until a conclusive peace could be achieved. As in the summer of 1917, he commissioned House to follow events in the Central Empires through the reports that came in from Berne, Copenhagen, Paris, and London.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, *January 31, 1918*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

It looks as if things were at last beginning to crack. I do not believe Germany can maintain a successful offensive

¹ Czernin, *In the World War*, 275.

with her people in their present frame of mine. I hope the Entente will keep still and not do anything. . . . The situation is so delicate and so critical that it would be a tragedy to make a false step now.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

*Mr. Carl W. Ackerman to Colonel House*¹

BERNE, SWITZERLAND
February 4, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

This letter is intended as a report on the political situation in Germany and the Central Powers. On January 28th I asked the Legation to send you a long telegram on this subject, but because the wires were 'crowded' it could not be sent in the form I had written it and I do not know how it reached you.

The address of the President, in which he stated the fourteen conditions of peace, has had the greatest effect upon the political situation within the enemy countries of any public address delivered since the United States has been a belligerent. It was successful in the following ways:

1. It separated absolutely, and I think permanently, the people and the Liberals from the Annexationists, the Military Leaders and the War Industrial magnates;
2. It forced the Austro-Hungarian Government to recognize the peace movement in that country and cemented the Dual Monarchy to the German Liberal party;
3. It gave more momentum to the revolutionary movement, which is under way in Germany, than the Russian revolution;
4. It increased the possibilities of success for the present

¹ Note by E. M. H.: 'Original sent to the President for his information.'

confidential negotiations which are taking place with Bulgaria; and

5. It made a tremendous impression upon the small European neutrals.

I need not go into detail in regard to these points because you have undoubtedly received through the Department full information regarding the strikes, the fight over Count Hertling's reply, and the dispute between Vienna and Berlin.

After Mr. Wilson's speech was printed in the Swiss papers, Dr. Louis Schultess, a former attaché of the Swiss Legation in Washington [was appointed] to study the question of a League of Nations and report on what part Switzerland could play in the formation of such an organization.

In my telegram of January 28th I suggested that the President reply to Count Hertling and Count Czernin in order to force the issue of peace on our terms, which are essentially the terms of the German and Austrian people, or of war on Count Hertling's terms.

I believe that we should adopt a firm, determined, and uncompromising attitude toward Count Hertling on the ground that he voiced the sentiments of the German War Party, which wants to continue the war, and on the ground that he did not speak for the people.

I suggested that we assume a different attitude towards Vienna for the purpose of attempting to widen the gap between the two belligerents.

Since I made these suggestions I have concluded that it was fear of revolution more than anything else which prompted Count Czernin to aim his remarks at the President and say that Austria-Hungary considered the President's terms as a possible basis for discussions. I believe our aim should be to strengthen the peace party in Vienna and Budapest so as to force Count Czernin to *ask* the United States, officially, to make peace between the Dual Monarchy and the Entente. Unless the Austrian Government succeeds in

getting food from Russia we may have an opportunity to talk separate peace with that country.

The situation within Germany and Austria-Hungary, to my mind, is the following:

If there is not peace, or a great military victory, there will be a revolution. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that there are three possible developments: 1. Peace; 2. Reformation; 3. Revolution, because I do not believe the German army and navy will be able to decisively defeat the United States and the Allies this year.

The war has reached the decisive period. To my mind, the problem facing the United States is this:

How far can the United States go in encouraging the peace movement and the reform forces within Central Europe without weakening the determination of the Allies to fight until a just peace can be concluded.

The solution is: War, relentless war with armies and speeches against the German War government but peace with the democratic, or reform, peace forces.

Very sincerely and respectfully

CARL W. ACKERMAN

The policy suggested by Mr. Ackerman, whose knowledge of Germany and the German psychology was based on close observation, was almost exactly in line with that laid down by the President in April, 1917. The war, now in its decisive stage, was being fought not merely by generals and soldiers, but also by statesmen to gain the enemy peoples. Germany had tried in vain to undermine the confidence of the Entente peoples in their leaders or in the righteousness of their cause; she had no means of victory except that on the field of battle. But this new military offensive of Germany, coupled with the imperialist demands made at Brest-Litovsk, might enable the Entente leaders to separate the German people from their rulers, by strengthening the belief of the German work-

ing classes that the military leaders were prolonging the war and were responsible for their sufferings. If Wilson could intensify the effect which his speech of the Fourteen Points had made upon the German and Austrian workmen, he would be contributing as much to Allied victory as twenty divisions.

President Wilson was fully informed of the perils attendant upon this policy, which were especially emphasized by the officials of the French and Italian Governments. The determination of the Allied peoples must not be cooled by indiscriminate peace talk; any restatement of peace conditions might lead the working classes to believe that peace was already at hand and dull the enthusiasm for enduring the struggle until even moderate war aims could be ensured. So strongly did the French feel, that the censor refused to permit the cabling of one of Mr. Ackerman's articles, in which he advocated the Wilsonian policy.

Mr. Carl W. Ackerman to Colonel House

LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND
April 12, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . May I not call your attention to a conversation I had with M. Sabatier, of the Foreign Office, regarding an article which I wrote from Switzerland about the recent strikes in Germany. The object of this article for *The Saturday Evening Post* was to show the effects of the President's speeches upon internal affairs in Germany. I tried to show how the strikes were all organized demonstrations in favor of a democratic peace. The Foreign Office, after careful consideration, refused to pass the article for publication, because, as M. Sabatier said:

'We believe that President Wilson and the American people are making a big mistake in paying any attention to the so-called democratic movement in Germany. We could not

pass your article because we thought that it would weaken the morale of the American people; that it would make them hope that internal troubles in Germany would end the war when the war can be ended only by military operations.'

In reply I stated that I agreed with him that military operations were absolutely essential, but that I thought the Allies should play every possible card against Germany and that the President's speeches were political cards which had important political results. He would not agree with this statement and said that the Foreign Office could not pass my article. (A copy of this article, entitled: 'The Street Parliaments' has been forwarded to Mr. Grew.) . . .

Very sincerely and respectfully yours

CARL W. ACKERMAN

It is obvious that there was no unity of policy between the United States and the Allied Governments regarding the attitude that should be adopted toward the German reform movement. Wilson wished to encourage the Social Democrats and weaken the German 'will to victory' by the promise of a fair peace. He was disturbed, as he confessed to House, by the letters which came from Europe emphasizing the unwillingness of Allied leaders to follow him and by the suggestion that it was none of his business. 'A just peace,' he said to House, 'is everybody's business.'

Early in February an incident took place giving clear indication of the lack of diplomatic coördination between the Allies and the United States. On February 4 the Supreme War Council, which was in session to consider military plans, issued a statement regarding the speeches of Czernin and Hertling. The declaration itself was harmless and in accord with the facts; namely, that the two speeches did not furnish any basis for peace. But the abruptness of its tone and the failure to say anything calculated to encourage the German Socialists gave the impression of a challenge, which in

existing circumstances might throw the dissident elements in Germany back into alliance with the Government.

Statement of the Supreme War Council

February 4, 1918

'The Supreme War Council gave the most careful consideration to the recent utterances of the German Chancellor and of the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, but was unable to find in them any real approximation to the moderate conditions laid down by all the Allied Governments. This conviction was only deepened by the impression made by the contrast between the professed idealistic aims with which the Central Powers entered upon the present negotiations at Brest-Litovsk and their now openly disclosed plans of conquest and spoliation.

'In the circumstances, the Supreme War Council decided that the only immediate task before them lay in the prosecution, with the utmost vigour, and in the closest and most effective coöperation, of the military effort of the Allies until such time as the pressure of that effort shall have brought about in the enemy Governments and peoples a change of temper which would justify the hope of the conclusion of peace on terms which would not involve the abandonment, in face of an aggressive and unrepentant militarism, of all the principles of freedom, justice, and the respect for the law of nations which the Allies are resolved to vindicate. . . .'

From the report of the discussion in the Supreme War Council which Mr. Frazier sent to Colonel House, it appeared that the declaration was issued with some hesitation, especially on the part of the British, who realized the delicacy of the situation which might arise if a formal restatement of war aims were made without the participation of President Wilson. It also appeared that the Italians were anxious that

nothing should imply the weakening of their determination to carry out their annexationalist projects. The irony of the discussion lay in the fact that the political members of the Supreme War Council stated that the declaration was meant to further the Wilsonian policy, to 'detach the German people from the Military party,' and to serve as 'a deliberate invitation to the German people to repudiate the ruling caste.' At a later meeting, indeed, Clemenceau insisted that the declaration was entirely in line with Wilson's policy.

Mr. A. H. Frazier to Colonel House

February 4, 1918

The statement given out for publication was drafted partly by M. Clemenceau and partly by Lloyd George. The latter stated that he thought best not to make a formal restatement of the objects of the war, as it would be a declaration of only three countries and he felt doubtful whether President Wilson would endorse such a declaration when neither he nor Colonel House was present. He therefore considered it better to issue a statement of what the Supreme War Council had done in the matter of preparing for the prosecution of the War.

Baron Sonnino objected to a phrase in the original draft which read as follows: 'moderate conditions laid down by Mr. Lloyd George, President Wilson and M. Pichon.' He said that such a declaration on the part of Italy would be equivalent to a renunciation; that what Italy was fighting for was security and the future security of Italy was the very reason for which she had entered the war. As an illustration he mentioned that although the Allied fleets in the Adriatic were three times as strong as the Austrian fleet they were able to accomplish little due to the form of the Dalmatian coast. In deference to Baron Sonnino's views it was decided to make the phrase read 'moderate conditions laid down by all the Allied Governments.'

Baron Sonnino also objected to a phrase occurring in M. Clemenceau's draft, reading as follows: 'Dying fury of German domination.' Baron Sonnino was opposed to the phrase 'unrepentant militarism,' alleging that it was out of keeping with the greater moderation of the more recent utterances of the Allies and that it would not detach the German people from the military party as was its evident intention. Both M. Clemenceau and Lloyd George warmly defended the expression stating that it was a deliberate invitation to the German people to repudiate the ruling caste. The phrase was therefore allowed to stand.

FRAZIER

The situation was not without its elements of humor. Clemenceau and Sonnino were doing their best to fall in with the Wilsonian policy, which they did not favor, and yet their most sincere effort was greeted by the liberals in Great Britain and the United States as merely another declaration of reactionary imperialism. The British Liberal weeklies attacked Lloyd George for his subservience to Continental imperialism; they were doubtless correct in assuming that Italian claims made impossible any concessions to Austria, but they were singularly far from the mark in their belief that but for Clemenceau and Sonnino there would have been a complete and liberal restatement of war aims.

President Wilson was seriously disturbed by the declaration of the Supreme War Council, in part, perhaps, because he regarded its tone as unfortunate, in part because, although the United States was not formally represented upon the political side of the Council, the presence of General Bliss as military representative, and of Mr. Frazier of the Paris Embassy as liaison officer, might give the impression that the Supreme War Council spoke for the President in political matters. He was further disturbed by a statement regarding Russia issued by the Interallied Finance Board, which might

be taken to express American policy. He sent to House the draft of a telegram to Mr. Frazier, as well as a draft statement to be handed the Allied Ambassadors in Washington, which indicated his fear that wires would become crossed if the Interallied councils in Europe undertook to issue political manifestoes without previous consultation with Washington.

Draft telegram for Mr. A. H. Frazier

WASHINGTON, February 5, 1918

. . . You should make it very clear to the members of the Council that this Government objects to the publication by the Supreme War Council of any statement of a political character which carries with it the inference that the United States Government, on account of your presence and the presence of General Bliss, has been consulted and approves of such statement. You should point out to the members of the Council that statements issued by the Supreme War Council, upon which the United States Government has a military representative, naturally carry the inference that they are issued with the approval of the United States Government. The United States Government objects to the issuance of such statements by the Council as may in any way be considered political unless either (1) the text of the statement is first referred to the President for his approval, or (2) it is expressly stated in the statement that it has not been submitted to the Government of the United States. . . .

Draft statement made for Allied Ambassadors in Washington

February 19, 1918

Referring to the recent action of the Supreme War Council with regard to conditions of peace and to the action of the Interallied Board with regard to the recognition of the Bolsheviki authorities, I beg to inform you that the President wishes very respectfully to earnestly urge that when he sug-

gested the creation of an interallied board, and gave his active support to the creation of the Supreme War Council, it was not at all in his mind that either of these bodies should take any action or express any opinion on political subjects. He would have doubted the wisdom of appointing representatives of this Government on either body had he thought they would undertake the decision of any questions but the very practical question of supplies and of the concerted conduct of the war which it was understood they should handle.

He would appreciate it very much if this matter were very thoroughly reconsidered by the political leaders of the governments addressed, and that he might be given an opportunity, should their view in this matter differ from his, to consider once more the conditions and construction under which the representatives of the United States should henceforth act.¹

¹ This letter, or one similar, was delivered by Secretary of State Lansing. The following cable from Wiseman to the Foreign Office explains the President's position:

'Lansing's letter ought to be considered in its relation to the background formed by the events of the last few months.

'The President was always opposed to United States representatives joining any Council of the Allies on the ground that they would inevitably become involved — sooner or later — in political questions which the U.S. ought to keep free from.

'It was pointed out to him, however, on various occasions: — by the P.M. in a letter brought by Lord R.; by W. and by House that the U.S. could not have an army in Europe and in fact could not take any large part in the war unless they were fully represented at the Councils which determined the use to which American troops and American resources should be put.

'The President finally agreed to —

a) Send a temporary American mission to Europe to discuss coöperation of every sort — political, military, financial, etc.

b) To be represented on the Interallied Supply Council.

c) To a military representative at the S.W.C. The question of a political representative at the S.W.C. was left in abeyance — a junior official being designated to attend its meetings merely to report on them.

'At the same time, the President was always strongly in favour of a Supreme War Council with the fullest powers to deal with all aspects of the military situation. The coördination of Allied and American military

III

President Wilson had already planned himself to make a formal reply to the speeches of Czernin and Hertling, and his decision was probably reënforced by his fear that the declaration of the Supreme War Council might strengthen the position of Ludendorff in Germany. Intent upon driving the wedge between the German Socialists and Imperialists, he asked House to supervise the collection of excerpts from the Socialist press and speeches in the enemy countries. The President by utilizing the criticism leveled at the German Government by the Socialists themselves, using their own phrases, could emphasize the sympathy between them and Wilsonian principles and the mutual hostility to German imperialism.¹

effort and, so far as possible, unification of direction has always been in the President's opinion essential to victory.

'On the other hand he has been careful to point out that the U.S. is not bound by any of the interallied treaties or agreements nor does the U.S. necessarily subscribe to all the war aims of the Allies.

'He would have had no objection to joining with the Allies in a general declaration of war policy but only after such declaration had been carefully considered by him in view of the special position of America. . . .

'Colonel House reported to the President on his return that it had not been found practicable for the Allies in conference at Paris to formulate any joint statement of War Aims. The speeches of L.G. and the President a little later seemed to indicate that this policy of separate announcements had been agreed among the Allies.

'The statement of the S.W.C. at its second meeting came, therefore, as a surprise to Washington and was open to two main objections —

'A statement on policy, as distinct from military plans was given out without consulting the President, and in such a way that the public here at any rate supposed that the U.S. was a party to the statement. The second objection was that the statement was not in accordance with the President's views or former pronouncements.

'The President took two steps to remedy this — first, he addressed Congress on the subjects of the German and Austrian speeches, and later instructed Sec. L. to write to the Allied Ambs., no doubt with the idea of having the matter on record in case of any future Senatorial investigation or enquiry.'

¹ The memoranda based upon this collection and upon an analysis of the German press, copies of which were sent to the President, when they are compared with German memoirs published since the war, indicate

Besides appealing to the German Socialists, it might be possible to make threats. Hertling's thesis that the settlement in eastern Europe was none of the Entente's business might be met with the rejoinder that in that case western tariffs were none of Germany's business, and there was nothing that the Germans feared more than a tariff war after the peace.¹ House had discussed this with the French High Commissioner. Extracts from his diary tell of the preparations for the speech the President planned, as well as the policy of economic threats.

'January 27, 1918: André Tardieu came to ask if I would not advocate a chairman of an international board, consisting of representatives of Great Britain, France, and the United States, for the purpose of working out a plan for an economic war against Germany in the event it was necessary. His thought was that a plan should be ready . . . even though nothing was said of its formation. In reply I thought the only thing needful was the passage of a resolution by Congress, giving this Government power to put an embargo on raw materials for five years after the war. I thought this should be done without debate and with but little comment. It should be directed at no one, but Germany would get word of it through her agents and would know the significance of it. . . . Tardieu accepted this suggestion as being wise and simple. I added that England and France could also pass such measures and without comment, and that these laws should not be made at the same time, but at different periods

admirable insight on the part of the State Department official, Mr. W. C. Bullitt, who compiled them.

¹ President Wilson developed this idea in his speech of February 11: 'Count von Hertling,' he said, 'wants the essential bases of commercial and industrial life to be safeguarded by common agreement and guarantee, but he cannot expect that to be conceded him if the other matters to be determined by the articles on peace are not handled in the same way as items in the final accounting.'

not widely separated. He said he would communicate with his Government and tell them of my views.

'January 29, 1918: The President told X that "we have tentatively decided to answer the Hertling and Czernin speeches in this way: In reply to Hertling's assertion that differences between Russia and Germany must be settled between the two, and questions between France and Germany should be settled in like manner, we will call attention to the fact that this is the old diplomacy which has brought the world into such difficulties, and if carried to its logical conclusion Germany and the rest of the world cannot object if England and the United States should conclude between themselves treaties by which the balance of the world would be excluded from their raw materials."

'We discussed the best method of making his views public. This morning when I was with him, Lansing suggested that he give out an interview. . . . The President disagreed with this conclusion. He said he wanted to make a habit of delivering through Congress what he had to say. . . .

'He wondered what excuse he could make for going before Congress again. I suggested that he get a member of the Foreign Relations Committee to write him a letter which would call forth a promise to address Congress on the subject upon which he desired information. He objected to this, as he did not wish Congress to think they could control him in any way or take part in handling foreign affairs. I then suggested that he state that the questions now pending between the nations were of such importance he felt that every move he made, or contemplated making, or whatever thought he had concerning the international situation, should be communicated through Congress.

'February 7, 1918: [New York.] Y was one of my callers. I get information from him concerning the German frame of mind and how best to foment trouble between the Liberals and Imperialists in Germany. I am particularly anxious for

such information now because of the President's forthcoming address.'

On the following day House received word through the State Department that the President expected to deliver his speech to Congress on February 11 and wanted him in Washington to discuss the draft he had written. Late in the afternoon he reached the White House, where the President met him.

'February 8, 1918: We first cleared the decks,' wrote House, 'by reading all the despatches bearing on foreign affairs that had come during the day, and by reading the address to Congress which he had prepared and was holding for criticism.'

'We did not finish and start to dress until seven minutes of seven. I walked out of my room at seven o'clock, to find that the President had beaten me by a half-minute.'

'After dinner we went into executive session and continued until bedtime. I did not interrupt while he read the draft of the message, but made mental notes of changes I thought necessary. . . . I felt that it was a remarkable document, but knew that much of it would have to be eliminated. . . .

'The President said he had departed from his usual custom and did not first write the address out in shorthand, but had typed it from the beginning, and had written it disjointedly and in sections. He usually devoted hours at a time to these messages, but in this instance on account of the pressure of affairs he did not do so. . . . I have never advised a quarter as many eliminations in any previous address as in this one. He had something about Alsace and Lorraine which I asked him to cut out. . . . He did so without comment. He did not argue with me at all when I pointed out changes. This in itself showed that he was not confident.'

'The main eliminations were toward the end of the mes-

sage. I objected to his stating that we had 1,500,000 men ready to go to Europe and that we had 10,000,000 men that would go if necessary. . . . I thought the whole world knew, as well as he and I, of the resources of the United States, both in men and wealth.

'I objected to his making positive statements as to Czernin's opinions. In one instance I asked him to use the expression "it seems" rather than the more positive one which he used concerning Czernin. When he had finished polishing it off, we went to bed with no conversation upon other subjects.

'*February 9, 1918:* The President and I went over the message again to-day and made some minor changes. Contrary to his usual custom, he had Swem write the address in its entirety after we finished the corrections.

'He called in Lansing to-day around twelve o'clock and read it to him. Lansing made two or three suggestions . . . which the President adopted and which I think added to its strength.

'*February 10, 1918:* I walked to Gregory's again after Hoover left. While I was there the President came in and I returned with him to the White House. I was glad I did so, because it gave me the opportunity to express my feeling that his address to Congress still lacked something, and the something I thought it lacked was the focusing of the world's attention on the military party in Germany. I thought he should say that the entire world was now in substantial agreement as to a just peace with the exception of this small group who seemed determined to drive millions of men to their death in order to have their will.

'The President . . . took a pad and pencil and began to frame a new paragraph. This paragraph begins: "A general peace erected upon such foundations can be discussed," and ends with the sentence, "The tragic circumstance is that this one party in Germany is apparently willing and able to send

millions of men to their deaths to prevent what all the world sees to be just." . . .

'The President is not enthusiastic about it [the message], but I was certain it would meet with almost universal approval.'

Mr. Wilson delivered his speech in a joint session of Congress on February 11. He connected it directly with the speech of the Fourteen Points by referring to the replies of Hertling and Czernin. The series of speeches had thus something of the nature of open peace negotiations, characterized, however, by extreme generalization of phrase. The first portion of the President's address was a critical analysis of the replies of Czernin and Hertling. Count Hertling's programme of barter and concession he found totally inadequate: 'The method the German Chancellor proposes is the method of the Congress of Vienna. We cannot and will not return to that. What is at stake now is the peace of the world. What we are striving for is a new international order based upon broad and universal principles of right and justice — no mere peace of shreds and patches.' The essential justice of the final settlement was the business of all mankind. If Germany could not accept this principle, she could hardly hope for justice of treatment in the commercial world of the future. In conclusion the President stated in a new form the general principles of what he regarded as the only safe settlement:

'First, that each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent;

'Second, that peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power; but that

'Third, every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival states; and

'Fourth, that all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world.'

Colonel House reported that the speech was well received by Congress, but without the enthusiasm that had attended earlier addresses of the President. Wilson's purpose was to catch the attention of the liberal elements in Germany; in the terms of House's diary, the President was 'building a fire back of Ludendorff.' Doubtless few of the members of Congress understood this purpose, and fewer still sympathized with it. Mr. Wilson apparently caught this lack of sympathy.

'On the return from the Capitol,' wrote House in his diary, 'I drove with the President. He was only half pleased with his reception and only scantily hopeful of the success of his speech. . . .

'After lunch, to Lord Reading's. He has retaken his old quarters at No. 2315 Massachusetts Avenue. I was delighted to hear him say, "I would have given a year of my life to have made the last half of the President's speech." I said he would surely want to know why the last half. The reply was that the first half was merely a reiteration of Czernin's and Hertling's positions, but the last half was a noble utterance, both from an oratorical viewpoint and from that of a statesman. . . .

'I returned to the White House, where the President was waiting to hear if I had any news from Reading. He was

delighted when I told him what Reading, Wiseman, and Gordon had to say. . . . I regard the President's January 22nd speech of 1917 and his January 8th speech of this year, the greatest he has made. In speaking of the January 8th speech I told the President that that was a great adventure. He stood to win or lose by it, while this speech was a perfectly safe proposition.'

IV

The first direct result of Wilson's speech was evident on February 20, when House was called by telephone from Washington and told that a secret peace offer from the Emperor of Austria had been picked up by the British Intelligence Service, under the direction of Admiral Hall. The news did not come as a complete surprise. During the first week in February an Austrian Liberal, Dr. Lammasch, had been sent to Switzerland, where he had several long conversations with Dr. George Herron, who was supposed to enjoy President Wilson's confidence. Lammasch explained that the Emperor Karl was sincerely desirous of immediate peace and hoped that Wilson would take steps to bring it about at once in order to save Europe from the horrors that would result from the great German drive in the spring. The Emperor himself was ready, he averred, to reform completely the Austro-Hungarian Empire, instituting a sort of federal system which would assure autonomy and complete satisfaction for the subject nationalities.

Dr. Herron naturally replied that he could not speak for the President. He found the Emperor's plan hardly sufficient to settle permanently the problems of southeastern Europe, a plan which, in his opinion, was designed rather to tide the crisis over for the Hapsburg dynasty than to furnish a stable basis for peaceful relations between the nationalities. He urged Lammasch to persuade the Emperor to proceed with more imagination and liberality. Herron himself received

the impression that so great was the need of Austria, her demand for peace would be renewed.¹

So it proved, for on February 19 Czernin telegraphed to the Austrian Ambassador in Madrid a message from the Emperor for transmission to the King of Spain, a message which contained within it another which he asked the King to transmit to President Wilson. A copy was sent to House with a request for his opinion.²

Here was a direct offer of peace based upon what read like a cordial acceptance of the conditions laid down by the President in his speech of February 11. But it took no note of the speech of the Fourteen Points nor of the more special conditions contained therein. Unlike the proposals of Dr. Lammasch, which intimated that the Emperor would apply the principle of self-government to all the peoples of Austria-Hungary, the Emperor in his telegram to the King of Spain apparently suggested a peace based upon the *status quo*. The single reference to *Italia Irredenta* indicated no willingness to concede an iota to Italian claims. These were essential parts of the general settlement and negotiations could not begin without more explicit assurance that Austria accepted the terms laid down in the Fourteen Points. The Emperor said nothing of German claims. Did he plan a separate or a general peace, and was the German Government in agreement with his acceptance of Wilson's conditions? Their demands upon Russia at Brest-Litovsk did not indicate the fact.

The danger of negotiations with Austria had been impressed upon House by Wickham Steed, foreign editor of *The Times* and the leading English authority upon the Hapsburg problem. He was at this moment engaged in the vital work of assisting the revolutionary movement among the

¹ This account of the conversations is based upon cables from the American Legation in Berne, copies of which were sent to House.

² See appendix to this chapter.

Austrian Slavs, which promised the shortest cut to Allied victory in southeastern Europe and which was imperiled by any hint that the Allies would throw over the Slavs in order to make peace with Austria on the basis of the *status quo*. Another authority on the Hapsburg problem, André Chéradame, wrote at length to Colonel House indicating the sources of danger.¹

President Wilson was fully warned of the diplomatic perils attached to any peace negotiation with Austria, which in any case could not be inaugurated without consultation with the Allies. On February 23 he asked House to come over to Washington. House thus records in his diary the gist of the conference:

'February 24, 1919: We had time before lunch to discuss the Austrian Emperor's note to the President, sent through the King of Spain, which the British have intercepted and already given us. We agreed that it would be well to ask Balfour's opinion of it and we outlined the following cable. The President wrote it on his typewriter.'

Colonel House to Mr. Balfour

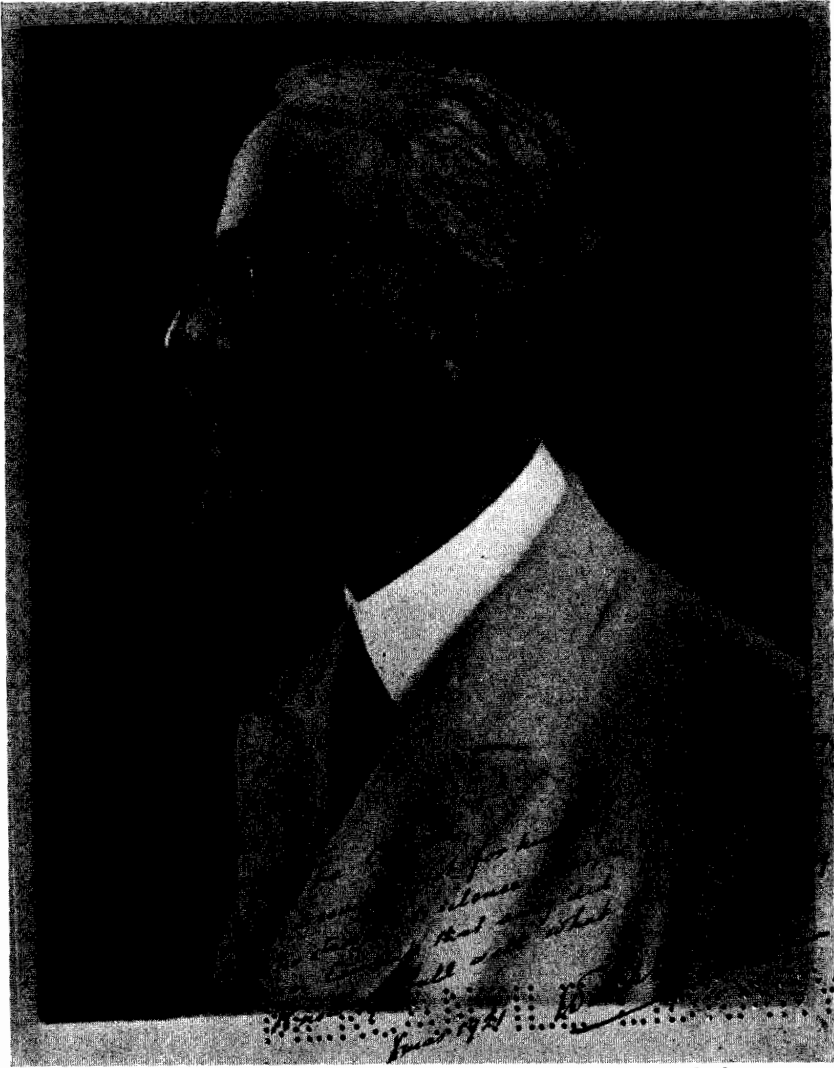
[Cablegram]

WASHINGTON, February 24, 1918

In view of the intercepted message from the Emperor of Austria to the King of Spain and your recent message to the President through me which I received on the 8th, the President would very much appreciate any comments or suggestions you may be kind enough to make. The actual message has not yet been received from Spain. How far would you think it necessary to go in apprising the Entente Governments of the character of the message from Austria?

EDWARD HOUSE

¹ See appendix to this chapter.



PHILADELPHIA

YRASEL EUTRACEREN

APR. 1964

PRESIDENT RECEIVES AUSTRIAN NOTE 375

'February 26, 1918: This afternoon, the Spanish Ambassador asked for an audience and handed the President the note from the Emperor of Austria. The President said he had difficulty in composing his face and in trying to look surprised. He has written a memorandum in reply to Emperor Charles, which he read to me last night and which . . . is non-committal and seeks further information. . . .

'It is one of the most delicate and difficult situations with which he has yet had to deal. There is so much involved; it is not only the Austrian-German situation, but also the question of the Entente and our relations with them.

'February 28, 1918: The President was pleased with his interview with the French Ambassador. He expected rather a stormy time because he intended to tell him of his communication to the Austrians. Jusserand thought he was acting wisely. The Ambassador said that his Government had picked up some information which led them to believe that the two Kaisers, Wilhelm and Karl, had gotten the Apostolic Delegate in Munich to take their peace terms to Rome for the purpose of having the Pope use his good offices toward peace.'

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, February 27, 1918

Please express to President my very high appreciation of his confidence.

My views about Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' message to him for what they are worth are as follows:

1. I am profoundly impressed by difference between Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' official utterance conveyed through the King of Spain and personal policy of Emperor of Austria as embodied in a conversation between Professor Lammasch and Dr. Herron, of which we had an account from our Minister in Berne. First does not appear to go beyond

suggestion for return to *status quo ante* except that Bulgaria is to obtain a great deal that she did not possess before the war, while Serbia is to get something and to lose something, balance of loss and gain being on the whole against her.

These proposals are known to the German Emperor and doubtless represent his policy. They amount to a success for the Central Powers and can hardly be reconciled with public declarations of President on the subject of peace terms.

2. Proposals of Professor Lammasch through Dr. Herron are of very different tenour and I presume represent opinions of Emperor of Austria (in his then mood) unaffected by German influences. Professor Lammasch lays down with great emphasis and in quite unambiguous language the right of peoples to choose form of government and Emperor is reported as expressly desirous to see this principle applied to his own dominions. This scheme as far as it goes is in harmony with principles laid down by President and might therefore form a starting-point for discussion. But it is open to two very serious objections. In first place, it ignores Italy, and, in second place, unless matters be very carefully handled, it may alienate subject races of Austria whom President desires to benefit. Various Slav peoples have so often been fooled by phrase 'self-government' that they will be disposed to regard all schemes which are so described as giving them old slavery under a new name. They will draw no distinction between what President desires to give them and what they have already. What they have already leaves them completely subject, in Austria to a German minority, in Hungary to a Magyar one.

I need not insist on dangers both from Italian and Austrian side which conversations begun on Lammasch basis inevitably carry with them. The future of the war largely depends on supporting Italian enthusiasm and on maintaining anti-German zeal of Slav populations in Austria. Both Italians and Slavs are very easily discouraged and are quick

to find evidence in foreign speeches that their interests are forgotten or betrayed. I fear Austrian statesmanship will not be above using any indication that President had a tenderness for Austrian Empire, as a means of convincing Slavs that having nothing to hope for from the Allies they had best make terms with Central Powers.

3. But some risks must be run and, if President feels strongly that it is really essential not to close door to further discussion, it seems to me that it might be worth while to take some steps to ascertain if the Lammasch conversations really represented the mind of the Emperor and whether he would be prepared to treat them as a basis of discussion. Austro-German proposal through King of Spain appears so completely inconsistent with President's public declarations that it is hard to see how any discussion round a table can bridge the differences between them. In answer to question which President asks me about taking the Allies into his confidence, I suggest it must largely depend on policy he intends to pursue. When German proposals for a conference last summer were conveyed to me by King of Spain, I called Ambassadors of great belligerents including Japan to Foreign Office and informed them of everything that had occurred. This, in the circumstances, was quite easy and avoided all occasion for suspicion. It may not be so easy now. But my advice would be to follow this precedent if *Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' proposals are in question*: but if, on the other hand, the President means to follow up Lammasch-Herron line I should in his place content myself with telling the Allies very confidentially that I was carrying on informal conversations with Austria and would communicate further with them if occasion arose.

I offer these suggestions with utmost diffidence and only in consequence of direct request which you have conveyed to me from President.

BALFOUR

Colonel House to Mr. A. J. Balfour

[Cablegram]

WASHINGTON, March 1, 1918

The President has asked me to thank you for your message. We waited until it arrived before coming to a decision. The President is glad to find (as he fully anticipated) your view is substantially in accordance with his own. He has replied to the King of Spain's message in a way which will not close the door to further discussion, but rather develop and probe what the Emperor of Austria has in mind. We feel that if this message indicates a genuine desire to meet the just demands of the Allies, it ought not to be rejected; and if, on the other hand, it is merely designed to cover annexationist schemes, it can be best met by demanding that the Central Powers shall apply the principles they profess to hold to concrete cases. If the Germans are not sincere in their expressed desire for peace, is it not of the highest importance to expose this before whole world — the German people themselves, if they will listen; certainly before the neutrals and any of those in Allied countries and the United States (particularly in Labor and Socialist circles) who may still believe in German professions. If any further conversations take place the United States will at the same time redouble her efforts to equip her own forces and assist the Allies. The President is well aware that an efficient army is at the present moment the best guarantee against the intrigues of German militarism. He cannot, of course, in any sense commit the Allies by these conversations, but he wishes to assure you that he has no intention of allowing the United States to be committed to any further steps unless the Central Powers are prepared to translate general principles into frank and concrete assurances.

The President will inform the Allied Ambassadors in the general sense of the above. He has considered most carefully

and is bearing in mind the very just observations you make in your message.

EDWARD HOUSE

Careful investigation of Austria's attitude failed to develop any possibility of winning the Vienna Government to an acceptance of the conditions which Wilson had laid down, or of separating Austria from Germany. It is possible that if it had been in his power the Emperor Karl would have made broad concessions; but he was bound to the chariot wheel of Germany. A peace based upon the *status quo* represented a victory for Austria-Hungary; it was the integrity of the polyglot empire for which she was fighting. Naturally she accepted the principle of no annexations. Such a peace was impossible for either France or Italy, since their purpose was the removal of conditions which had long threatened the peace of Europe and would disturb it in the future so long as Alsace-Lorraine and *Italia Irredenta* remained in the hands of their enemies; they regarded the annexation of these regions not as a spoil of conquest but as an essential and logical part of the general purpose of pacification. It was possible, indeed, to go farther and maintain that there could be no stable peace in southeastern Europe so long as the Slavs remained under Austrian domination.

The impossibility of reaching any arrangement with Austria was proved beyond peradventure by the conversations of General Smuts and Count Mensdorff, both of whom sought earnestly for a common ground of negotiation. A memorandum drafted by Count Czernin or under his supervision, indicated the utter futility of these or other conversations. A copy of the memorandum was given to House.

Count Czernin's Memorandum

'The Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs finds it difficult to believe that the declarations of the British messenger

[General Smuts] really tend towards a general peace based on justice, since they leave aside the only difficulty in the way of a just and lasting peace; e.g., the desire for annexation on the part of France and Italy.

'The Central Empires will never recognize this desire, which appears to them unjustified. So long as Italy wishes to annex Austrian territory and France declares that she cannot make peace without acquiring Alsace-Lorraine, peace with these powers is impossible. If, however, they abandon their aims of conquest, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs sees no obstacle to the conclusion of peace at once. So long as England supports her allies in their annexation schemes no one in the Central Empires will believe she seeks a just and lasting peace. The Central Empires have not the slightest desire to interfere with internal affairs in the Allied countries; neither do they wish others to interfere in theirs.

'The Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs feels that the reproach with regard to the peace with Rumania is unjustified and the proof of this is that the Rumanian people wish for nothing more than the formation of a Margholiman Ministry such as will allow them to draw closely to the Central Powers in a profitable manner.¹ The Rumanian people feel that the benefits which a *rapprochement* will confer will be greater than the sacrifices which the peace imposes upon them.

'As regards after war conditions Count Czernin declares he is resolutely determined to adhere to a programme which will aim at preventing future wars. But first the present war

¹ Nothing could more effectively stimulate distrust in the candor of Czernin than this paragraph. The peace imposed upon Rumania at Bucharest was one of 'violence' in the extreme; heavy economic penalties were laid upon Rumania, and a strip of territory seized along the old frontier which put Rumania absolutely at the mercy of Austria-Hungary. Czernin's reference to the desire of the Rumanians for a *rapprochement* with the Central Empires suggests an ill-chosen touch of irony. Margholiman represented the pro-Teuton elements in Rumanian political circles.

must be brought to an end, which will only be possible when France and Italy no longer speak of conquest. It will be possible then to discuss the future.'

The peace offers of Austria were doubtless prompted in part by a vague hope of disturbing the diplomatic unity of the Allies, in part by a nervous anxiety to cast out feelers that might perchance lead to peace negotiations before the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire. They had merely passing interest and left no effects. It was quite otherwise with the diplomatic negotiations between the Central Powers and Russia, which were finally consummated early in March.

The Trotsky policy of 'no peace, no war,' which had led to the rupture of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, proved a magnificent gesture but little more. The German armies advanced steadily eastward, and on February 24 the Soviet Government, at the inspiration of Lenin, accepted conditions infinitely more drastic than those which they had previously refused. A new delegation, from which Trotsky was conspicuously absent, left for Brest and on March 3 signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

The effect in Germany and in Austria was an immediate revulsion of feeling in favor of the Governments. In Germany all parties, with the exception of the minority Socialists, supported the Berlin plan of erecting a chain of buffer vassal states along the eastern frontier of Germany and Austria-Hungary, at the expense of Russia. The success of the Government in its Russian policy, moreover, created a willingness to support the sacrifices of the spring battles, which according to the promises of the military leaders would force the Entente to recognize the futility of further fighting.

It was useless, then, for the United States or for the Allies to continue any emphasis upon the Wilsonian policy of making friends with the German opponents of German

imperialism. For the moment they were hypnotized by its diplomatic triumph at Brest-Litovsk. 'It will not be long,' wrote W. C. Bullitt, who was making a special study of the problem for Colonel House, 'before the President can again appeal to the German Socialists and Liberals. But to-day a scathing indictment of German policy in the East would serve merely to unify the people behind the Government. For the present, therefore, we had better fight and say nothing.'

APPENDIX

The Emperor Karl to the King of Spain

[Telegram]

February 20, 1918

The European situation has been materially cleared by President Wilson's speech on the one hand and by Count Czernin's on the other and the points at issue have been reduced to a certain minimum; hence the time seems to have come when a direct discussion between one of my representatives and one representing Mr. Wilson might clear up the situation to such an extent that no further obstacle would stand in the way of a World's peace congress.

Your magnanimous desire so frequently expressed to pronounce proposals for peace prompts me to request you to forward the following message through a secret channel to President Wilson.

'In his speech of February 12th President Wilson expressed four main principles as the foundation of an understanding to be hoped for. My position in regard to these four principles can be summed up as follows:

'In point one President Wilson demands, according to the German text before me, "that each part of the final settlement must be based on the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring about a peace that will be permanent." With this guiding principle I am in agreement. Every man of principle and intellect must desire a solution which assures a lasting peace and it is only a just peace, securing vital interests, that can afford such a solution.

'Points two and three belong together and are to the effect that "peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power, but that every territorial settlement involved in the war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned and not as a part of any adjustment or compromise of claims among the rival states."

'The question of territory I believe will resolve itself very simply if all governments expressly declare that they renounce conquests and annexations. Of course all states would have to be placed on the same footing.

If the President will endeavor to bring his allies into line in this respect, Austria will do everything in her power to induce her own allies to take up this position. As regards what might be accomplished in respect of possible frontier modifications in the interest and in favor of the peoples concerned similar friendly conversations may be carried on between state and state for, and this seemed to be the opinion of the President too, a lasting peace could scarcely be promoted if in a desire to avoid a forcible transference from the sovereignty of one power to another we wished to prevent a corresponding territorial settlement in other parts of Europe where hitherto there has been no fixity of frontiers as in the case of the parts inhabited by Bulgars. However the principle must remain that no state shall gain or lose anything and the pre-war possessions of all states be regarded as inviolable.

'Point Four. "All well defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded to them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world."

'This statement too, so clearly and aptly put by the President, is acceptable as a basis. Again I lay the greatest stress on the fact that any fresh settlement of conditions in Europe should not increase the risk of future conflict, but rather diminish it. The President's sincerity in saying "that the American Government was quite ready to be shown that the settlements she has suggested are not the best or the most enduring," arouses in us a high hope that we may in this question too reach some agreement. In this exchange of opinion we shall be in a position to furnish conclusive proof that there are national demands the satisfying of which would be neither good nor enduring nor would they provide for the grievances which are continually put forward, a solution which would meet the wishes of the states affected. We shall be able to establish this in case of the national claims of Italy to the part of the Austrian Tyrol inhabited by Italians by means of the proof of indisputable manifestations and expressions of the popular will in this part of the country. I must therefore for my part most strongly urge that my representative discuss with the President every possible means of preventing fresh crises. In the principle already enunciated of an entire renunciation of annexations the demand of the complete surrender of Belgium is apparently included. All questions of detail such as Serbia's access to the sea, the granting of the necessary commerce and navigation outlets for Serbia and many other questions could be certainly cleared up by discussion and prepared for a peace conference.

'The second main principle which the President had already established is the unconditional avoidance of a future war; with this I am in complete accord.

'As regards the third point laid down by the President, the main purpose of which is general disarmament and freedom of the seas for the prevention of future world wars, there is no difference of opinion between the President and myself. In view of all this I hold that there exists such a degree of harmony between the principles laid down by the President

on the one hand, and myself on the other, that results might be expected from an actual conference and that such a conference might bring the world considerably nearer to the peace fervently desired by all the states.'

If you will be kind enough to forward this to the President I believe you will render the cause of peace in general and the whole human race the greatest service.

KARL

M. André Chéradame to Colonel House

February, 1918

COLONEL:

Having kept a special memory of the kindly welcome you were good enough to give me during your stay in Paris, allow me to send you here-with a cutting from a Vienna newspaper, reproduced this morning by one of our great Paris journals, which refers to a particularly important point to which I draw your careful attention. It is clearly evident from the text that Czernin's recent rhetorical manifestations were but pacifist manoeuvres resulting from a very close understanding with Berlin. This is a fact which has never been doubted by those who, like myself, have studied Austria and the Government at Vienna at close range during the last ten years.

As is recorded by the Vienna newspaper, the Government at Vienna has developed its pacific offensive 'with remarkable success.' This is unfortunately true. The recent declarations of Entente statesmen which it has been possible to interpret as favouring the preservation of Austria-Hungary, have encouraged the audacity of our adversaries who respect nothing save force, and whose already immeasurable ambitions are only whetted by any concession. Furthermore these declarations have been the cause of an undeniable moral depression on the part of the Allies of Western Europe and of the Slav and Latin peoples oppressed by Austria-Hungary. It would be highly desirable that the people of the United States should be assured that those who, like myself, preach the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary as indispensable, do not dream for a moment of seeing constituted in the place of Austria-Hungary a swarm of small States, too small to be able to exist comfortably.

As a matter of fact it is possible to conceive that states such as Bohemia, Yugo-Slavia, a democratized Magyar State, whilst they would each remain politically independent, should come to an understanding to form one economic territory, as it is to their interest to do so. The term 'Austria-Hungary' in reality denotes, not a nation, for such does not exist, but a system of States based on the oppression of nationalities. Also if the hypothetical idea is put about the United States that Austria-Hungary must be maintained, in Europe it is considered as an opinion in sharp contradiction with the principle proclaimed by President Wilson that all peoples should be free to dispose of themselves. One fact proves how dangerous it is to believe that the Government of Vienna differs from that at Berlin. The greatest harm that has been done in the last weeks is the result of the visit of a member of the British Government, General

Smuts, a Boer general who knows nothing about Austria-Hungary, and who, nevertheless went to Berne to start conversations with regard to a separate peace with Austria-Hungary. These conversations had, naturally, no chance of success, but they were immediately used by the people at Vienna and at Berlin to depress the morale of the Slav and Latin populations of Austria-Hungary, by telling them that Allies have betrayed them. Moreover, steps such as those taken by General Smuts, which are in open contradiction with the pact of London, are of a nature to imperil the trust which should exist amongst allies. And, evidently, this trust must be preserved intact.

For the same reasons it would be infinitely dangerous that the plan put forward by Allied Socialists to hold an International Conference should bear fruit. In reality, this decision could but decide the destruction of Allied moral resistance on the Western Front. The discussion about Stockholm contributed in a considerable proportion to Russia's dissolution. That experience should carry the conviction that the same mistakes should not be repeated in a scarcely different form. We therefore count upon President Wilson yet to render the Allied cause the immense service of putting aside this redoubtable trap. I will be particularly happy, Colonel, if you will be kind enough to transmit to the President these various points of view, in so far as you consider it useful to do so. I believe them to be absolutely true, because the events justify them. And I am convinced that truth is indispensable to victory.

Please receive, Colonel, the assurances of my very high consideration.

ANDRÉ CHÉRADAME

CHAPTER XIII

THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA¹

I have been sweating blood over the question what is right and feasible to do in Russia. It goes to pieces like quicksilver under my touch. . . .
President Wilson to Colonel House, July 8, 1918

I

THE advent of the Bolsheviks to power in Russia was destined in the end to bring difficulties upon Germany, since the contagion of social rebellion soon touched the German troops on the Western Front.² But for the moment the pacifist determination of the Soviet leaders was translated into immediate German profit at Brest-Litovsk and enabled Germany to concentrate her military effort in the West. To the Allies, many of whom assumed that the Bolshevik revolution was the work of German propaganda, it seemed of the first importance to reconstruct the Eastern Front by sending in an expeditionary force which might serve as focus for the mobilization of anti-German elements in Russia. They tended to underestimate the essential factors that had compelled Russia to make peace and they believed that with Allied assistance a fighting front could be reestablished and the Bolsheviks overthrown.

The French were the most vigorous in their demand for military intervention in Russia. They raised the problem at various times during the Interallied Conference at Paris

¹ This chapter is not designed to be a sketch of American policy in the Far East at this time, but merely to throw light on the situation as it was viewed by Colonel House. Among his papers are a mass of documents relating to the Siberian expedition; but since he was not in as close relationship with the statesmen and events of the Far East as he was with those of Europe, his papers do not reflect the history and policies of the war period so completely for the Far East as for American relations with Europe.

² *Ludendorff's Own Story*, II, 331, 334, and *passim*.

in late 1917. On December 1, Clemenceau discussed with House the possibilities of intervention and urged upon him the desirability of a Japanese expeditionary force. Previous to the revolution, he said, the old Russian Government had been unwilling to solicit Japanese military aid. But Russia's withdrawal, after the Bolshevik revolution, had changed the situation. Russia was out of the game. It was the moment for Japan to take her place.

Colonel House was then and always opposed to military intervention in Russia. He did not believe that a Japanese expedition or any other would serve to build up a new fighting front against Germany in the East. The fighting spirit of Russia, he insisted, was burnt out; the industrial organization of the country, so necessary to continued war, was shattered. The Bolsheviks were in control, not because of German gold, but because they had satisfied the only real demand of the Russian peasants: the distribution of land. This argument he based upon the reports he received from the American Red Cross Mission, supported by those of the British Consulate in Moscow. The following is typical:

JEWISH
GOLD.

Mr. Arthur Bullard to Colonel House

PETROGRAD, December 12, 1917

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

... It is no use crying over spilt milk. But I think there was a chance — months ago — to illumine a fighting spirit in the Russian army. If the soldier had been promised his land, if he had been made to believe that continued fighting meant the defense of the Revolution, if the real democratic idealism of the allied nations had not been hidden by the diplomatic rebuff to the Russian demand for a frank statement of war aims, the miracle might have been accomplished. But the Provisional Government and Kerenski were doomed because they refused to meet these two burning issues of the

people — 'Land and peace' — and contented themselves with busy activity in the political combinations of Petrograd.

It was inevitable that some party should arise that would try to meet the popular demands. It might have been any one of the half-dozen so-called political parties. It happened to be the Bolsheviki, because they had the men of sufficient daring to cut all the Gordian knots, to meet the real issues frankly, daringly, unscrupulously. . . .

Cordially

A. BULLARD

If Russia were both unwilling and unable to stay in the war it would be useless to attempt to force her by means of an expeditionary force, and it would be very costly at a time when the Allies needed all their man-power for the coming struggle in the West. Any attempt to interfere in Russian politics, apart from the moral issues involved, might prove exceedingly dangerous. What chance was there to oust the Bolsheviki, who appeared to the peace-hungry and land-hungry Russians as the first leaders who had made a sincere effort to satisfy their needs? Would not such interference merely strengthen the control of Lenin and Trotsky? Was it, indeed, certain that if the Bolsheviki were overthrown they would be replaced by a party able better to withstand the Germans? Trotsky showed no inclination to be tricked by Berlin or to make any proposal which would be of direct aid to Germany.

House concluded that, so far as the United States was concerned, any effort at intervention, except at the request of the Russian Government, would be a mistake. He so advised Wilson on his return from Europe in December, at the same time urging that the President declare American friendliness to Russia and provide whatever help the Russians might ask.

'André Tardieu and Thomas W. Lamont called,' wrote

House on January 2, 1918. 'Tardieu has just returned from France and desired to get in touch with the situation on this side. Lamont came to tell of Russia and of Thompson's work there.¹ He found I was in partial agreement with Thompson and therefore in disagreement with the English, French, and American Governments regarding the policy that should be adopted toward Russia at this time. God only knows who is right, but, at least, I feel that I am on the safe side when I advise that literally nothing be done further than that an expression of sympathy be offered for Russia's efforts to weld herself into a virile democracy, and to proffer our financial, industrial, and moral support in every way possible.'

A week later the President delivered his speech of the Fourteen Points, in which he included a special appeal for Russia, conceived in the friendliest spirit of aid and breathing no reproaches, either against the Bolsheviki or the Russian people for their withdrawal from the war against Germany. So far as Russia was concerned, the effects of the speech were not what House had hoped. Trotsky was engaged in his paradoxical plan to cease war without making peace with Germany, and it does not appear that at this moment he put faith in Wilson's professions of help; still less Lenin. Between the bourgeois capitalistic republic of the West and the communistic revolution of the East there could be little sympathy.²

¹ Colonel William B. Thompson had been Chief of the American Red Cross Mission in Russia.

² Radek, the propagandist of the Bolsheviki, later spoke of the Fourteen Points as 'a very deliquescent programme of political rascality' and termed Wilson the 'prophet of American imperialism.' Cf. the following letter written to Colonel House by Lincoln Steffens, February 1, 1919: '... One clog in your peace machinery is the failure of Trotzky and the Russians to believe in the sincerity of President Wilson. I understand their reasoning. I used to hear them say, even in my day (last spring) that what the President said was what they, the Russians, thought; but they argued as hard-headed Socialists along the line of economic determination; to wit, the United States is not a democracy. It is a plutocracy; it is a part of the capitalistic system. Therefore the head of it can't mean literally what Mr. Wilson says. He must be playing some game....'

II

In the mean time the Allies decided to press their plans for Japanese intervention in Siberia, partly on the ground that elements in the Far East might be organized against the Bolsheviks and 'therefore against Germany,' partly to protect the military stores of the Allies at Vladivostok. The coöperation of the United States Government in these plans was obviously desirable and Mr. Balfour cabled to Colonel House, for transmission to the President, an exposition of the factors which had led to the decision.

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, January 30, 1918

Instructions have been sent, by telegraph, to Colville Barclay to urge that Japan shall be asked by the Allies to occupy the Siberian Railway as their mandatory. I hope the scheme will receive very careful consideration in spite of the many serious difficulties it presents. . . . At first sight the occupation of the Siberian Railway may appear inconsistent with due respect for the rights of the Government now at the head of affairs at Petrograd. We do not wish to quarrel with the Bolsheviks. On the contrary, we look at them with a certain degree of favour so long as they refuse to make a separate peace. But their claim to be the Government of all the Russians, either *de facto* or *de jure*, is not founded on fact. The forced dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, in particular, makes their claim no better than that of the autonomous bodies in South East Russia which the occupation of the Siberian Railway is intended to assist; while there is much less probability of their helping to defend the Rumanian army, to repeal attacks on Armenia by Turkey and of their refusing to furnish supplies to the Germans. . . .

I trust you will not mind my putting these considerations

before you, but the question is regarded as one of great military importance by the Cabinet. You will realize that [it] is also one of immediate urgency.

BALFOUR

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, February 2, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I have never changed my opinion that it would be a great political mistake to send the Japanese troops into Siberia. There is no military advantage that I can think of that would offset the harm. Leaving out the ill feeling which it would create in the Bolsheviki Government, it would arouse the Slavs throughout Europe because of the race question if for nothing else. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The President was quite as strongly opposed to the suggested Japanese expedition as House. It is likely that he believed, on what the State Department regarded as solid evidence, that the Japanese themselves were the instigators of the plan for an invasion of Siberia; and they wished the expedition to be exclusively or overwhelmingly Japanese in order to ensure an occupation of the Maritime Provinces.

Such a development Mr. Wilson constantly endeavored to forestall, and this determination on his part underlay American policy as regards the Far East, a policy warmly endorsed both by the Department of State and by the military leaders. But the European Allies constantly urged Japanese intervention. Late in February Wilson took up with House the conditions under which he might safely approve it.

'February 25, 1918: We discussed at great length,' House wrote in his diary, 'the question of Japanese intervention in

Siberia, but came to no conclusion. There are arguments both for and against it. My thought was that unless Japan went in under a promise to withdraw, or at least be subject to the disposition of the peace conference, the Entente in backing her would place themselves in exactly the same position as the Germans now occupied toward Western Russia, to which there is such vociferous objection among the Western Powers.'

Under continual pressure from the French and the British, President Wilson wrote a memorandum in which he withdrew his objections to the Allied note requesting Japanese intervention, although he did not go so far as to join with the Allies in making the request.¹ The note was not formally circulated, but its contents were pretty generally known to the Allied Ambassadors. Colonel House, who may have weakened in his opposition to Japanese intervention during his discussions with the President at Washington, continued to emphasize the difficulties involved in the Allied proposition, especially after a conversation with Ambassador Bakhmetieff. 'The Russian Ambassador,' he wrote on March 2, in New York, 'desired to call my attention to the danger of the Japanese expeditionary force into Siberia. He thought it would throw the Russians into the arms of the Germans for, between the two, there would be no question as to which they would choose. We did not disagree upon this position.'

Colonel House to the President

[Memorandum] ²

March 3, 1918

1. I think it is necessary under the circumstances for the note to go to the Japanese, but before it is sent the Allied

¹ The text of this note is printed in the appendix to this chapter.

² Transmitted by telephone.

Ambassadors should be called together and it should be pointed out where this venture may lead.

(a) The lowering, or even loss, of our moral position, which will undoubtedly have the effect of dulling the enthusiasm of our people for the war, in exchange for a vague and nebulous military advantage.

(b) Suggest that at the same time this statement is delivered to the Japanese they should be requested to make a statement of their reasons for this action and policy in regard to Siberia. This statement should be made along the lines of the President's note so that their position may be favorably contrasted in the eyes of the world with that of Germany.

2. Does he [the President] not think it would be well for me to cable Balfour fully outlining the difficulties and dangers as we see them?

3. The Japanese have already approached the British inquiring whether the holding back of the Americans was antagonistic to Japan. They were assured that it was not. However, this indicates the necessity for caution and our press should be warned not to write inflammatory articles.

NEW YORK, *March 3, 1918*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Senator Root has just left. He agrees with you and with me as to the danger of the proposed Japanese intervention in Siberia. He thinks that even if Japan should announce her purpose to retire when the war was over, or at the mandate of the peace conference, the racial dislike which the Russians have for the Japanese would throw Russia into the arms of Germany.

The Russian Ambassador, whom I saw yesterday, is of a like opinion.

We are treading upon exceedingly delicate and dangerous ground, and are likely to lose that fine moral position you have given the Entente cause. The whole structure which

you have built up so carefully may be destroyed over night, and our position will be no better than that of the Germans.

I cannot understand the . . . determination of the British and French to urge the Japanese to take such a step. Leaving out the loss of moral advantage, it is doubtful whether there will be any material gain. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to Mr. A. J. Balfour

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, March 4, 1918

I have told the President that I am cabling you because I feel that the proposed Japanese action in Siberia may be the greatest misfortune that has yet befallen the Allies. This is said with the kindest feelings for Japan and no desire to question her position in Far-Eastern affairs. The United States wishes in every way to assist, and in no way to obstruct, this scheme, but it would be entirely unfair not to warn you of the dangers of the plan so far as public opinion in the United States is concerned.

Since the proposals have been made semi-public, I have sounded various shades of opinion here, and find them almost unanimous in their verdict; even so conservative a statesman as Root considers it would be a grave mistake. However altruistic the intentions of the Japanese may really be, they will be misrepresented by German propaganda everywhere. They will endeavor to show that the Allies, through the Japanese, are doing in Siberia exactly what the Germans are doing in the West; that the Siberian case is even worse because the Japanese have not been invited to come by any Russian body; that Japanese territory is not threatened as the Germans and Austrians claim theirs to be. The race question, in particular, will be sharply emphasized and an attempt made to show that we are using a yellow race to

destroy a white one. This may result in the American press and public opinion getting out of hand, and adopting an attitude which will be resented in Japan and cause serious friction between the two peoples.

I feel this action will mean a serious lowering, if not actual loss, of our moral position in the eyes of our own peoples and of the whole world, and a dulling of the high enthusiasm of the American people for a righteous cause. Unless we maintain our moral position we must expect a very formidable anti-war party here, a general weakening of the war effort, and a breaking-up of that practically unanimous support upon which the Administration can now count.

The President has agreed to send a note to the Japanese Government associating himself with the Notes of the Allies,¹ but he would still like you to consider whether something cannot be done which will prevent part at any rate of the misrepresentations of the German propaganda from bearing fruit.

It will probably be suggested to the Allied Ambassadors that the Japanese Government, when they receive their mandate, should be requested to make a public announcement to the effect that they are sending an armed force into Siberia only as an ally of Russia, and for the purpose of saving Siberia from the invasion and intrigues of Germany; that they will be willing to leave the settlement of all Siberian questions to the council of peace.

EDWARD HOUSE

Following the receipt of House's memorandum and letter, President Wilson decided to withdraw the first memorandum and constructed another. In the original note, while declining to associate himself formally with the Allied request for

¹ The President's first note did not formally associate the United States Government with the notes of the Allies; it merely stated that the Government had no objection to the request being made of Japan.

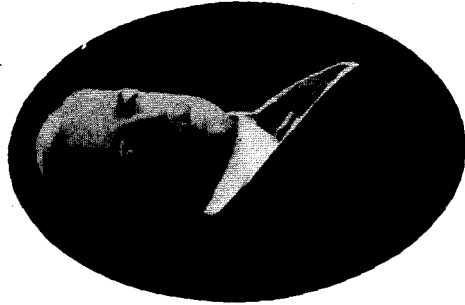
Japanese intervention, he expressed confidence in the motives that lay behind such intervention. In the note finally sent, however, he laid primary stress on the unwisdom of any intervention. Colonel House commented as follows in his diary:

'*March 5, 1918:* The President called for Polk this morning and handed him a new note to Japan which was to be substituted for the one written the other day and later held up. I agree with what the President says in this last note. . . . Polk and I had a long argument over the telephone about the matter after he had seen the President. However unfortunate it may be that the State Department had given the substance of the first note to the Japanese and Allied Ambassadors, nevertheless I believe the President was wise in changing it and substituting the note written yesterday.'¹ . . .

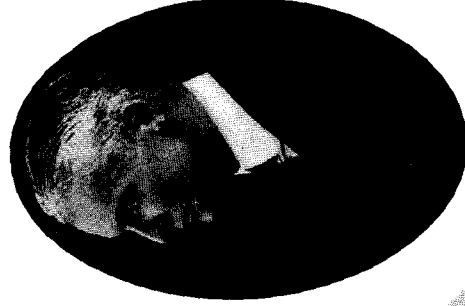
III

President Wilson's objections to Japanese intervention in Siberia did not alter the opinion of Allied leaders in Europe that it was both desirable and necessary. When on March 4 the Bolsheviki, under German military pressure, signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, it became apparent that Bolshevik resistance to Germany was at an end. The Allies therefore pressed again for American approval of the Japanese expedition, emphasizing the plea that the Japanese would appear in Siberia not as invaders, but as representatives of the Allied armies helping Russia to throw off German domination.

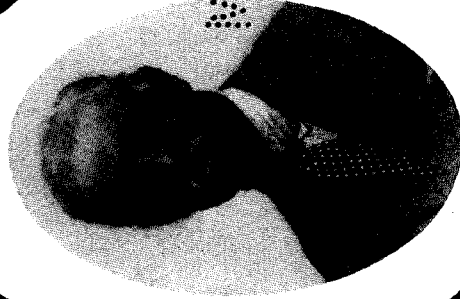
¹ This second note is printed in the appendix to this chapter.



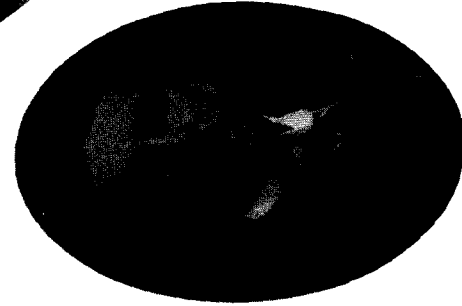
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FRANK L. POLK
SIDNEY E. MEZES



ARTHUR HUGH FRAZIER



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Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *March 6, 1918*

I am grateful for your telegram of the 4th March, and much appreciate the frank exposition of your views which it contains.

Up to the moment when the Bolshevik Government decided to accept the German peace terms, I was opposed to Japanese intervention, as I hoped Bolshevik resistance to German aggression might continue.

When the Bolsheviki surrendered unconditionally, it became of the utmost importance to prevent the rich supplies in Siberia from falling into German hands, and the only method by which this could be secured was by Japanese intervention on a considerable scale. Information reached us that Japanese Government were making preparations to take action in Eastern Siberia, while, owing to the public discussion of the question, it seemed likely that considerable resentment would be aroused in Japan if, the Japanese Government being willing to act on behalf of the Allies, a mandate were refused. The formidable pro-German party in Japan would have asserted that such a refusal was due to mistrust, and I fear that, however erroneous in fact, this sentiment would have predominated in Japanese opinion.

I need hardly emphasize the advantage to be gained by substituting for Japanese action alone and in her own interests, action as mandatory of the Allied Powers. I am in full agreement with the proposals made in the last paragraph of your telegram; I sent to our Ambassador in duplicate on March 4th a telegram following these lines. This telegram was repeated to Lord Reading and I am telling him to send a copy to Sir William Wiseman immediately for your information.

Although reports have reached us that enemy prisoners

in Siberia are being armed under Bolshevik instructions, yet the Bolshevik Government assert that they still intend to organize resistance to German aggression in spite of having signed a peace treaty. I have therefore telegraphed our agent to suggest to the Bolshevik Government that they should invite Japanese and Rumanian coöperation for this purpose. I fear, however, that there is little chance of the proposal being entertained, nor do I know how the Japanese and Rumanian Governments would regard such an appeal.

I have done this so that we can put ourselves right with public opinion, if and when a statement is made on the whole subject.

I hope and believe that the action which has been taken, and which will, I feel sure, meet with the President's approval, will enable us to justify completely the intervention which we are asking Japan to undertake.

It will show that the Allies have been actuated by no selfish or mean motives, and if Japan consents to undertake the obligation on such terms, might not it contribute to allay the suspicion which exists in many quarters both here and in the United States?

BALFOUR

Colonel House remained firm in his impression that the landing of Japanese troops in Siberia would accomplish, as nothing else could, the complete antagonism of the Bolsheviks against the Entente and would throw them into the arms of Germany. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had yet to be ratified by the Soviet Congress, which was even then about to assemble at Moscow. A message of friendship to the Soviets and a promise of aid might help to induce the Congress to refuse ratification.

*Colonel House to the President*NEW YORK, *March 10, 1918*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

What would you think of sending a reassuring message to Russia when the Soviet meets at Moscow on the 12th?

Our proverbial friendship for Russia could be reaffirmed and you could declare our purpose to help in her efforts to weld herself into a democracy. She should be left free from any sinister or selfish influence which might interfere with such development.

My thought is not so much about Russia as it is to seize this opportunity to clear up the Far-Eastern situation but without mentioning it or Japan in any way. What you would say about Russia and against Germany could be made to apply to Japan or any other power seeking to do what we know Germany is attempting.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Such a message might prove especially timely, inasmuch as Trotsky, probably in all sincerity but perhaps without the full approval of Lenin, laid before Raymond Robins, then Chief of the American Red Cross in Russia, a proposal intimating his willingness to prevent the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Trotsky asked if the Treaty were not ratified or if the Soviet renewed hostilities, whether the Bolsheviks could count on Allied aid, what sort it would be; and, if Japan should threaten to intervene in Siberia, what steps would be taken by the Allies and the United States to prevent a landing.

To this proposal, which was cabled to London by the British Commissioner, Lockhart, with a recommendation that a cordial reply be sent, the British Government made no immediate response. President Wilson's message dated March 11, in line with House's letter of March 10, did not

affect the situation.¹ He expressed sympathy with Russia at the moment when 'the German power has been thrust in to interrupt and turn back the whole struggle for freedom.' But he confessed that the United States was not 'now in a position to render the direct and effective aid it would wish to render.' On March 16 the Congress of Soviets ratified the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. At the same time it passed a resolution in response to Wilson's message, conceived in anything but a friendly spirit, and expressing the belief that 'the happy time is not far distant when the laboring masses of all countries will throw off the yoke of capitalism.' Zinoviev is said to have boasted: 'We slapped the President of the United States in the face.'²

The surrender of the Bolsheviks to Germany convinced the French that the plan of Japanese intervention should be pushed through, and at the meeting of the Supreme War Council at London, on March 16, both Clemenceau and Pichon argued strongly that a joint note should be sent President Wilson asking for American coöperation. Mr. Balfour, who was in close touch with the American situation and point of view and always preserved an open mind on the domestic situation in Russia, admitted that the advices which his Government had received from Russia were against intervention. Lockhart, who was intimate with Trotsky at this time, had reported that a Japanese expedition would throw all of Russia into the hands of Germany; he insisted that Trotsky really wanted a working arrangement with the Allies, and both Balfour and Lloyd George advocated delay in the announcement of Japanese intervention, perhaps in the hope that an invitation for Japanese help might ultimately come from the Bolsheviks themselves. But the French and Italians demanded immediate action,

¹ See appendix to this chapter for Wilson's Message and the Soviet response.

² Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy*, 230.

and it was agreed that a new appeal should be sent to Wilson. On March 18 Colonel House, who was ill in New York, noted in his diary:

'Lord Reading has received a cable from his Government urging him to again press the Japanese intervention plan. I sent a message to the President through Gordon, saying I had not changed my opinion in that matter. I asked Wiseman, after reading Reading's interview with the President, what the President had told him. He replied that the President said, "I have not changed my mind."

Colonel House to Mr. A. J. Balfour

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, March 29, 1918

I have discussed the matter with the President and he hopes that nothing will be done for the moment because the situation is so uncertain.

There seems no need for immediate action and the situation might possibly clear itself a little later so we would know better what to do.

EDWARD HOUSE

As among France, Great Britain, and the United States, there were thus three opinions as to the course to pursue. The French, distrustful of the Bolsheviks to the point of clear-cut hostility, advocated Japanese intervention without delay. The British recognized the advantages of intervention as rather outweighing its disadvantages, but were willing to work with Trotsky if it were feasible, and hoped that perhaps ultimately the Bolsheviks through Lockhart might ask for intervention. The United States Government believed that intervention, unless definitely demanded by the Bolsheviks, would prove useless and perhaps disastrous.

The British and American points of view were not far separated; ultimately a plan was evolved and agreement reached.

IV

The compromise which the British Foreign Office suggested was to substitute for Japanese intervention an inter-allied expedition, in which the United States should play a prominent part. The objections of the Bolsheviks to intervention in Siberia had arisen in part from anti-Japanese feeling. They feared that it meant permanent Japanese control of eastern Siberia, a fear which was intensified by racial prejudice. They had raised no serious difficulties following the Allied expedition to Murmansk, and it was possible that they might even ask for intervention in the East if it were given an interallied character. On March 26 Wiseman received a telegram from the Foreign Office, instructing him to consult Colonel House confidentially as to whether such a suggestion would cause embarrassment at Washington. If not, the Allies would again take up with Tokyo the question of an interallied expedition, for which the Japanese had earlier expressed some distaste.

House agreed that many of the disadvantages of intervention would disappear if it could be put upon an interallied basis; they might all disappear if an invitation could be secured from Trotsky, for which Lockhart was working and for which, Balfour intimated in a telegram of April 3, Robins also should be instructed to work. At House's suggestion Wiseman was sent to England to explain the Washington point of view and bring back to Reading his impressions of the European situation. In the mean time the plan of interallied intervention was developed.

'The [British] Ambassador,' wrote House on April 24, 'had an extensive budget to go through with me. The most pressing matter was Russia. His Government believe that

it is possible now to get Trotsky and his associates to agree to an understanding by which the Allies could send a force into Russia and compel Germany to re-form an army on the Eastern Front. He seemed gratified to learn that I thoroughly endorsed the plan which Mr. Balfour outlined in a very long cable.'

It was all the more difficult for Wilson to hold to his refusal to consider intervention in Russia, because of the military situation in France. Since March 21 the victorious German offensive had been proceeding, and it was of the first importance that no more reënforcements should reach the Western Front. Furthermore, there was no hope of completely defeating Germany, even if the Allies held firm in France, so long as she was able to exploit Russia through the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. All this Lord Reading laid before House, together with Mr. Balfour's recommendations to the effect that an Allied front be reëstablished in Russia, through an interallied military expedition. Extended comments were added in a cablegram from Wiseman.¹

House's Notes of British Statement on Russia

'The British War Cabinet have now further considered the general military problem before the Allies, and have reached the conclusion that it is essential to treat Europe and Asia, for the purposes of strategy, though not of command, as a single front. The transfer of German divisions from East to West is still continuing and, under present conditions, can be further continued, and it is imperative to stop this movement if it can possibly be done.

'Germany can now draw food and raw materials from Asia, and in these conditions, even if our defensive is successful, there is little chance that we could make a successful

¹ See appendix to this chapter.

offensive. In the present state of affairs we cannot hope for a favorable change in internal conditions in Germany and for this reason also it is important that pressure should be brought on the Central Powers from the East.

'It must further be remembered that Germany is now trying to sow disorder throughout the East, and that German agents are already attempting to cause trouble in Afghanistan, Persia and Turkestan. This movement will have important effects unless it can be checked.

'It thus becomes of the greatest urgency to reestablish an Allied front in Russia, and the only hope of doing this appears to be by producing a national revival of Russia, such as that which was seen in the time of Napoleon.¹ Russia has an immense supply of soldiers trained to arms, and with experience of modern warfare, including capable generals, and if the necessary spirit could be aroused, an effective army could in a short time be produced, and supplied from the stores now at Russian ports. The Germans would then be compelled either to withdraw or strengthen their forces in Russia.

'The British Government considers that it is necessary for the Allies to unite in order to bring about a Russian national revival, and in order to adopt a policy of freeing Russia from foreign control by means of Allied intervention. The Allies must, of course, avoid taking sides in Russian politics, and, if the Bolshevist Government will coöperate in resisting Germany, it seems necessary to act with them as the *de facto* Russian Government. Trotsky, at least, has for some time shown signs of recognizing that coöperation with the Allies is the only hope of freeing Russia from the Germans, and, whatever his motives, he has taken steps against anti-Ally newspapers and has asked for coöperation at Murmansk, and on other matters. He has now definitely asked

¹ The suggestion of a national revival indicates the limited extent of Allied knowledge of actual conditions in Russia at this time.

for a statement of the help which the Allies could give, and of the guarantee which they would furnish, and says that he considers an agreement desirable if the conditions are satisfactory. The British Government are of opinion that the Allies should avail themselves of this opportunity to offer Allied intervention against Germany, accompanied by a suitable declaration of disinterestedness and by proper guarantees as to the evacuation of Russian territory. If such an offer was accepted the whole position might be transformed, and if it was refused, the position of the Bolshevist Government would at least be defined.

'Japan would clearly have to furnish the greater part of any considerable military force which might be used, but it is desirable that all the Allies should participate.

'The intervention of Japan alone clearly might throw a large proportion of the Russian population onto the side of Germany, and we can therefore only offer an intervention by all the Allies, Japan providing the greatest military strength. The British Government would be ready to make a naval demonstration at Murmansk and elsewhere, which would provide rallying-points for anti-German forces and hold the ports as bases. The British could also give assistance to the Russian forces in trans-Caucasia if communication through Persia can be established, which will depend largely on the coöperation of the Bolshevists in that region. The important step to be taken would, however, be an advance through Siberia by a force predominantly Japanese and American. The Allied character of this force would have to be furnished mainly from the United States, though British and probably also French and Italian detachments could accompany it. The American contingent might be composed mainly of technical corps, especially mechanical transports, signal units, railway troops, and medical units, and also one complete division. This force would probably have little or no fighting for some time after land-

ing, and the American division, if sent, could finish training in Siberia. A great quantity of war material now at the ports would be made available for refitting the Russian army.

'The British War Cabinet are anxious to learn whether the President would be disposed to agree to the following course of action:

'1. Great Britain and the United States to make a simultaneous proposal to the Bolshevist Government for intervention by the Allies on the lines indicated, an understanding to be given for the withdrawal of all Allied forces at the conclusion of hostilities.

'2. An American force, composed as described above, to be sent to the Far East.

'If this general policy is acceptable, the question of approaching the Japanese Government remains. Japan would under this scheme intervene in Siberia as part of a joint intervention by the Allies. The proposed declaration might not be very welcome to her, and it would probably be necessary for her to use her troops, in conjunction with Russian and Allied forces, in European Russia as well as in Asia. The British Government consider that Japan should, in return, have the military command of the expedition, though a Mission from each Allied country, including a strong propaganda detachment, would be attached. It also seems desirable that the proposal should be made to the Japanese at an early date and pressed on the ground that the proposed course of action is necessary for a victory of the Allied cause. . . .

'The suggested plan is one of urgent importance. The proposals outlined above are in no way intended as an alternative to sending American infantry to Europe, the need for which is constantly increasing. The problem of Russia is one of pressing urgency and in the present situation it is essential to bring pressure against Germany in the

East, without delay. If this cannot be done, it is difficult to see how the blockade can be made effective or how peace is to be reached through a conclusive defeat of the enemy's forces.

'Before consulting the other Allied powers the British Government think the most important step is to ascertain whether the President concurs in these proposals, for without his concurrence the British Government would not care to proceed further with them.'

Such recommendations were reënforced by personal visits of numerous foreigners who came to press the Allied point of view upon President Wilson and who almost always stopped first at Magnolia for a conference with House. Their arguments were generally the same: that only by recreating a fighting front in the East could the German pressure in the West be diminished. They also asked for aid to the Czecho-Slovak divisions who were struggling across Asia, at times in conflict with irresponsible Russians, Hungarians, and Germans, at times with Bolsheviks. Their valorous anabasis won the admiration of the Allied world, and the demand was general that steps be taken to prevent their extermination.

On June 11, M. Marcel Delaney, French Ambassador to Japan, called on House. 'We discussed Japanese and Allied intervention in Russia and Siberia in its every phase.' M. Delaney carried a personal message from Clemenceau to Wilson, to the effect that the French Prime Minister 'considers intervention imperative not only because he believes it will be effective but because he believes it will stimulate the morale of the French people more than anything else, and that they need stimulating in this hour of trial. He [Delaney] declared the situation to be critical. The Germans are within forty miles of Paris in two different directions along two valley routes. The nearer they get to Paris, the

more air raids are possible and the harder it is to maintain the morale of the people.'

The next day Thomas G. Masaryk, President of the Czecho-Slovak Committee and later first President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, took lunch with House to discuss Russia. 'Masaryk talked with more sense than most people with whom I have discussed the subject, and he knows Russia better.' A few days later it was Henri Bergson who stopped on his way to Washington to present the case for intervention to the President. Shortly afterwards House heard the other side from Louis Edgar Brown of the *Chicago News*, who had just returned from Petrograd. 'He takes an entirely different viewpoint of the Russian situation and of intervention from that of my recent visitors. He believes in both Lenin and Trotsky and thinks the Soviet Government will maintain itself. He considers the worst thing we can do is to intervene in any way, particularly in coöperation with Japanese troops. He thinks if we do this Russia will ask Germany to help her organize the Russian army to repel the invasion. It is difficult to come to a satisfactory judgment when one hears such conflicting views from intelligent men and those who have been on the ground for a long time. Brown has been in Russia for a year or more and comes hot-foot from there, having left Petrograd within the month.'

House was convinced that it was no longer possible simply to return a blank negative to Allied demands for intervention, and he pondered methods by which an Allied force could be introduced into Russia without arousing suspicion of imperialistic motives. After long discussions he decided that the only possible solution of the problem was the creation of an economic relief commission, which more than any other would win the welcome of the Russians themselves.¹

¹ Colonel Raymond Robins, who returned to the United States in May, advocated an economic commission and had elaborated with the Soviet leaders a scheme for the development of commercial relations.

It was possible that by thus subordinating the military aspects of intervention the confidence of the Russians might be secured. House was the more inclined to this plan because of the possibility of persuading Hoover to take charge of its execution. On June 13 he wrote in his diary:

'Gordon telephoned last night suggesting that Hoover head a "Russian Relief Commission" as part of an intervention plan. The idea appealed to me strongly at once. This morning . . . we decided that he should go to Hoover and ask whether he would be willing to serve in that capacity. . . .

'Hoover told Gordon he was willing to serve wherever the President thought he could do so best. He was enthusiastic over the suggestion and thought it the best solution of the Russian problem. We then mentioned the plan to Lansing, who greeted it with enthusiasm. . . .

'Sir William is in favor of the plan and we agreed that he should intercept Reading at Princeton, where he goes tomorrow for a degree, tell him the story, and get him to cooperate with us in putting it through.'

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 13, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

. . . I hope you will think well of the plan. . . . The Russians know Hoover and Hoover knows the East. If he heads 'The Russian Relief Commission' it will typify in the Russian mind what was done in Belgium, and I doubt whether any Government in Russia, friendly or unfriendly, would dare oppose his coming in. . . .

Hoover has ability as an organizer, his name will carry weight in the direction desired, and his appointment will, for the moment, settle the Russian question as far as it can be settled by you at present.

Some one has been here almost every day since I arrived, to talk about this vexatious problem and to try and get me to transmit their views to you. I have not done so because no good way out was presented. This plan, however, seems workable and I sincerely hope it will appeal to your judgment.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Four days later Mr. Hoover came from Washington to Magnolia to discuss the prospect of his being sent to Russia as the chief of the Russian Relief Commission. House's conviction of the necessity of taking some action of this kind was further intensified by a visit from the British Ambassador. Lord Reading laid before him the contents of a new cable from England analyzing the military situation. Colonel House's notes of the substance of the cable were as follows:

'1. Unless Allied intervention is undertaken in Siberia forthwith we have no chance of being ultimately victorious, and shall incur serious risk of defeat in the mean time.

'2. By the first of June, 1919, the exhaustion of British and French reserves of man-power will have necessitated a very serious reduction in the number of divisions that they can maintain in the field. The growth of the American army, even under the most favorable circumstances, will not suffice to equip, train, and place in the line enough divisions to restore the original balance in our favor. Thus the Germans, reckoning on a similar scale of battle casualties for them as for the Allies, will in the first half of 1919 still have a formidable army on the Western Front even without withdrawing any further divisions from the East.

'3. But if the Central Powers are not threatened by any military force in the East they will by that time be in a posi-

tion to withdraw from there many more divisions, still further increasing their superiority. In view of the unfavorable strategic situation of the Allied armies in France it is possible that the Germans might with this superiority obtain a decision in their favor in the West.

'4. On the other hand, if intervention is started now it is estimated that by the spring of 1919 a sufficient Allied force could be deployed west of the Urals to rally to the Allied cause all those Russian elements which are in favor of law and order, good government and economical development, and which would render possible the reconstitution of democratic Russia as a military power.

'5. The greater part of this force must for the time being be Japanese, as it would be strategically unsound to divert forces that can be used in the Western theater, except such small detachments of the other Allied Powers as are necessary to give the operation an international character.

'In this manner, too, German troops would be held by an Allied force which would not otherwise be employed. Ultimately there may be a surplus of American troops over and above what can be maintained in France, and this should be used in support or in substitution of the Japanese.

'6. The immediate effect of this force would be, first, to prevent the withdrawal of any further German troops from the East; second, to oblige them to withdraw divisions from the Western Front and thus give the Allies a real chance of obtaining a military success in the West even in 1919.

'7. Finally, it is not considered that any military success which it is within the power of the Allies to obtain on the Western Front can be decisive enough to force the Central Powers to tear up the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, or to prevent Russia and most of Asia from becoming a German colony. The immense spaces at the enemy's disposal for maneuver in the West and his superior communications would enable him to fight for an unlimited time without a decision being

obtained. Even if driven completely out of France, Belgium, and Italy, the Central Powers would be still unbeaten. Unless therefore Russia can reconstitute herself as a military power in the East against the time when the Allied armies are withdrawn, nothing can prevent the complete absorption of her resources by the Central Powers, which would imply world domination by Germany; the only means by which the resurrection of Russia can be brought about is by immediate Allied military intervention in that theater.

'8. *To sum up:*

'No military decision in the Allies' favor can ever be expected as the result of operations on the Western Front alone; nor will such a measure of equality as may be looked for in that theater in any way secure the objects for which the Allies are fighting, unless combined with the maximum military effort that can be made in the East.

'9. The matter is urgent not merely politically, but also because it is necessary to take advantage of the summer, which is rapidly passing away, and because the agricultural districts should be secured before the harvest is gathered in.'

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 21, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Lord Reading, who has been in Cambridge getting a degree, has spent the better part of the day with me. While here he received a cable from Balfour about Russian intervention. I suggested that he send you a copy for your information before he sees you, which he hopes to do on Monday. . . .

Neither Reading nor I agree to the statement that a decision is not possible on the Western Front. . . . The memorandum attached and which was drawn up by their repre-

sentative in Russia, together with the French Ambassador there, is worthy of notice.

I believe something must be done immediately about Russia, otherwise it will become the prey of Germany. It has become now a question of days rather than months. I have this to suggest and recommend:

Make an address to Congress setting forth the food situation in this country; telling of the speeding-up of our food products in one year's time to a point where after August it will not be necessary for the Allies to continue on rations except as to beef and sugar. This statement in itself will enormously stimulate the morale in France, England, and Italy, and correspondingly depress that of the Central Powers.

Hoover has planned to make this statement himself in London around the middle of July. . . .

Then set forth your plan for sending a 'Russian Relief Commission' headed by Hoover with the purpose of helping Russia speed up her food production by the same methods we have used. While this is being done the Commission to be instructed to coördinate all such relief organizations as the Red Cross, Y.M.C.A., etc., etc., and supply the Russian people with agricultural implements necessary to make their potential arable lands as productive as ours and with a like beneficent result.

To do this it would be necessary for the Relief Commission and their assistants to have a safe and orderly field to work in and you have therefore asked the coöperation and assistance of England, France, Italy, and Japan, which they have generously promised, and they have also given the United States the assurance that they will not either now or in the future interfere with Russia's political affairs or encroach in any way upon her territorial integrity.

This programme will place the Russian and Eastern situation in your hands and will satisfy the Allies and perhaps

reconcile the greater part of Russia towards this kind of intervention.

Lord Reading is enthusiastic over this plan and I asked him to discuss it with you when you receive him. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

July 8, 1918

You were good enough to tell me when you were over here last year that I might communicate with you, if there were anything which I thought you ought to know. May I venture therefore to say this?

I am convinced that there is growing up in this country a very strong feeling that Allied intervention in Siberia is being unduly delayed. So far public expression of opinion on the subject has been strongly discouraged by the Government. Till lately the newspapers have been warned not to discuss it, and even now they have been asked to treat it with great caution. Attempts to raise matter in Parliament have been prevented. But I am afraid that sooner or later feeling will become too strong to be repressed and a dangerous explosion may follow which might produce very unwelcome results, possibly even giving rise to international criticism and recrimination. From one point of view these are matters with which you may rightly say you have no concern. But knowing how very much you have at heart the maintenance and increase of cordial friendship between our two countries, I thought you would forgive me if I let you know how the situation strikes one, part of whose business it is to watch public opinion and who has given very close personal attention to this particular question for the last six months.

ROBERT CECIL

v

President Wilson, obviously against his inclination and judgment, was forced to consider how the plan of intervention could be carried through; he insisted that, since Russia refused to ask for intervention, it must not appear to injure the sovereign rights of Russia. I have been sweating blood, he wrote to House on July 8, over the question what is right and feasible to do in Russia. It goes to pieces like quicksilver under my touch, but I hope I see and can report some progress presently along the double line of economic assistance and aid to the Czecho-Slovaks.¹ If House had been more persistent than usual in pressing for a decision, it was evident that the President did not resent it, for he wrote at the same time: I hail your letters with deep satisfaction and unspoken thanks go out to you for each one of them, whether I write or not, and the most affectionate appreciation for all that you do for me.

President Wilson was evidently fearful lest once the Japanese forces found themselves in Siberia, it would be difficult to persuade them to leave. Their military leaders were not likely to see much value in intervention unless it was to result in Japanese control in Eastern Siberia, to which Wilson was steadily opposed. The President sought in every way to limit the size of the Japanese army and to lay down conditions of withdrawal. House noted in his diary on July 25 that Wilson was 'fretted with the Japanese attitude.'

'The difficulty I think,' added House, 'is that there are two parties in Japan. The civil Government wishes to cooperate with us and sees the necessity for it. The military clique see nothing in such intervention for Japan. They have not the vision to know that in the end it would be better for the Japanese to do the altruistic thing. It is the

¹ Wilson to House, July 8, 1918.

old story one meets everywhere and the one met since the beginning of the world: "What is there in it for me?" I hope before the war is over we can drive it into the consciousness of individuals as well as nations that from a purely selfish viewpoint, it is better to take the big, broad outlook that what is best for all is best for one.'

At the end of July President Wilson reached an agreement with the Japanese, which resulted in the landing at Vladivostok of a small American force and ultimately of a Japanese army of some size. The purpose of the expedition was publicly defined with meticulous care by the State Department in a declaration to which the Japanese Government gave full adherence.¹

Declaration of Department of State

August 3, 1918

'... Military action is admissible in Russia now only to render such protection and help as is possible to the Czecho-Slovaks against the armed Austrian and German prisoners who are attacking them, and to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance. . . .

'The Government of the United States wishes to announce to the people of Russia in the most public and solemn manner that it contemplates no interference with the political sovereignty of Russia, no intervention in her internal affairs — not even in the local affairs of the limited areas which her military force may be obliged to occupy — and no

¹ The expedition to Siberia led to misunderstanding and difficulties. The Americans understood that each nation would send in 7000 troops, and were surprised to learn that the Japanese forces considerably exceeded that number. It developed that the Japanese contended that the Americans had violated the agreement by sending 2000 noncombatants in addition to the 7000 combatant troops. The exact number of Japanese troops despatched was not known, but they were estimated by American officials at more than 60,000.

impairment of her territorial integrity, either now or hereafter, but that what we are about to do has as its single and only object the rendering of such aid as shall be acceptable to the Russian people themselves in their endeavors to regain control of their own affairs, their own territory, and their own destiny. The Japanese Government, it is understood, will issue a similar assurance.'

Nothing was said or done at this time about the creation of an economic relief commission, which Colonel House had hoped would be emphasized and which, from his letter of July 8, President Wilson had seriously considered. On August 17, the President visited House on the North Shore. The Colonel recorded in his diary:

'After lunch we had our usual conference for an hour or more. We discussed Russia and the economic mission. I was surprised to find that he did not have any one in mind to head this mission and asked for suggestions. He thought there was no haste, because he believed the military forces should go in before the economic. . . . I would have featured the economic part of it and sent in that section before the military, or at least have coöperated with it.'¹

Neither the hopes nor the fears that had been aroused by the long discussions regarding intervention in Siberia were fulfilled. It is true that the Bolshevik Government protested bitterly against it, especially as Japan proceeded to increase the number of her expeditionary forces. But it is doubtful whether the hostility of the Bolsheviks to the Allies was rendered more intense thereby than it would have been in any case. Nor did the expedition throw Russia into

¹ The plan for Russian relief, as finally put into effect, was quite different from the suggestions of House for a relief expedition in 1918. The history of the plan and its operation is found in H. H. Fisher, *The Famine in Soviet Russia* (Macmillan Company, 1927).

the hands of Germany, as had been feared, since by autumn Germany had collapsed and the treaties of Brest-Litovsk were torn up. On the other hand, intervention, as finally carried through, did not affect the military situation in the West nor even strengthen the Allied position as against the Bolsheviks in the following year.

Plans for an effective expeditionary force to Siberia and one capable of redressing the military balance in Europe would have required something like a miracle to assist them to success. The objections of the United States to a large and purely Japanese army in Siberia were inflexible, even if such an army could have been transported across the largest continent so as to reconstruct an Eastern Front against Germany.¹ In no other way could the purpose of intervention in Siberia have been carried through. It was a practical impossibility to send a large American army across the Pacific and far into Siberia, with only a single line of communication to Vladivostok. The shipping necessary to carry supplies for such a force was lacking. In the spring of 1918 all available American troops and every American ship was demanded for the reënforcement of France. From first to last, the American military leaders protested against the Siberian 'side-show.'

It is easy to criticize the slowness, the hesitations, and the changes of mind that characterized the decisions taken regarding Allied policy in Siberia. It is more difficult to define a constructive policy which, under the conditions, might have proved of practical value. It must not be forgotten that at the time when the Allied leaders had to meet the problems raised by the Bolshevik surrender to Germany, they were also confronted with the military crisis on the Western Front. It was there that the war would be won or lost.

¹ In 1928 Colonel House wrote: 'The Japanese told me it would take their entire army to keep the Siberian Railway open.'

APPENDIX

President Wilson's First Note to Allied Ambassadors Regarding Japanese Expedition

[Written about February 28, 1918. Not circulated.]

'The Government of the United States is made constantly aware at every turn of events that it is the desire of the people of the United States that, while coöperating with all its energies with its associates in the war in every direct enterprise of the war in which it is possible for it to take part, it should leave itself diplomatically free wherever it can do so without injustice to its associates. It is for this reason that the Government of the United States has not thought it wise to join the Governments of the Entente in asking the Japanese Government to act in Siberia. It has no objection to that request being made, and it wishes to assure the Japanese Government that it has the entire confidence that in putting an armed force into Siberia it is doing so as an ally of Russia, with no purpose but to save Siberia from the invasion of the armies and intrigues of Germany and with entire willingness to leave the determination of all questions that may affect the permanent fortunes of Siberia to the council of peace.'

President Wilson's Second Note to Allied Ambassadors Regarding Japanese Expedition

March 5, 1918

'The Government of the United States has been giving the most careful and anxious consideration to the conditions now prevailing in Siberia and their possible remedy. It realizes the extreme danger of anarchy to which the Siberian provinces are exposed and imminent risk also of German invasion and domination.

'It shares with the Governments of the Entente the view that if invasion is deemed wise, the Government of Japan is in the best situation to undertake it and could accomplish it most efficiently. It has moreover the utmost confidence in the Japanese Government and would be entirely willing, so far as its own feelings towards that government are concerned, to entrust the enterprise to it. But it is bound in frankness to say that the wisdom of invasion seems to it most questionable. If it were undertaken the Government of the United States assumes that the most explicit assurances would be given that it was undertaken by Japan as an ally of Russia in Russia's interest and with the sole view of holding it safe against Germany and at the absolute disposal of the final peace conference. Otherwise the Central Powers could and would make it appear that Japan was doing in the East exactly what Germany is doing in the West and was seeking to counter the condemnation which all the world must pronounce against Germany's invasion of Russia which she contemplates to justify on the pretext of restoring order.

'And it is the judgment of the Government of the United States uttered with the utmost respect that even with such assurances given they could in the same way be discredited by those whose interest it

was to discredit them; for hot resentment would be general in Russia itself, and that the whole action might play into the hands of the enemies of Russia and particularly of the enemies of the Russian revolution for which the Government of the United States entertains the greatest sympathy in spite of all the unhappiness and misfortunes which have for the time being sprung out of it. The Government of the United States begs once more to express to the Government of Japan its warmest friendship and confidence and once more begs it to accept its expressions of judgment as uttered only in the frankness of friendship.'

President Wilson's Message to the Soviet Congress

March 11, 1918

'May I not take advantage of the meeting of the Congress of the Soviets to express the sincere sympathy which the people of the United States feel for the Russian people at this moment when the German power has been thrust in to interrupt and turn back the whole struggle for freedom and substitute the wishes of Germany for the purpose of the people of Russia.

'Although the Government of the United States is, unhappily, not now in a position to render the direct and effective aid it would wish to render, I beg to assure the people of Russia through the congress that it will avail itself of every opportunity to secure for Russia once more complete sovereignty and independence in her own affairs, and full restoration to her great rôle in the life of Europe and the modern world.

'The whole heart of the people of the United States is with the people of Russia in the attempt to free themselves forever from autocratic government and become the masters of their own life.'

Reply of the Congress of Soviets

March 15, 1918

'... The Russian Socialistic Federative Republic of Soviets takes advantage of President Wilson's communication to express to all peoples perishing and suffering from the horrors of imperialistic war its warm sympathy and firm belief that the happy time is not far distant when the laboring masses of all countries will throw off the yoke of capitalism and will establish a socialistic state of society, which alone is capable of securing just and lasting peace, as well as the culture and well-being of all laboring people. ...'

Sir William Wiseman to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, May 1, 1918

There are four courses open to the Allies:

1. To take no action, but await developments. This open to two very strong objections. First, it enables the Germans to withdraw more

troops and guns from the Russian front; secondly, it enables the Germans to organize Russia politically and economically for their own advantage and gives them undisputed access to grain, oil, and fat supplies in Siberia and valuable metal supplies in the Urals. Also it enables them to sustain Austrian morale by telling them that the war is over in the East and that they have only to help in the West to secure a complete German victory.

2. Allied intervention at the invitation of Bolsheviki. This would probably be the most desirable course, the various Allied missions to come from Archangel and Southern Russia, giving the whole proposition the character of an Interallied movement rather than solely Japanese. From Vladivostok the main military force would come, consisting in the first place of about five Japanese divisions accompanied by Allied Missions and a few Allied troops, to be followed by a very much larger Japanese force. This would meet a Bolshevik force which they would help organize and could, it is thought, easily penetrate to Cheliabinsk as the first stage of operation. This would deny all Siberian resources to the Germans and threaten the re-creation of a formidable Eastern front.

This programme, however, depends upon an invitation from Trotzky, and I begin to doubt whether this is feasible. If Trotzky invites Allied intervention the Germans would regard it as a hostile act and probably turn his Government out of Moscow and Petrograd. With this centre lost the best opinion considers that the whole Bolshevik influence in Russia would collapse. No one knows this better than Trotzky and for this reason he probably hesitates. The only chance would be if Trotzky would be prepared to abandon Moscow and retire along the Siberian Railway to meet the Allied force, calling upon all loyal Russians to rally to him and save the revolution from German reactionary intrigues.

3. If we decide Trotzky will not or cannot invite us, we might find Kerenski and other members of the original republican revolution and get them to form a Government Committee in Manchuria and do what Trotzky will not do. Many think that this would be the signal for the rising of all elements that are best in Russia.¹ It would have the advantage that Kerenski's is the Government still recognized and we could deal with him through his Ambassadors in Washington and elsewhere.

4. The only other scheme is for Allied intervention without the invitation of any party in Russia and possibly against the wishes of the Bolsheviki. This is urged as a last resource by our military people and the French, but has of course its disadvantages.

It is certain that nothing can be done without the whole-hearted cooperation of the President. I believe that the Japanese are influenced by two considerations: First, they are genuinely afraid of German domination of Siberia, eventually threatening their position in the Far East. Also a strong party in Japan really want to do their part in helping the

¹ This opinion was by no means universal among American observers. Arthur Bullard cabled to House: 'There is a rumor that Kerenski is training for the rôle of Venizelos. I hope not. The opposition to a man who has already disappointed great hopes is sure to be intense. A dark horse is better than a dead one.'

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Allies and see in the Japanese advance towards the Eastern Front an opportunity for the Japanese to play a glorious part in the World War. Far-seeing Japanese statesmen also foresee an opportunity of friendly coöperation with America, which might go far to solve the Japanese-American problem. Those who know them best maintain that anything they solemnly undertake before the whole world, they will strain their utmost to carry through.

CHAPTER XIV

FORCE WITHOUT STINT OR LIMIT

There is a great danger of the war being lost unless the numerical inferiority of the Allies can be remedied as rapidly as possible by the advent of American troops.

Telegram of Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando, June 1, 1918

I

ALL through the spring of 1918 the tide of success, both political and military, seemed to be setting towards the Central Powers. They had cleared up the Eastern Front, forced the surrender of Russia and Rumania, and established their control upon the border provinces. Austria-Hungary accepted German domination in a new military treaty, the essential clause of which provided for the employment of troops 'according to one common principle, the initiative of which shall be left principally to Germany.' The Berlin and Vienna Governments, their prestige restored by success in the East, suppressed the elements of dissatisfaction at home and concentrated for the supreme effort in the West.

To meet this impending attack the Entente Allies had need of diplomatic as well as military unity. Hitherto, as Colonel House had discovered during the Interallied Conference of the preceding autumn, there had been no real co-ordination of policy as regards the enemy. The Governments of France and Italy, and to a lesser extent that of Great Britain, had in their hearts felt some suspicion of President Wilson's plan of appealing to the German people against their Government. They found it difficult themselves to make any distinction, and feared lest an expression of friendly sentiments towards the German people might weaken the fighting morale of the Allies. Success would depend upon the creation of a real unity of purpose between the United States

and the Entente. A telegram from Mr. Ackerman to Colonel House, early in March, emphasized its importance.

Mr. Carl W. Ackerman to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

BERNE, March 9, 1918

Strong indications that Germany is centering diplomacy upon the crisis which she expects to follow coming offensive. In the past, the military party has succeeded by eliminating Entente nations after great battles, and fundamental policy has been to prevent Allied unity. Germany is now working through Hertling publicly, and some others privately, to cause dissension in England, France, Italy, or Belgium, hoping to make separate peace with one or more after coming campaign. Therefore our next political move should not only bridge the present crisis but lay firm foundation upon which all Allies can stand after offensive.

Germany's fear is America's moral influence, not only with the Allies but inside Germany and Austria. Enemy's great hope is to undermine this influence, which Germany believes can best be accomplished by preventing Allied political unity. Therefore United States and Allies should be united politically and diplomatically now, because of moral effect upon enemy peoples and because of necessity for unity in crisis following summer offensives. I believe political and moral offensive of Allies should be Allied, not only American as in past.

I believe we should convince the Allies that this united moral influence is the only thing which German military offensive cannot destroy, therefore I reemphasize conclusion in my last telegram, that political and diplomatic affairs of United States and Allies be buttoned up.

ACKERMAN

The desirable unity of purpose between the United States

and the Allies was achieved at least temporarily through the change in Wilsonian policy which followed upon the German military and diplomatic successes of the spring. The change was one of emphasis rather than of principle. The essence of Wilson's speeches had been, 'War upon German imperialism, peace with the German liberals,' and hitherto he had laid chief stress upon the profit which the liberals would acquire by separating their fortunes from those of Ludendorff and accepting the terms which he offered. But in March, 1918, it had become obviously futile to appeal in conciliatory tones to German Social Democrats, while Ludendorff, already successful in the East, could promise them, through victory in the West, even greater profits. The Allies must persuade them that Ludendorff was wrong, and the sole method of persuasion, at this juncture, was to defeat him on the field of battle. As Mr. Ackerman cabled to Colonel House from Berne: 'Our chief emphasis from to-day should be upon our determination. The more strength we and our Allies exhibit, the greater will be the reaction in Germany from the offensive and from lack of food and from political disagreements. If we appear weary or inclined to peace when Germany is worn out, there will be no reaction in Germany.'

This was the sincere conviction of Allied leaders, and as soon as Wilson adopted such a tone he found himself in complete accord with them as with most students of German political psychology. His earlier statements of fair terms to a Germany ready to disavow Ludendorff and what he represented, were not forgotten and were later to bear fruit. But in the spring of 1918 the soundest political strategy was to reiterate the impossibility of peace with the kind of Government that had imposed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

President Wilson apparently decided to adopt this strategy immediately after the signing of peace by the Russians. His decision was reënforced by the news of the German victories on the Western Front in March. It was the moment when

the moral as well as the material assistance of America could be of importance. Colonel House was in Washington during the week that Wilson prepared a speech designed to show the Allies, as well as Germany, America's unyielding determination to support the Allies and fight through to victory. House's diary refers briefly to the composition of the speech:

'March 28, 1918: The main work we did to-night was to outline the speech he [Wilson] decided he should make soon. The opportunity will be given him when he reviews the Camp Meade troops at Baltimore on April 6, which is the anniversary of our entrance into the war. It is also the occasion of opening the Third Liberty Loan.

'April 9, 1918: He wrote something on his speech almost every night and we would then talk it over. He would come in with the speech in sections to discuss it. He made such eliminations as seemed advisable without argument. There were but few. He outlined the speech first in paragraphs and it was admirably done. Each paragraph was afterwards enlarged. He agreed that it should be short, and that it should leave the door open for peace and yet strike a note that the German military party would clearly understand. We both hoped that what he said about our meeting force with force would allay something of the panicky feeling in England and France. . . .'

Wilson's speech of April 6, despite its brevity, was the most effective indictment of the German military leaders made during the war. Their treatment of Russia proved conclusively the hollowness of their professed desire to conclude a fair peace and to accord to the peoples with whose fortunes they were dealing the right to choose their own allegiance.

'The real test of their justice and fair play has come,' said Wilson. 'From this we may judge the rest. . . . Their fair

professions are forgotten. They nowhere set up justice, but everywhere impose their power and exploit everything for their own use and aggrandizement; and the peoples of conquered provinces are invited to be free under their dominion. . . .

'I do not wish, even in this moment of utter disillusionment, to judge harshly or unrighteously. I judge only what the German arms have accomplished with unpitiful thoroughness throughout every fair region they have touched.

'What, then, are we to do? For myself, I am ready, ready still, ready even now, to discuss a fair and just and honest peace at any time that it is sincerely purposed — a peace in which the strong and the weak shall fare alike. But the answer, when I proposed such a peace, came from the German commanders in Russia, and I cannot mistake the meaning of the answer.

'I accept the challenge. . . . Germany has once more said that force, and force alone, shall decide whether Justice and Peace shall reign in the affairs of men, whether Right as America conceives it or Dominion as she conceives it shall determine the destinies of mankind. There is, therefore, but one response possible from us: Force, Force to the utmost, Force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant Force which shall make Right the law of the world, and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust.'

II

There was unanimity between America and the Western Allies. They would oppose force with force, and once the American man-power were made available there could be no doubt of the outcome. In the mean time there was serious danger lest Germany with superior strength on the Western Front should use up Allied reserves, separate the French and British armies, and inflict upon each an overwhelming de-

feat. It had become a race between Ludendorff and United States troops.

The need of American man-power had been stressed at the Interallied Conferences in Paris, in November, 1917; at that time the military leaders of the Entente suggested to House that instead of waiting to form a complete and independent American army, General Pershing should permit his troops to be incorporated as individuals or by small units into the British and French armies. House had carried this plan back to Wilson, who discussed carefully with him the nature of the requests made by the Allies during the November Conferences. It was the President's desire to do everything in his power to meet Allied wishes; at the same time he never faltered in his determination that the commander of the American Expeditionary Force must have a free hand and must use his own military judgment. Following his discussions with House on military policy, the President arranged to send a cablegram of instructions, the first draft of which he left with House; it was substantially the same as that ultimately forwarded by the Secretary of War and illustrates Wilson's point of view very clearly.

Draft Cablegram to Commander of A.E.F.

WASHINGTON, December 18, 1917

Both English and French are pressing upon the President their desire to have your forces amalgamated with theirs by regiments and companies and both express belief in impending heavy drive by Germans somewhere along the line of the Western Front. We do not desire loss of identity of our forces, but regard that as secondary to the meeting of any critical situation by the most helpful use possible of the troops at your command. . . . The President, however, desires you to have full authority to use the forces at your command as you deem wise in consultation with the French

and British Commanders-in-Chief. It is suggested for your consideration that possibly places might be selected for your forces nearer the junction of the British and French lines which would enable you to throw your strength in whichever direction seemed most necessary. This suggestion is not, however, pressed beyond whatever merit it has in your judgment, the President's sole purpose being to acquaint you with the representations made here and to authorize you to act with entire freedom in making the best disposition and use of your forces possible to accomplish the main purpose in view.

It is hoped that complete unity and coördination of action can be secured in this matter by your conferences with the French and British Commanders. . . .

The difference in point of view between the French and British commanders and the American commander in France was fundamental. The former desired to use American troops as a reservoir, filling up their losses therefrom, and thus giving to the Americans actual experience on the battle-front in the midst of veterans, which they regarded as the speediest and most efficient training. Such a method would prevent the creation of an American army in France, but in the opinion of the Entente military leaders it was the method by which the United States could render the most and the earliest service. A report which Mr. Frazier sent to Colonel House of the meeting of the Supreme War Council on January 30, at Versailles, left no doubt of their opinion.

'General Foch, General Pétain, General Haig,' wrote Mr. Frazier, 'agree that the American arms if taken as an autonomous unit, could not be counted upon for effective aid during the present year, and that the only method of rendering them useful at the earliest possible moment would be by amalgamating American regiments or battalions in French or

British divisions. General Pétain was particularly outspoken on this subject. The Italian Prime Minister stated that in his opinion the Council should request General Bliss to state whether the American Government would or would not be willing to accept this system of amalgamation. . . .'

The Commander of the American Expeditionary Force, naturally, took a different attitude. He pointed out that the national sentiment of the United States was opposed to service under a foreign flag. The method proposed would also have unfortunate moral consequences in the United States, where it would provoke criticism of the Administration and play into the hands of German propagandists, who would declare that American troops were being utilized by the Allies for their own purposes. More than that, the military enthusiasm of the American troops was obviously dependent to a large degree upon their serving under their own flag.

Some three weeks previous, on January 8, André Tardieu had cabled very definitely to the French Government:

'If your aim is really amalgamation, that is, the enlistment of the American army by small units on our front, you will fail. It is not only the American High Command which will oppose such a policy, but the Government, public opinion, and events. You could not get the English to consent to any such thing when their army was quite small; and you will not get the Americans to consent. If, on the contrary, you intend this only as a temporary measure, I believe that to complete their training we shall manage to obtain the incorporation of American divisions and brigades, perhaps even of regiments. During my stay in France, I had several talks on the subject with General Pershing, who, on this temporary basis, did not say No. But if we appear to ask more and try to dislo-

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DUPLICATE



To Colonel House,
My friend and war-time comrade
as a souvenir of our association together.
John J. Pershing.

YASRI LITMAREN

ALP. BOA. IRI

cate the future American army, we shall get nothing, not even the foregoing.'¹

The compromise which Tardieu mentioned in this cable was suggested in principle to the Supreme War Council by the Americans, and was perforce accepted by the Entente. According to the agreement then reached, the infantry of six American divisions should be immediately transported to be brigaded with the British or French; the agreement stated explicitly that the principle of an independent American army was to be maintained.

'The President desired to see Wiseman,' wrote House in his diary on February 3, 'in order to take up the question of using our troops in the French and British armies. Balfour has been sending cables freely about this matter and so has Pershing. Sir William's cable to Mr. Balfour, a copy of which is attached, will explain the President's position.'

Sir William Wiseman to Mr. A. J. Balfour

[Cablegram].

WASHINGTON, February 3, 1918

I lunched to-day with the President and Secretary of War. The President asked me to send you a cable explaining his views regarding the disposal of American troops in France. The following is the substance of his arguments:

In the first place the President is confident you will believe that he is actuated solely by what he considers the best policy for the common good. The President says American troops will be put into the line by battalions with the French or British if it should become absolutely necessary, but he wishes to place before you frankly the very grave objections he sees to this course.

Apart from the serious danger of friction owing to different

¹ Printed in Tardieu, *France and America*, 219.

methods, it is necessary that an American army should be created under American leaders and American flag in order that the people of America shall solidly and cheerfully support the war. The placing of American troops in small bodies under foreign leaders would be taken as a proof that the recent criticism of the War Department was justified and that the American military machine had broken down. The American people would not, he fears, understand the military reasons and the necessary secrecy would prevent a very full explanation being given.

Their resentment would be increased if an agreement was made between the American and British Governments for the disposal of American troops in this way before they left home. It would not have so bad an effect if Pershing, as American Commander-in-Chief, decided after the men arrived in France that it was necessary to place some of them at the disposal of the British in this way. The President therefore hopes you will provide transportation for the six American divisions at present under discussion without making a bargain and, if they are used to reënforce the British Line, that you will agree they are to be used by Pershing as he thinks best.

At the same time the President repeats most earnestly that he will risk any adverse public criticism in order to win the war and he has told Pershing that he may put American troops by battalions in the British line or use them in any way which in his, Pershing's, judgment may be dictated by the necessities of the military situation. . . .

WILLIAM WISEMAN .

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *February 7, 1918*

Please express to the President my gratitude for the exposition of his views regarding the disposal of American

troops at the front. I appreciate highly the frankness of this communication and I have never for a moment doubted that he is actuated in this, as in all other questions, solely by consideration for the common good.

Speaking for myself, I attach the greatest weight to his arguments. American soldiers must feel that they belong to an American army, fighting under the American flag. It is only on these terms that the best can be got out of them or that they can count on the enthusiastic support of the American people. I know that these views were strongly pressed by General Pershing at Versailles, but I understand that proposals were made there which in his view would enable small American units to train, and, if need was considerable, to fight in the immediate future in companies with French and British troops without interfering with or delaying the creation of a great American army. If so, early and much-needed assistance would be given us on the Western Front without hindering the realization of legitimate American ideals.

I hope I am right. I need hardly add that I am entirely at the President's disposal if anything I can do can help to make the position easier.

BALFOUR

The French and British military commanders were by no means satisfied with the compromise which the Americans offered, but they accepted it with every evidence of good temper.

Mr. A. H. Frazier to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

PARIS, January 29, 1918

During an interview between General Bliss and the President, when I was present as interpreter, M. Poincaré made the statement that General Pétain and General Pershing

were in complete agreement. General Bliss thereupon asked whether he was authorized to telegraph this information to President Wilson. Before replying M. Poincaré summoned an A.D.C., who telegraphed to Compiègne to ascertain whether there had been any change in the situation since the last interview between the French and American Commanders-in-Chief. The reply came back from Compiègne by telephone that there had been no change and that the understanding was complete and satisfactory.

FRAZIER

III

The most interesting development of the January meeting of the Supreme War Council was the plan for handling the general reserve; it crystallized the effort to make of the Supreme War Council a real factor of military coördination on the Western Front. It will be remembered that during the Paris conferences House had agreed with Clemenceau that the military advisers should form a board of coördination and that its chairman should have executive powers. To this the British raised objections on the ground that it was an infraction of the Rapallo Agreement and would come close to making of the chairman a generalissimo.

In January, a new plan was evolved by General Foch and Sir Henry Wilson which provided for a large measure of coördination. Since the Allies were decided to remain upon the defensive until the American troops appeared in force, they planned to create a general reserve, drawn from all the Allied armies, which would be placed under the orders of the military advisers of the Supreme War Council. The latter would form for this purpose an Executive War Board, which could throw reënforcements to any point attacked by Ludendorff. If the Germans drove back either the British or the French, in so doing they would present an open and unguarded flank, against which the Allied reserve could be

hurled. It was in essence the strategy utilized by Foch in his July counter-offensive, the beginning of victory. It left the British and French Commanders-in-Chief supreme over their armies on the fighting line, but created an authority higher than the Commanders-in-Chief to dispose of the reserve. It was open to criticism in that it divided the forces and placed the command of the reserve in charge of a committee. But the committee, as constituted, expressed the military brains of Foch and it was free from the dangerous preoccupation of each Commander-in-Chief — how to save his own army when attacked.

The plan was approved by the Supreme War Council at its January meeting, and received the enthusiastic endorsement of both Pershing and Bliss, who believed it the best available substitute for a *generalissimo*.¹ The French and British Commanders-in-Chief were present at the meeting of the Council which created the Executive War Board and the General Reserve, and seemed to acquiesce. When, however, they were requested to contribute their quota to the General Reserve, Sir Douglas Haig, after waiting nearly a month, replied that he had no divisions to contribute. A new plan was then drafted by himself and Pétain for resisting the German attack. The reserve was not constituted, the powers of the Executive War Board vanished (for it had nothing to command), and the Foch scheme of defense was shattered.

It is a question for military experts to decide, whether Haig was insufficiently supplied with troops, considering the length of his line, and thus was justified in his refusal to cooperate in the Foch plan; and also whether that plan would have actually fulfilled the hopes of the military members of the Supreme War Council. It is certain, however, that the Haig-Pétain plan was inadequate under given conditions, for when the Germans attacked, on March 21 (and that too at the

¹ Pershing to House, February 27, 1918; Bliss, in *Foreign Affairs*, December, 1922.

point named by the Executive War Board), they broke the Allied line and destroyed the British Fifth Army. Within less than a week they threatened the capture of Amiens and the definitive separation of the British and French armies.

The peril of the Entente armies led to their salvation. It was clear that if Allied military unity were not at once established, Germany might defeat the Allies separately. The German victory was not the result of anything so much as unified action and concentration of forces. During the week that followed March 21, one hundred German divisions had come into action against thirty-five British and only fifteen French. The moral was obvious; the Allies must secure unity of control.

André Tardieu, whose relations with Clemenceau were close, pictures the French Prime Minister as always working for the supreme command and unchangeable in his opinion as to whom it should be given.

'As soon as he assumed the reins of government in November, 1917, M. Clemenceau set to work to obtain more and better [than the Supreme War Council]. I had informed him that he could count on President Wilson's aid. On the other hand, opposition was still manifest in London and when during a brief stay in Paris at the end of 1917 I publicly declared that the American and French Governments were agreed on the necessity of a unity of command, several English newspapers protested. On the eve of my departure for New York, on December 30, 1917, I had a last talk with M. Clemenceau. I said to him:

"They are going to talk to me again over there about unity of command. And no doubt they will ask me, 'Who?' What shall I say?"

'M. Clemenceau replied: "Foch."' ¹

¹ Tardieu, *Truth about the Treaty*, 37.

On March 26, at Doullens, the new Secretary for War, Lord Milner, representing the British, accompanied by the chief British generals, met Poincaré, Clemenceau, and the French military leaders.¹ It was settled that: 'General Foch is charged by the British and French Governments with co-ordinating the action of the Allied armies on the Western Front.' For a few more weeks he was compelled to carry through the task 'more by negotiation than by command,' but from that moment control of the forces in the West was in his hands. A new era had begun.²

Mr. Balfour in the mean time cabled to House asking him to impress upon the President the need for American troops. Would it not be possible for the United States to increase the number of embarkations and to send 120,000 troops a month for four months? Lord Reading also laid before House the gist of a long cable which he had received from the British Prime Minister, emphasizing the immediate importance of American man-power. Colonel House's notes of Lord Reading's communication follow:

Reading Statement on Military Situation

March 29, 1918

'While there are good hopes that the present effort of the enemy may be checked, it is possible that Amiens will be lost, and the events of the immediate future will prove whether the enemy can reach this point or not. If Amiens falls we shall have to face a very grave military situation. In any event, the enemy has certainly shown his ability to break

¹ Field-Marshal Haig agreed that he would be glad to receive General Foch's advice.

² At Beauvais, on April 3, Foch was given a brevet of actual command: 'The strategic direction of military operations.' But the Commanders-in-Chief were left in control of 'the tactical conduct of their armies,' with the right of appeal to their respective Governments. It was not until April 24 that Foch received the 'Commandement en chef des armées alliés.'

through the Franco-British front over a wide area, and it is certain that if the German High Command cannot secure all their aims in the present battle, they will at once commence preparing their forces to deliver a further attack at the earliest possible date. The point at which this attack will be delivered must depend to a great extent on the eventual result of the operations now proceeding. The entire military position in the future must depend on whether we can reconstitute and reënforce our armies in sufficient time to check the next blow, and, in the light of the last week's fighting, it is clear that the problem of man-power is the fundamental question with which the Allies are faced. . . .

'Our losses so far have reached about 120,000 men. We can barely make good these losses by bringing in our whole resources of partially and fully trained men, and we shall be obliged to use all our trained reserves in doing so. In these circumstances we are immediately taking action to increase the number of our troops by taking in youths of 18 and by raising the age limit to 50, and we are also again "combing out" our industrial establishments to a large extent, a proceeding which will cause serious hardship and dislocation to our industries. Furthermore, we are ready to run the risk of serious difficulties in Ireland, as we regard it as absolutely essential that we should during the summer of this year be in a position to show ourselves more powerful than the Germans. These drastic measures will, we hope, give us 400,000 to 500,000 men as reënforcements, but they cannot be given sufficient training to enable us to employ them in France for another four months at least. There is, therefore, the risk of a shortage during the period of May to July next, and this is the very time at which the next great effort by the Germans is to be anticipated.

'Thus, in order to be certain of checking the enemy during these months, and making it impossible for him to reach a military decision on the West Front, it will be necessary to

make good the deficiency during this period by the use of American troops. In this way alone it is possible to secure the position of the Allies.

'The shipping experts in London have estimated that the tonnage which we can provide by heavier sacrifices in other ways will be able to embark about 60,000 men in the United States during April, and, according to an estimate by Admiral Sims, 52,000 men per month can be carried by the American trooping fleet. There is also a certain volume of Dutch shipping which could be used by the United States, and the use of certain further Italian tonnage is being secured by us. We think that in all it is possible to embark 120,000 from the United States during April, a number which could be somewhat increased in the following months. . . .

'If the struggle should be decided against us without these troops being employed, it is quite possible that the war may be terminated and the cause lost, for which the President has pleaded so eloquently, without the United States having received a chance of making use of anything but a small fraction of her forces.

'The whole future of the war will, in our opinion, depend on whether the enemy or the Allies can be first to repair the losses which have been incurred in this great struggle, and it is certain that there will not be a moment's delay on the part of the Germans. They are in possession of sufficient manpower to repair what they have lost, and there is also the Austrian army 250,000 of which are, according to statements made by the German press, already in the West. If we cannot refit as rapidly as the enemy, this will give the enemy the opportunity to achieve the definite military decision by which the German leaders hope to terminate the war as a German victory.'

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, March 26, 1918

Prime Minister and I saw Mr. Baker¹ this morning and earnestly pressed upon him the urgency of obtaining from the proper authorities assent to the following suggestions:

First: That four American divisions should be used at once to hold the line and relieve further French divisions.

Second: We understand that transport is available for bringing six complete American divisions to this country. We strongly urge that, in present crisis, this tonnage would be more usefully employed if it were not used to carry complete divisions with their full complement of artillery *et cetera*, but if it were used in main for transport of infantry of which at this moment we stand in most pressing need.

Third: That as temporary expedient American engineer units in France now engaged in preparing base and line of communication of future American Army and said to include many skilled engineers should be diverted from present occupation and utilized as extemporized engineer units for construction of defences *et cetera* in rear of our armies.

Fourth: That one of American displacement divisions which is reported to be complete with transport should also be employed in the line either as a separate division or to increase infantry in combatant divisions.

BALFOUR

Colonel House to Mr. A. J. Balfour

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, March 26, 1918

Your No. 68 received and has been handed to the President with my urgent recommendation that orders be at once issued as suggested.

¹ Secretary Baker spent some weeks in a visit of inspection in France and England.

Although anxious we have such faith in the courage and tenacity of the British troops that we feel confident of the final outcome.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

NEW YORK, *March 27, 1918*

The President agrees with practically every suggestion that you make regarding the disposition of our army.

I am glad to inform you that Secretary Baker, after consultation with Generals Bliss and Pershing, has given orders making effective the recommendations set forth in your message.

EDWARD HOUSE

Mr. A. J. Balfour to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, *April 3, 1918*

May I personally express to you my very great appreciation of the noble response which the President has made to our urgent request for American help in this crisis. I feel sure that much was due to your efforts. I would like you to know that it is realized here how great a sacrifice has been made by America by allowing her battalions to be incorporated in British Divisions. I need hardly to assure you that I will do all in my power to make the position as little onerous as possible. . . .

BALFOUR

IV

The March crisis had led General Pershing to go at once to General Foch's headquarters and to place at his disposal all American combatant forces. Approximately 300,000 troops had by this time reached France. The acceptance of this offer meant the dispersion of those troops along the Allied

front and a consequent delay in building up a distinctive American force in Lorraine, although Pershing planned to keep his divisions intact.

Furthermore, on March 27 the Supreme War Council passed, with American approval, the following resolution, which provided for the temporary brigading of American troops with Allied units, although it also emphasized the principle of an independent American army. It was accepted by Pershing.

Resolution of Supreme War Council

'The Military Representatives are of the opinion that it is highly desirable that the American Government should assist the Allied Armies as soon as possible by permitting in principle the temporary service of American units in Allied Army corps and divisions. Such reënforcements must, however, be obtained from other units than those American divisions which are now operating with the French, and the units so temporarily employed must eventually be returned to the American army.

'The Military Representatives are of the opinion that from the present time, in execution of the foregoing, and until otherwise directed by the Supreme War Council, only American infantry and machine-gun units, organized as that Government may decide, be brought to France, and that all agreements or conventions hitherto made in conflict with this decision be modified accordingly.'

In conjunction with the promise of President Wilson that the United States would ship 120,000 troops a month for four months, the Allied leaders took this resolution to mean that all American troops transported during four months would be infantry and machine-gunners and would be brigaded with the Allies. General Pershing, however, did not so understand

it. He was firm always in his insistence upon the need of building up an American force as soon as possible, and while he understood that the 60,000 troops for which the British had promised to find transportation might be brigaded, he believed that the agreement permitted him to use the excess tonnage over the 60,000 to complete American divisions. On April 9, Lord Reading, who had just received a long cable from his Government, informed Colonel House of its substance and asked his advice as to how best to take up the misunderstanding with the American Government.

‘It is plain,’ he said in effect to House, ‘that the views held by General Pershing are in no way consistent with the broad lines of policy which we understand to have been accepted by the President. The principal point of difference is that in our view the promise meant that, in the course of the four months, April, May, June, and July, 480,000 infantry and machine guns are to be brigaded with British or French troops. This obligation is not admitted by General Pershing, who clearly disapproves of the adoption of such a policy.

‘A further and lesser discrepancy is that the British Government, while quite in agreement with General Pershing as to the ultimate withdrawal of the troops brigaded with the British and French for the formation of an American army, consider that this process cannot and should not be attempted before about October or November next at the end of this year’s season for active military operations.

‘The President has shown such a firm grasp of the situation that we are most unwilling to cause him any possible embarrassment. . . . It is, however, essential to have the question cleared up, as the repeated indications of the difference between the view taken by General Pershing and what we understand to be the policy decided upon by the President show that those differences are of fundamental importance and closely affect the issues of the whole war.’

'I advised Reading,' wrote Colonel House in his diary, 'not to ask for an appointment with the President until tomorrow and not to see him until after he had received a letter from me which I will write to-day.' House sympathized both with the Allied leaders and with Pershing. 'Pershing's feeling,' he wrote the President, 'that an American army under his command should be established and made as formidable as possible is understandable. Nevertheless, the thing to be done now is to stop the Germans and to stop them it is evident that we must put in every man that is available.' The only way to satisfy both sides was to increase the number of troops shipped, even beyond the 120,000 that had been planned. Before coming to a decision it would be necessary to await the arrival of Secretary Baker, who had been present in France and could report authoritatively upon conditions there. In the mean time all preparations for the transportation of American troops would be pushed.

On April 19 Ambassador Reading was handed another memorandum. It reiterated the promise of transporting 120,000 troops and intimated that they would consist of infantry and machine-gunners. It stated, however, that these troops 'will, under the direction and at the discretion of General Pershing, be assigned for training and use with British, French, and American divisions, as the exigencies of the situation from time to time require.'

The Commander of the A.E.F. thus was left free to distribute these troops as he deemed best. If tonnage facilities could be increased and more troops brought over, then it would be possible for him to assign the full 120,000 for purposes of brigading, and utilize the excess for the formation of an independent American army. It was this possibility which, in the mind of Colonel House, would furnish the solution to the problem.

Neither the British nor French were satisfied, however, and further negotiations and tentative agreements between

their military leaders and Pershing failed to convince them of the justice of his position. At the Abbeville conference, early in May, he offered six divisions of infantry and machine-gunners a month, provided tonnage facilities could be increased; but he insisted that the excess tonnage should be devoted to the transportation of the artillery and auxiliary arms necessary to complete American divisions. Furthermore, he agreed to leave his six divisions with Field-Marshal Haig only as 'long as the emergency lasted.' This would permit him later to recall the divisions when he considered that the emergency no longer existed.¹

General Foch and the military representatives of the Supreme War Council necessarily disapproved this arrangement. They were convinced that to prevent the appalling danger of the Germans exhausting the Allied reserves and having them at their mercy in July or August, every available ton of shipping should be utilized for the transportation of American infantry and machine-gunners.

Mr. A. H. Frazier to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

PARIS, May 6, 1918

... The difference in result between these two plans is not insignificant; assuming that the tonnage can be found for transporting two hundred thousand men in the months of May and June and that only infantry were sent, the Allies could count on four hundred thousand men to fill up their shattered divisions and thus not be forced to reduce the number of such divisions. According to General Pershing's plan barely half of this number of infantry would be available.

FRAZIER

But Pershing was willing to wager that the Germans could

¹ As it developed, General Pershing early in August asked for the recall of the American divisions, in order to form the First American Army.

be stopped under his plan, and that the creation of an independent American army would mean such increased fighting power on the part of the American troops, fighting under their own flag, that the war would be shortened. He held firm to the offer which he made, and the Allies perforce accepted it. Whatever may have been the opinion in Washington as to the correctness of his judgment, the Administration supported the general in command.

In the middle of May came a suggestion that perhaps Wilson would send over Colonel House to represent the United States on the political side of the Supreme War Council. The suggestion was brought by Lord Reading to the Colonel before he took it to the President. He showed him a cable from Lloyd George which is paraphrased in Colonel House's notes as follows:

'In my opinion it is of the greatest importance that Colonel House should come to Europe for the next meeting of the Supreme War Council. This meeting will be a most important one at which decisions on vital matters will be taken, especially in connection with the employment of American troops.

'It does not seem to me possible to arrive at satisfactory conclusions unless there is present a political authority to represent the United States Government with whom we are able to deal on equal terms and who is in a position to reach a decision at once. . . .

'Great injury results from the indecision and delay which are entailed by telegraphic negotiations. The French Premier has now pressed that the next meeting may take place on June 1, as both he and General Foch are most anxious that we should arrive at final decisions without delay.

'We fully concur in this view as to the urgency of meeting. The date proposed would, of course, hardly allow sufficient

time for House to arrive before the opening meeting, even supposing that he left early next week. If he can come, I would, however, ask for a few days' postponement in spite of the deep regret with which I should regard delay, owing to the very great importance which I attach to his presence. Will you please urge this matter upon the President and, if the President concurs, endeavour to persuade House to start at the earliest possible moment? Please convey my apologies to him for the short notice given. I am quite aware that these sudden voyages are most embarrassing, but unfortunately, the enemy waits for no man's convenience. . . .'

Colonel House was quite definite in his own mind that neither he nor any one else ought to be sent over to the Supreme War Council meeting at this juncture. It was certain that the Allied leaders would appeal to an American political representative to persuade Pershing to postpone his plan for a separate American army, and it was equally certain that the Commander of the American forces must be allowed a free hand. President Wilson had promised himself that for the first time in the history of the country, there should be no political interference with the military conduct of the war.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, May 20, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Reading took breakfast with me this morning. He is just back from Ottawa. He had a cable from the Prime Minister, instructing him to see you and request that you send me or some one else to represent the civil end of our Government at the next meeting of the Supreme War Council.

This meeting is scheduled to meet Saturday [week], but he thinks it could be postponed for a few days if I could leave within the next day or two. . . . What Lloyd George wants is

some one to overrule Pershing. They probably intend to bring up the same old question. . . .

We both believe that whatever is contemplated at this next meeting can rest long enough to get a cable directly from you in the event it is necessary to decide any difference which may arise between them and Pershing. Please be assured that I am perfectly willing to go now or at any time when in your judgment I should go. We think, however, that it would be much better for me to go later, probably in September or October, if you think it wise for me to go at all. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On May 22 Lord Reading requested an interview of President Wilson, at which he presented the suggestion of Mr. Lloyd George that an American political representative be sent to Europe to sit on the Supreme War Council, and, after gaining permission to speak with entire candor, said that the British and French would like Colonel House. The President replied that if he sent any representative it would be House, but that he agreed entirely with House that it was inadvisable to send him at the present time.

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When necessity drives, a means can be found. If the Allies had to have American infantry and machine-gunners, then they must make available the tonnage necessary for them as well as for the units essential to the completion of the American divisions and the creation of an independent American army. On June 5, Pershing, Foch, and Milner reached an agreement.

It was assumed that no less than 250,000 American troops would be transported in each of the months of June and July. For the month of June 170,000 of these should be combatant troops (that is, six divisions minus artillery, ammunition

trains, or supply trains). For July there should be absolute priority for 140,000 combatant troops as described. The balance of each 250,000 should be troops of categories designated by the American Commanding General in France. If the arrangement were carried into effect the Allies would have at their disposal a number of infantry and machine-gunners far exceeding what they had asked or expected in March after the German offensive, and yet General Pershing would be able to proceed with the creation of the American army.

The Prime Ministers of France, Great Britain, and Italy insisted that only with the assistance thus provided for could there be any certainty of averting a German victory before the close of the summer, and they cabled directly to President Wilson to make sure that Pershing's promise was understood in Washington and that the Administration was prepared to carry it out. Wilson replied with a promise of full support, agreeing ultimately to put an army of one hundred divisions in France.

Cable of the Three Prime Ministers

VERSAILLES, June 1, 1918

We desire to express our warmest thanks to President Wilson for remarkable promptness with which American aid in excess of what at one time seemed practicable has been rendered to Allies during past month to meet a great emergency. The crisis, however, still continues. General Foch has presented us a statement of the utmost gravity which points out that the numerical superiority of the enemy in France, where 162 Allied divisions now oppose 200 German divisions, is very heavy, and that as there is no possibility of British and French increasing the number of their divisions (on the contrary, they are put to extreme straits to keep them up) there is a great danger of the war being lost unless the numerical

inferiority of the Allies can be remedied as rapidly as possible by the advent of American troops. He therefore urges with utmost insistence that maximum possible number of infantry and machine guns, in which respects shortage of men on side of Allies is most marked, should continue to be shipped from America in months of June and July to avert the immediate danger of an Allied defeat in present campaign owing to Allied reserves being exhausted before those of the enemy.

In addition to this and looking to future he represents that it is impossible to foresee ultimate victory in the war unless America is able to provide such an army as will enable the Allies ultimately to achieve the necessary numerical superiority. He places the total American force required for this at no less than 100 divisions and urges continuous raising of fresh American levies which in his opinion should not be less than 300,000 a month, with a view to establishing a total American force of 100 divisions at as early a date as this can possibly be done.

We are satisfied that General Foch, who is conducting the present campaign with consummate ability and on whose military judgment we continue to place the most absolute reliance, is not overestimating the needs of the case and we feel confidence that the United States Government will do everything that can be done both to meet the needs of the immediate situation and to proceed with continuous raising of fresh levies calculated to provide as soon as possible the numerical superiority which Commander-in-Chief of Allied forces regards as essential to ultimate victory. . . .

CLEMENCEAU
LLOYD GEORGE
ORLANDO

'June 5, 1918: I had an important conversation,' wrote House, 'with Wiseman this morning. Lloyd George has sent

Lord Reading a cable signed by the Prime Ministers of England, France, and Italy, urging the President to send over a stated number of troops during June and July: 170,000 fighting men was the June estimate, and 140,000 the July estimate. The cable is an alarming one. . . . The President is willing to send troops without limit either as to number or as to time. . . . It is an indication that they now have arrived at some understanding with Pershing.

'I have asked Sir William to write out a cable to send Lloyd George, in which he is to state that it was prepared after consultation with me. . . . Jusserand is to see the President at two o'clock and present the cable [of the Prime Ministers]. Wiseman is to telephone me the result later. . . .

'Wiseman has just telephoned that Jusserand saw the President and he promised to send one hundred divisions of our troops over as soon as it was possible to do so. This means 2,700,000 men.'

Thus was American man-power to be transferred to the battle-front. The number of American troops which actually participated in the defensive warfare of June and July was not large, but the arrival of the troops in France was a guarantee that Allied reserves would not be exhausted, as the military leaders of the Entente feared. The American promise of March had been to send 480,000 in the four succeeding months. As it developed, close to a million were sent during those four months.¹ The agreement of June, which called for 250,000 a month, was surpassed; the monthly average from June to September inclusive was over 280,000.²

¹ April	118,642
May	245,945
June	278,664
July	306,350
	<u>949,601</u>

Ayres, *The War with Germany*, 37.

² *Ibid.*, 37.

452 INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

It was the general opinion in military circles that it would require at least another year of fighting to defeat Germany.¹ In fact, some felt that the final campaigns could not come before 1920. These were the days when it seemed wiser not to be optimistic, for the military situation demanded the courage of desperation. It was true that the gap between British and French armies before Amiens had been closed and the British had held firm in Flanders. But the German drive from the Chemin des Dames at the end of May had been victorious and in June the enemy again threatened Paris.

House hoped, nevertheless, that Allied victory might come sooner than the military leaders dared to believe. With the appointment of Foch as generalissimo and the American troops crossing the Atlantic in numbers, he felt that the worst crisis had been passed. He counted, furthermore, upon a break in Germany's morale as soon as it appeared clear that the offensive had been stopped, and upon the effect of President Wilson's speeches, which had sown distrust between German people and Government and stimulated the process of self-determination in Austria. He even dared to prophesy the overthrow of the German military leaders by autumn.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 23, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... I notice that the Germans are saying it will be 1920 before we can have as many as a million men there [France]. We already have them and the German people should know it. I was under the impression, and Reading confirmed it, that we have sent men across the Atlantic more rapidly than the English have ever sent them across the Channel,² and the

¹ Pershing to House, June 19, 1918.

² But more than half were carried in British ships.

shipping facilities of the Allies are increasing so rapidly that we can soon do even better.

England, France, and Italy need now constant stimulation and no one can do it so well as you. If their morale can be kept up until autumn, in my opinion our fight against Germany will be largely won. I believe Austria is already at the breaking point and I also believe the German people will take the supreme power from the military extremists this autumn, if they do not have a decisive victory on the Western Front. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

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THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE



THE ENDING OF THE WAR

JUNE, 1918 — AUGUST, 1919

'The war itself was like no other. . . . The peace, in turn, should have taken a new path. . . . It was an opportunity for sacrifice . . . which surely, later, would have garnered rich returns for all.'

COLONEL HOUSE, APRIL 9, 1928



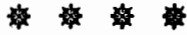
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Mr. Edward Ham et c. Mrs. House

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THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE



The Ending of the War

Arranged as a Narrative

BY

CHARLES SEYMOUR

Provost and Sterling Professor of History, Yale University



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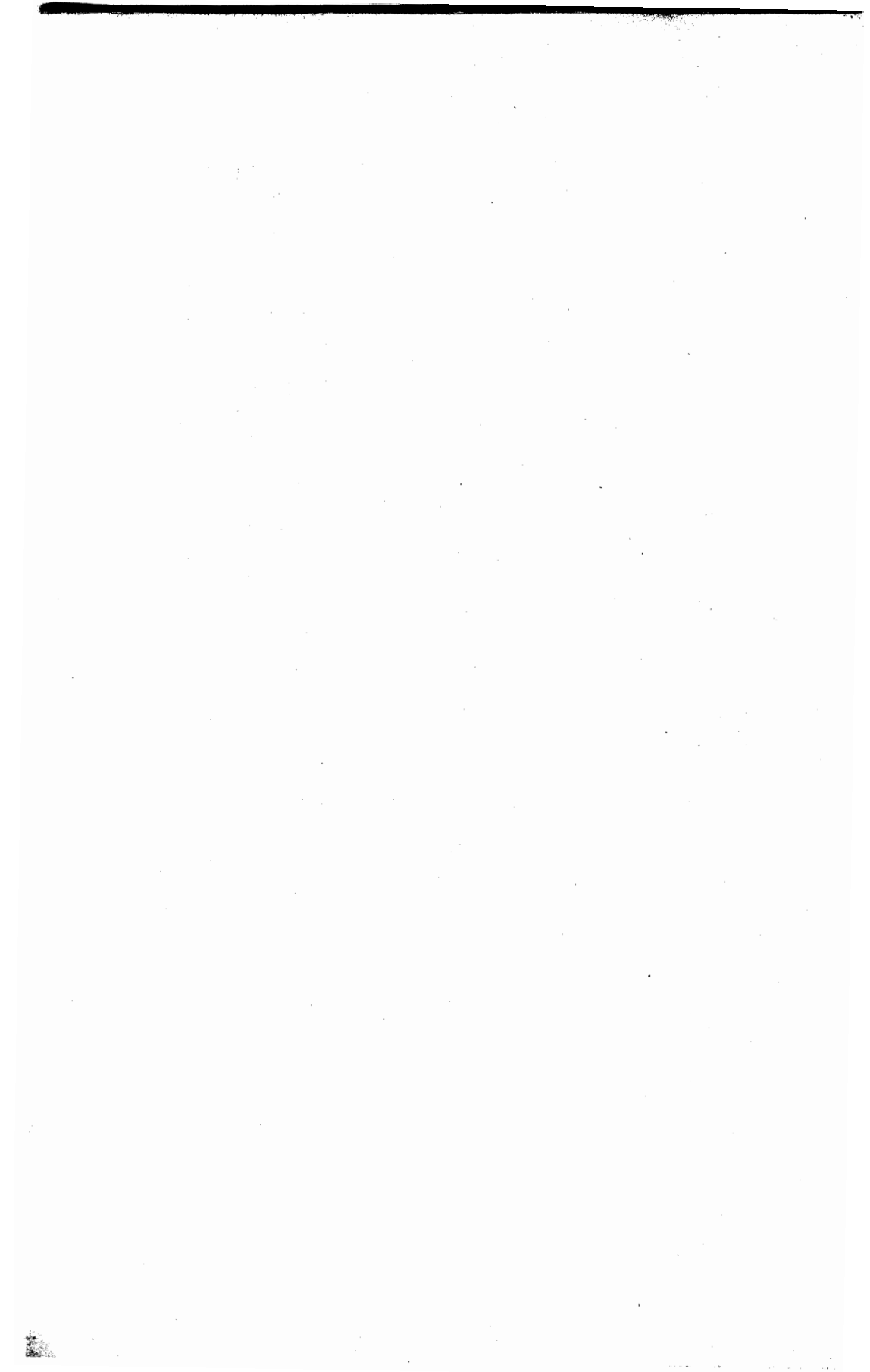
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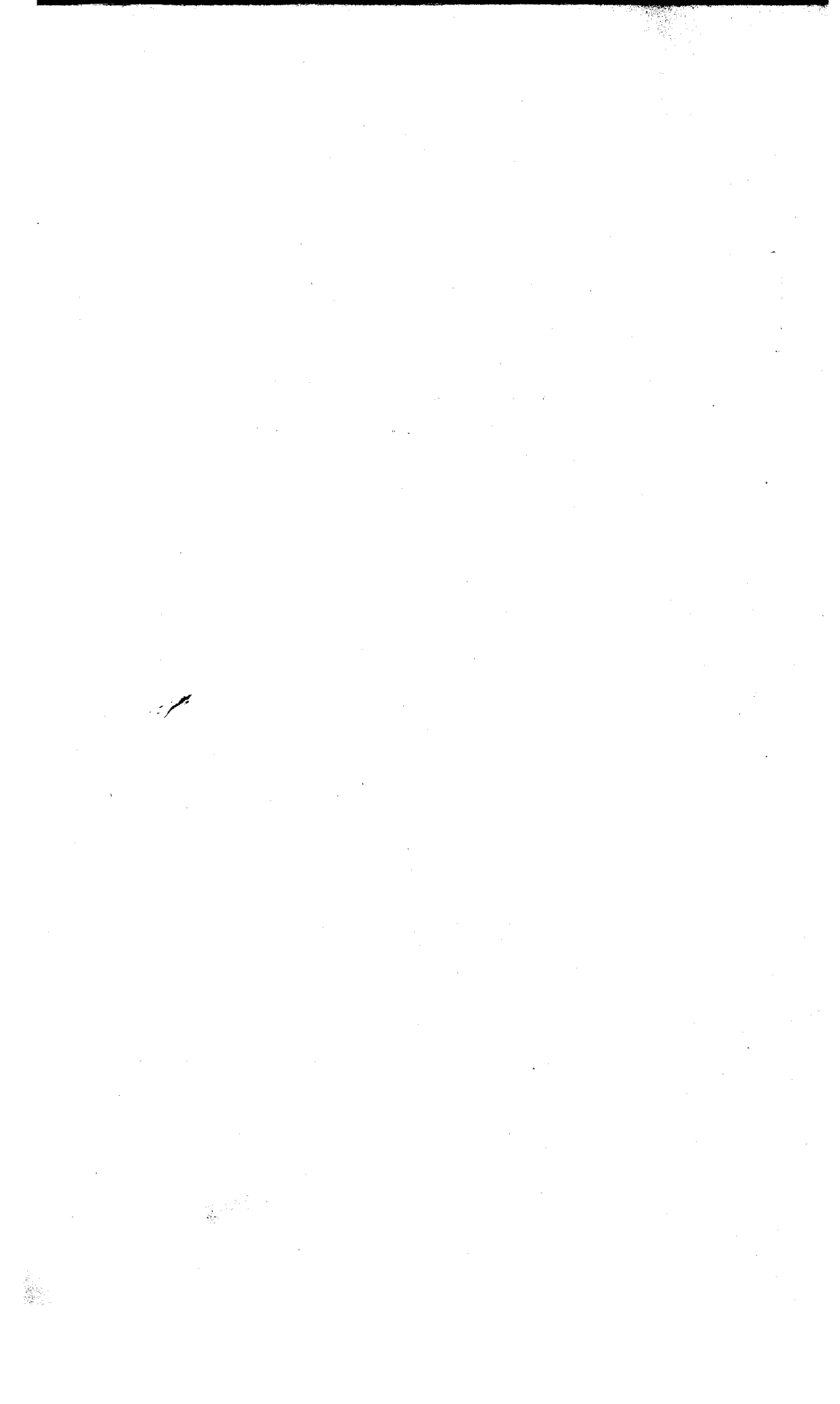


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THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE



THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

JUNE, 1918 — NOVEMBER, 1919

CHAPTER I

ANTECEDENTS OF THE COVENANT

My own conviction, as you know, is that the administrative *constitution* of the League must grow and not be made.

President Wilson to Colonel House, March 22, 1918

I

THE summer of 1918 witnessed the turn of the military tide, the final collapse of the German offensive in France, and the triumphant counter-offensive of the Allied armies under the coördinating direction of Foch. It was natural that during the same period preparations for harvesting the results of the impending military victory should be hastened. Few guessed how close that victory was, but there was an instinctive crystallization of plans for the peace. In France, Great Britain, and the United States the committees which had long been at work gathering data for the Peace Conference, began to put the results of their studies into comparatively definite and final form.

At the same time there were drafted the first official schemes for an association of nations. In France and Great Britain, Government committees sketched tentative constitutions for such an association, and in the United States President Wilson asked Colonel House to undertake a similar task.

The enthusiastic emphasis which Wilson placed upon a League of Nations as the keystone of a just and abiding

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peace settlement was progressive, for the President was more cautious than many of his compatriots in approving the principle. So early as 1914, however, the essence of Article X of the Covenant was in his mind. On December 16 of that year, he discussed with Colonel House the possibility of introducing a direct guarantee for the preservation of peace in the Americas. He was planning at that time the negotiation of a general Pan-American Pact, and wrote out on his own typewriter, as the basic formula of such a convention, the words: 'Mutual guaranties of political independence under republican form of government and mutual guaranties of territorial integrity.'¹ The negotiations for this Pan-American Pact, continuing through 1915 and 1916, were never completed, partly because of the diplomatic crises with the European belligerents which distracted Wilson from concentrating upon American affairs. But the President kept always in mind the principle of international association he then formulated, and the words 'political independence' and 'territorial integrity' bit deep into his consciousness.

These very crises with the European states shook him loose from any sense of isolation and impressed upon him the rôle which the United States might play in an association not merely American, but world-wide in its character. Colonel House's fruitless mission in 1914 for the furtherance of a general agreement between the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany, had in it the germ of a League of Nations; in August, 1914, House laid before Wilson his belief that if such an agreement had been in existence at the time of the Serajevo murders the war might have been prevented.²

¹ See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, 1, 209-10.

² *Ibid.*, 1, 275: 'I believed if we had had an opportunity to put this [a League of Nations] into effect, in all human probability such a war as this would not have occurred. . . .'

It was natural that the President should combine the idea of House's 1914 mission with that of the Pan-American Pact: the principle of American interest in world peace with the method of an association to guarantee it. He seems to have studied carefully the letters which Sir Edward Grey wrote to House and which the latter forwarded to the President; in them the British Foreign Secretary emphasized ceaselessly his belief that the future peace of the world depended upon a general and permanent conference of the nations, the substitution of international organization in place of the existing anarchy, international concert instead of national individualism. The effect of these letters upon Wilson was evidently decisive, for when he finally made up his mind, in May, 1916, openly to announce his adherence to the principle of a League of Nations, he asked House to furnish him with materials based upon this correspondence.¹ His speech of May 27, 1916, before the League to Enforce Peace, which outlined his entire foreign policy for the succeeding four years, echoed and emphasized the principle of the Grey-House discussions.²

After May, 1916, Wilson became the enthusiastic champion of the League of Nations idea, which he set forth, although in the most general terms, in each of his important addresses on foreign policy. In his notes of December 18 of that year, suggesting that the belligerents state their peace conditions, he intimated that 'a concert of nations immediately practicable' was the chief purpose of the settlement. In his speech of January 22, 1917, he spoke of a 'covenant of

¹ *Ibid.*, II, 296. The President wrote to House: I am thinking a great deal about the speech I am to make on the twenty-seventh, because I realize that it may be the most important I shall ever be called upon to make. . . . Would you do me the favour to formulate what you would say, in my place, if you were seeking to make the proposal as nearly what you deem Grey and his colleagues to have agreed upon in principle as it is possible to make it when concretely formulated as a proposal? Wilson to House, May 18, 1916.

² *Ibid.*, II, 337.

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coöperative peace,' of a 'concert of power,' which should replace the entangling alliances of the past. The speech of the Fourteen Points, January 8, 1918, culminated in his insistence upon a 'general association of nations,' which 'must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.'

It is clear that President Wilson came to the endorsement of a league of nations by gradual steps. It is equally clear that he was slow to formulate his ideas as to the exact kind of league that was desirable. His biographer, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, in discussing the documents relating to the drafting of the Covenant, has written: 'One fact arises above all others in studying these interesting documents: practically nothing — not a single idea — in the Covenant of the League was original with the President. His relation to it was mainly that of editor or compiler, selecting or rejecting, recasting or combining the projects that came in to him from other sources. He had two great central and basic convictions: that a league of nations was necessary; that it might be brought into immediate existence. In voicing these he felt himself only a mouthpiece of the people of the world.'¹

The President waited long before proceeding to anything like a draft of the framework of the proposed League. It does not appear that he studied seriously the programme of the League to Enforce Peace, nor the plans of Elihu Root which emphasized the principle of a World Court, although without the educational accomplishments of such advocates of the League idea, it is unlikely that even the later leadership of Wilson himself would have greatly availed. It is true that he was destined to incorporate many of their ideas in his own plan, but he did not ask for nor did he accept their co-operation. He was determined to keep the control of the

¹ Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement* (Doubleday, Page & Co.), I, 214.

movement in his own hands and he did not wish to be hurried. In the mean time he left it to House to collect and analyze opinions. Sir William Wiseman later commented as follows upon Colonel House's interest in early plans for the League:

'From the time that I first met House up to the Peace Conference, he was always anxious to hear all shades of opinion regarding the League of Nations, and the type of Covenant upon which it should be based. He would listen to any one who had studied the matter earnestly, whether they were enthusiastic advocates or bitter opponents. He sought the views of conservatives such as Root, of distinguished soldiers and sailors, labour leaders, pronounced pacifists, and extreme socialists. He did not by any means confine his enquiries to American opinion, but tried to get the views of thoughtful men in every country. Busily occupied with many other urgent matters, he asked me and one or two other trusted friends to gather opinions regarding the League. In this way, House was able to give Wilson a very fair summary of world opinion about the Covenant so far as it was developed at that time. It was very doubtful at the time that the United States came into the war whether the Government of any other country would agree to make the League a part of the Peace Treaty. The Allied Governments particularly were so engrossed in the prosecution of the war that they had neither the time nor the inclination seriously to consider the League Covenant as part of the Peace Treaty.'

During the year 1917 the President's mind was concentrated upon the conduct of the war, and he thought of the peace settlement only in the most general terms. As he said himself, he had a 'one-track mind,' and it was for this reason that he turned over to House, in September, 1917, the task of gathering material for the Peace Conference. None of his

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letters to House at this time regarding the future settlement discuss any details of a League, and he was evidently content to let the Colonel's organization do the spadework in its own way. House's enthusiasm for the principle of the League was well known in England, where he had discussed it frequently in 1915 and 1916 with Sir Edward Grey. In September, 1917, Lord Robert Cecil wrote to him suggesting that the time had come to appoint a commission to study feasible plans. Cecil was already recognized with Grey as among the most distinguished advocates of a League in Great Britain; he was destined to play an outstanding part in its creation.¹

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

LONDON, *September 3, 1917*

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

. . . I have ventured to send to you, by Sir William Wiseman, a copy of a memorandum I prepared for the Government here in September, 1916, dealing with a particular proposal for diminishing the likelihood of war. I should be very grateful to you if you could find time to read it. . . .

That we ought to make some real effort to establish a peace machinery when this war is over, I have no doubt; and I have very little doubt that an attempt of that kind will be made. One danger seems to me to be that too much will be aimed at. In the present state of public opinion in Europe, I am very much afraid that, if anything like a complete system for the judicial or quasi-judicial settlement of international disputes be aimed at, it will infallibly break down and throw the movement back for many years. Nothing did more harm to the cause of peace than the breakdown of the efforts after

¹ President Wilson has often been criticized for entrusting matters of importance to a private citizen, such as House, who did not occupy an official position. Much of House's influence was due, as is indicated by this and other letters, to the confidence placed in him by European statesmen.

Waterloo in this direction. It is now generally forgotten that the Holy Alliance was originally started as a League to Enforce Peace. Unfortunately, it allowed its energies to be diverted in such a way that it really became a League to uphold tyranny, with the consequence that it was generally discredited, besides doing infinite harm in other ways. That particular danger is perhaps not great now-a-days, but the example shows how easily the best intended scheme may come to grief.

People here have suggested to me that it might be worth while if in America, and perhaps in this country also, some Commission of learned and distinguished men were entrusted with the duty of examining all these schemes, in order to see what was possible and useful. I am not myself a very great admirer or believer in Commissions of any kind, but I should be very glad if some machinery could be hit on which would direct some of our best brains to the consideration of this problem.

Again, thanking you, believe me, with very sincere respect
Yours very truly

ROBERT CECIL

President Wilson, when House brought this letter to his attention, decided that there was no need of appointing a special committee, since the task of examining the various schemes for a league could be undertaken by the Inquiry as a part of its activities in gathering data for the Peace Conference. While these studies were in process, he wished to prevent public discussion of the constitution of a league by irresponsible writers, who he feared would be stimulated to fantastic proposals. As he wrote to House: We must head them off, one way or another. He dreaded especially 'that they insist upon a discussion now of the *constitution* of the league of nations.' He spoke of some of the American advo-

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cates of a league as 'woolgatherers,' and of the plans of others as 'folly.'¹

Thus during the winter of 1917-18 no official steps were taken to institute public discussion that might crystallize opinion upon the character of the proposed league. The President did not wish to take his mind from war problems so as to study details of a league, nor did he wish to have a programme formulated which he might later have to oppose. But after the speech of the Fourteen Points, the demand for the formulation of an official plan became stronger. Realizing that the leadership of the movement might pass into unofficial hands, President Wilson commissioned House to discuss the elements of a league with the most eminent of its American advocates. During January and February, House entered into conference with Mr. Taft, Mr. Root, and Mr. Butler, and later exchanged letters with President Lowell of Harvard. 'I have been working fitfully for some time,' he wrote Wilson, on February 19, 'trying to get the Carnegie peace group to coöperate with those that believe in a league to enforce peace.'

In the mean time the British Government, largely under the stimulus of Lord Robert Cecil, had taken definite steps in the direction of serious study, by the appointment of a committee authorized to report upon schemes for the avoidance of war. The advocates of a league in Great Britain urged again that the United States Government manifest a willingness to coöperate.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

LONDON, February 16, 1918

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I write to you because I know that you have been specially charged by the President with the superintendence of all

¹ Wilson to House, March 20, 1918.

questions which need preparation in connection with the Peace Conference.

I think you will agree with me that the 'League of Nations' will be one of these questions, and we have therefore appointed a Committee to enquire, particularly from a juridical and historical point of view, into the various schemes for establishing, by means of a league of nations or other device, some alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes, to report on their practicability, to suggest amendments, or to elaborate a further scheme if on consideration it should be deemed possible and expedient.

We do not at present intend to publish the fact of the formation of this Committee. The Chairman is Sir Walter Phillimore, lately Lord Justice of Appeal, and a well-known authority on International Law, and the author of a recent work entitled 'Three Centuries of Treaties of Peace,' a copy of which I hope you will accept from me.

I do not know whether your staff is also engaged on a similar task, but if they are it has occurred to me that if we could establish coöperation it would be a mutual benefit to us. If you share this view would you be inclined to let me know, for our confidential information, the lines on which you are working and I will undertake to keep you similarly informed?

Yours very sincerely

ROBERT CECIL

To this House was compelled to reply that it was impossible as yet to establish practical coöperation with the British, since American studies had not proceeded sufficiently far. At the same time he reported to President Wilson upon the increasing demand that some step should be taken by the President to advance the League idea. On March 8 he warned him of the suggestion of Lord Bryce to American advocates of a league, that if the President still hesitated to appoint a commission, one should be self-constituted. 'It

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seems to me,' wrote House to Wilson, 'that a committee might be formed over here, not with Government sanction but with its tacit approval, to work out plans which might be used as suggestions at the Peace Conference. Further than this I do not think it would be wise to go, and yet public opinion is driving so hard in this direction that I doubt if it would be wise to do less.'

The President refused to agree that such a commission was necessary. He none the less encouraged House to continue his discussions with American supporters of the League idea, and during the following weeks House gathered and tabulated the opinions of its leading advocates.

President A. Lawrence Lowell to Colonel House

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
March 13, 1918

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I am afraid that I did not make the object of my last letter clear. I had no idea of proposing that the Entente Powers should start during the war a League of Nations with the hope of getting the Central Powers and the Neutrals to join later; and if the first paragraph of the draft I sent you gave that impression it certainly was not so intended. In deference to some English opinion, this first paragraph was drawn so as to provide that the League, when formed at the close of the war, should consist *prima facie* of the Entente Powers; but I think it would be better to change it so that any of the Central Powers that were admitted would be admitted as primary members on the formation of the League. A plan for an immediate League has been proposed by some members of our organization, but I have always opposed it.

Last night I was talking with the Archbishop of York, and the ideas of his group and ours in the League to Enforce Peace seem to agree very closely. He tells me that he is to see you again before he sails.

A. LAWRENCE LOWELL CORRESPONDENCE 11

I sent you the extract from Lord Bryce's letter because he thought it would be better to have a joint commission appointed by the Governments of the two countries. As you are virtually such a commission on the part of our Government, I want to coördinate the work of the League to Enforce Peace with yours. I gathered from your letter that you think it is better not to have a governmental joint commission, but to have plans made independently, though keeping in touch with one another.

The essential point in the plan we are drawing up in the League to Enforce Peace is that the executive authority of the League, so far as executive action is needed, should be in the hands of the rulers, or the direct representatives of the rulers, of the Governments whose action in matters of peace and war will be decisive. The experience of the English House of Lords shows that a body, however great the personal distinction of its members may be, cannot have any considerable authority if it does not represent political forces.

The plan also provides for a position in the League of small permanently neutral states, which I believe necessary for their preservation and for a state of peace.

I should be glad if you would make any suggestions to keep us in touch with your work.

Very truly yours

A. LAWRENCE LOWELL

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, March 21, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a copy of a letter from Lawrence Lowell. I do not think there will be any difficulty in getting the League to Enforce Peace people to do anything you desire. . . .

The only thing I have suggested is that they unofficially

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and independently formulate their ideas from time to time, so that when the Peace Conference comes you may have the benefit of their thoughts. . . .

The Archbishop of York is to take lunch with me on April 11 and I had thought to ask Mr. Taft, Lowell, and Root to join us. Root, as you know, belongs to a different group. His is the 'World Court.' He too expresses a desire to conform to your wishes. If I get them all together I believe I can bring about a definite understanding. . . .

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Mr. Wilson was still decidedly averse from any policy that involved the formulation of a concrete albeit tentative constitution for a league. Such a constitution, he believed, must not be cut out of whole cloth; it must grow and not be made. He approved, however, House's suggestion of a luncheon conference with Taft, Lowell, and Root, and expressed his belief that it was 'most wise and should be most helpful.'¹ House also invited Mr. Lansing, who could not accept because of pressure of work in Washington. The Secretary of State was conscious of serious doubts as to the value of a league for the prevention of war. As he wrote to House, his chief preoccupation was the necessity of destroying completely the military power of Germany and the establishment of the democratic principle throughout the world. This, he believed, offered the most certain guarantee of permanent peace.

Secretary Lansing to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, April 8, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL:

Mr. Auchincloss gave me your invitation for luncheon on Friday next and I am sorry I cannot accept it. I concluded

¹ Wilson to House, March 22, 1918.

from what he said that the purpose was to discuss the American and British differences as to the League of Nations, and particularly the attitude of Lloyd George as expressed in his public address about a month ago.¹

As you probably know, Mr. Page wrote a long letter to the President on the subject. He sent a similar one to me, which I found very interesting in its dissection of British opinion.

To be entirely frank I am not disposed to quarrel too severely with the Prime Minister's opinion in regard to the League to Enforce Peace, because I am not at all sure he is not in a measure justified. The movement has been for several years very industriously and, I may say, very ably advocated in this country; but, doubting its efficiency as a means to insure international peace, I have, as you know, never affirmatively given it my personal support.

The practical element, in my opinion, in any league of nations is the good faith of the members. If they are untrustworthy, an agreement to unite in the forcible maintenance of peace would be worthless. If this is the true view, the character of the membership of the league should be of first consideration, and I do not understand this to be in the scheme of Mr. Taft and others advocating a League to Enforce Peace.

Briefly let me recall to you my line of thought, which I discussed with you a year and a quarter ago: No people on earth desire war, particularly an aggressive war. If the people can exercise their will, they will remain at peace. If a nation possesses democratic institutions, the popular will will be exercised. Consequently, if the principle of democracy

¹ A speech delivered by Mr. Lloyd George at the Free Churches, March 13, 1918. In this, replying to the criticism that he had not given sufficient prominence to the League of Nations, he stated that too much confidence must not be placed in phrases and that the 'true apostles of the League of Nations' were the 'millions of young men . . . in battle array. If they succeed . . . the League of Nations will be an established fact.'

prevails in a nation, it can be counted upon to preserve peace and oppose war.

Applying these truths (if they are truths and I think they are), I have reached the conclusion that the only certain guarantor of international peace is a League of Democracies, since they alone possess the trustworthy character which makes their word inviolate. A League, on the other hand, which numbers among its members autocratic governments, possesses the elements of personal ambition, of intrigue and discord, which are the seeds of future wars.

A League, composed of both democratic and autocratic governments and pledged to maintain peace by force, would be unreliable; but a League, composed solely of democracies, would by reason of the character of its membership be an efficient surety of peace.

To my mind it comes down to this, that the acceptance of the principle of democracy by all the chief powers of the world and the maintenance of genuine democratic governments would result in permanent peace. If this view is correct, then the effort should be to make democracy universal. With that accomplished I do not care a rap whether there is a treaty to preserve peace or not. I am willing to rely on the pacific spirit of democracies to accomplish the desirable relation between nations, and I do not believe that any League relying upon force or the menace of force can accomplish that purpose, at least for any length of time.

Until Autocracy is entirely discredited and Democracy becomes not only the dominant but the practically universal principle in the political systems of the world, I fear a League of Nations, particularly one purposing to employ force, would not function.

It seems to me that the proper course, the one which will really count in the end, is to exert all our efforts toward the establishment of the democratic principle in every country of sufficient power to be a menace to world peace in the event

it should be in the hands of ambitious rulers instead of the people. Unless we can accomplish this, this war will, in my opinion, have been fought in vain.

We must crush Prussianism so completely that it can never rise again, and we must end autocracy in every other nation as well. A compromise with this principle of government, and an attempt to form a League of Nations with autocratic governments as members will lack permanency. Let us uproot the whole miserable system and have done with it.

In reading over this letter it impresses me as a little too oratorical, but I am sure you will pardon that in view of the strong convictions which I have on the subject. I simply cannot think with complacency of temporizing or compromising with the ruffians who brought on this horror, because to do so will get us nowhere, and some future generation will have to complete the work which we left unfinished.

Faithfully yours

ROBERT LANSING

II

'April 11, 1918: The Archbishop of York, ex-President Taft, Senator Root, Presidents Lowell and Mezes came to lunch to-day,' wrote House in his diary. 'The discussion during the main part of the meal was largely about the Civil War, its causes, and the attitude of Great Britain and her statesmen toward the belligerents. Interesting as it was, I was compelled to break in when luncheon was over in order to start the discussion for which we had met. We wish to harmonize the divergent views of Taft, Lowell, Root, and the British group with the President's as how best to prevent future wars.

'I read them an extract from the President's letter on this subject as well as a letter from Lansing. There was general disagreement with Lansing. Root agreed with him as far as he went, but thought he left the matter in a state where it is

now and was before the war. Lansing's idea is that it is only necessary to democratize the world, and that the democracies will not war upon one another. . . .

'The portion which I read from the President's letter to me ran as follows: My own conviction, as you know, is that the administrative *constitution* of the League must grow and not be made; that we must *begin* with solemn covenants, covering mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity (if the final territorial agreements of the peace conference are fair and satisfactory and *ought* to be perpetuated), but that the method of carrying those mutual pledges out should be left to develop of itself, case by case. Any attempt to begin by putting executive authority in the hands of any particular group of powers would be to sow a harvest of jealousy and distrust which would spring up at once and choke the whole thing. To take up one thing and only one, but quite sufficient in itself: The United States Senate would never ratify any treaty which put the force of the United States at the disposal of any such group or body. Why begin at the impossible end, when it is feasible to plant a system which will slowly but surely ripen into fruition?'¹

'None of them altogether agreed with the President. They thought he did not go far enough. The final conclusion was that Root should draw up a memorandum embracing three proposals:

'1. That every nation was interested in war, no matter how small or in what quarter of the globe.

'2. That some machinery should be set up during peace times through which, at the threat of war, a conference of nations could be held for the purpose of making an attempt to stop it.

'3. Some machinery establishing a court or bureau of arbitration to which controversial matters might be referred.

¹ The text of this letter is in Wilson to House, March 22, 1918.

'The Archbishop was to receive a degree at Columbia University and was compelled to leave before we had finished our conference.'

As a result of this and other conferences Colonel House was able to draft certain principles which might be safely incorporated in the constitution of a league with the approval of the different groups of opinion. Nothing was published, however, or even put into formal articles, because of the President's unwillingness to stimulate discussion that might ripen into controversy. Once again pressure came from across the Atlantic. In Great Britain the Phillimore Committee completed its preliminary report with a draft constitution of a league of nations. This the British Government proposed to publish. Lord Robert Cecil wrote to House suggesting that before publication the American Government might wish an interchange of views, and that in any case he hoped to have an expression of his own personal opinion.

In reply Colonel House indicated very generally the nature of the League which he had in mind. The part of his plan which was wholly new was that in which he insisted upon a declaration to the effect that the standard of international conduct must be determined by criteria similar to those applying to standards of personal honor. 'Unless this is done,' he wrote in his diary, 'it does not seem to me to be much use to sign covenants only to be broken at will, and the breaking condoned.'¹ He also wrote to President Wilson, suggesting that the time had come to draft at least a tentative scheme.

¹ House had suggested this to Wilson many months before, notably when advising him as to his speech of May 27, 1916. See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, II, 338.

*Colonel House to Lord Robert Cecil*MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 25, 1918

DEAR LORD ROBERT:

There seem to be as many opinions concerning a league of nations as there are groups working at a solution.

To me there is something pathetic in the faith which the people of nearly every country have in the ability of their statesmen to work out this problem in a way that will insure an enduring peace.

I believe we should use as our guide the experience which mankind has gathered in solving the questions of law and order between individuals. The more advanced states of the world have worked out a fairly satisfactory civilization. But, internationally, thanks to Germany, we are thrown back to the Stone Age.

One of the most essential features of any league seems to me to be the installation of a moral standard such as that maintained among individuals of honor. Even before Germany smashed the international fabric, reprehensible action was condoned under the broad cover of patriotism; actions which in individuals would have been universally condemned and the perpetrators ostracized from society.

I believe that the most vital element in bringing about a world-wide reign of peace is to have the same stigma rest upon the acts of nations as upon the acts of individuals. When the people of a country are held up to the scorn and condemnation of the world because of the dishonorable acts of their representatives, they will not longer tolerate such acts.

To bring this about will not I think be so difficult as it would seem, and when this condition is realized, a nation may be counted upon to guard its treaty obligations with the same fidelity as an individual guards his honor.

I do not believe at the start it would be possible to form

any court ¹ or to have an international force at the disposal of the court to enforce its decision. It seems to me that in forming the league we could not go further than to agree that:

(1) Any war, no matter how remote or how insignificant the country involved, is the concern of all nations.

(2) Some country like Switzerland or Holland should be selected for a centralized peace ground. The ministers sent there should be *ipso facto* peace delegates.

When there is a rumor or murmur of war these delegates should by previous agreement automatically meet and

(a) Insist that the proposed belligerents agree to settle their differences by arbitration according to the agreement, which, as members of a League of Nations, they have signed.

(b) The arbitrators to be selected as follows: One by each belligerent and these two to select a third. In the event the two could come to no agreement as to the third, then the selection of the third arbitrator should be made by the League.

(c) Either nation [subject] to the arbitration may, if dissatisfied with the findings, have the right to appeal to the League.

(d) The finding shall be set aside only by a three-fourths vote.

(e) If the belligerent against whom the finding is made insists upon going to war, then it shall become obligatory upon every nation in the League to immediately break off all diplomatic, financial, and economic relations of every character and, when and where possible, also exert physical force against the offender.²

(3) One of the fundamental principles of the League shall be a declaration that each signatory nation shall bind itself

¹ Colonel House soon changed his mind as to the need of a court and included it in his first plan. President Wilson was opposed to it.

² Cf. the arrangements made by the Protocol in 1924 for the determination of the aggressor state.

forever to maintain the same standard as that maintained among people of honor so that any nation that failed to live up to the letter and spirit of this agreement shall be held up to public condemnation.

(4) The members of the League shall guarantee each other's territorial integrity. Any violation of this guarantee shall be visited by the same penalties as set forth in Paragraph (2), section (e).

These are my personal views at the moment and do not represent either the President or the groups over here that are working at the problem.

I would appreciate your letting me know what you think of the plan I have proposed.

I am, my dear Lord Robert,

Your very sincere

E. M. HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
June 25, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing you a copy of a letter which I have written Lord Robert Cecil in response to one from him in which he asks for my personal views.

The sentiment is growing rapidly everywhere in favor of some organized opposition to war and I think it essential that you should guide the movement. It will not wait for the peace conference and, while I can understand that you would not want to commit yourself to any plan until the war is ended, yet there are other ways by which you can direct it.

The trouble that I see ahead is that the English, French, or the groups here may hit upon some scheme that will appeal to people generally and around it public opinion will crystallize to such an extent that it will be difficult to change the form at the peace conference. It is one of the things with

which your name should be linked during the ages. The whole world looks upon you as the champion of the idea, but there is a feeling not only in this country but in England and France as well that you are reluctant to take the initiative.

If you do not approve the letter which I have written Lord Robert I can stop it.

Everywhere the most popular slogan is, 'This is a war to make future wars impossible,' and I believe that sentiment animates not only the people but the soldiers as well.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'June 24, 1918: President Lowell of Harvard,' wrote House in his diary, 'came for lunch. Our talk was largely concerning a league of nations. I read him the letter I wrote Lord Robert Cecil, and he approved with some slight qualifications. He said the executive committee of the League to Enforce Peace will meet in a day or two and he wished to know what action I thought they should take. I advised them to do nothing for the moment. . . . If both the President and Lord Robert agreed with my views, we could crystallize sentiment around them in this country, in England, and in France.'

III

This interchange of letters between Lord Robert Cecil and Colonel House proved to be the immediate origin of the first formal American drafts of the Covenant of the League of Nations. President Wilson made no immediate reply to House's letter of June 25, which enclosed a copy of the letter to Lord Robert; he was, as he wrote, 'sweating blood' over the Russian question. 'There never were so many problems *per diem*, it seems to me, as now.' But on July 8 he took up definitely the problem of drafting a tentative constitution for the League. He had received a copy of the Phillimore

Report, which the British Government had sent him, but he was evidently too busy even to read it at this time.¹ He asked House to rewrite the 'constitution' contained in that report: as you think it ought to be rewritten, along the lines of your recent letter to Lord Robert Cecil.² He did not suggest that the rewritten Constitution should serve any purpose other than to provide him with the basis for the comment and opinion which the British Government requested, nor did he give House any hint as to what was in his own mind as to a desirable constitution for a league. As it turned out, the draft which House produced in answer to the President's request was the foundation of the plan that Wilson took to the Peace Conference the following December.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 11, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... There is no denying that there has recently been a great acceleration of the thought and desire for a League of Nations. This thought has crystallized around your name and I believe you are wise in giving it immediate and thorough consideration.

It is an exceedingly difficult problem to solve in a way to satisfy the hopes of the peoples and yet satisfy a practical mind. But it can be done because the world will be so weary of war and the thought of it that it will seize upon any intelligent way out.

I hope to see you solve this difficulty as you did our banking and financial problems. They are not without analogy.³

¹ Thus Wiseman cabled to Reading, on August 16: 'The President remarked that... when he saw you he had not read the Phillimore Report.' See below, p. 52.

² Wilson to House, July 8, 1918.

³ What House had in mind was the point which he later developed at length: that much of the value of the Federal Reserve Act was psycho-

In spite of the skepticism of the financial world, panics have been made impossible and the shadow of impending disaster has been lifted. Now if war can be made impossible, what a glorious culmination of your other accomplishments.

I shall get at the matter immediately and will send you something for consideration early next week. One of the difficulties to be encountered is the desire of the French not only to have a League of Nations started by the Entente before the war ends, but to exclude the Central Powers afterwards. Lord Grey's recent assertion that a League of Nations would be incomplete without them has raised a storm in France and only a few Socialist papers have commended the idea.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On July 13 House set to work drafting the constitution of the League which he had in mind. He was assisted by David Hunter Miller, who for several months had been in charge of the subject for the Inquiry, and he discussed his draft with Sir William Wiseman who made critical suggestions. He had before him the Phillimore Report, but as he wrote to the President, he did not use it as a basis for his own draft, although in the process of revision he incorporated several of its salient provisions. The main lines which Colonel House followed were those which he had emphasized in his letter to Cecil.

logical. It instilled such confidence that people began to say, 'Under this system panics are impossible.' So long as they believed it, panics of course would be impossible. In the same way he argued that if an organization for the prevention of war could be evolved, which would instill confidence in its efficiency, the chief psychological cause of war, fear of aggression, would be removed.

*Colonel House to the President*MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
July 14, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

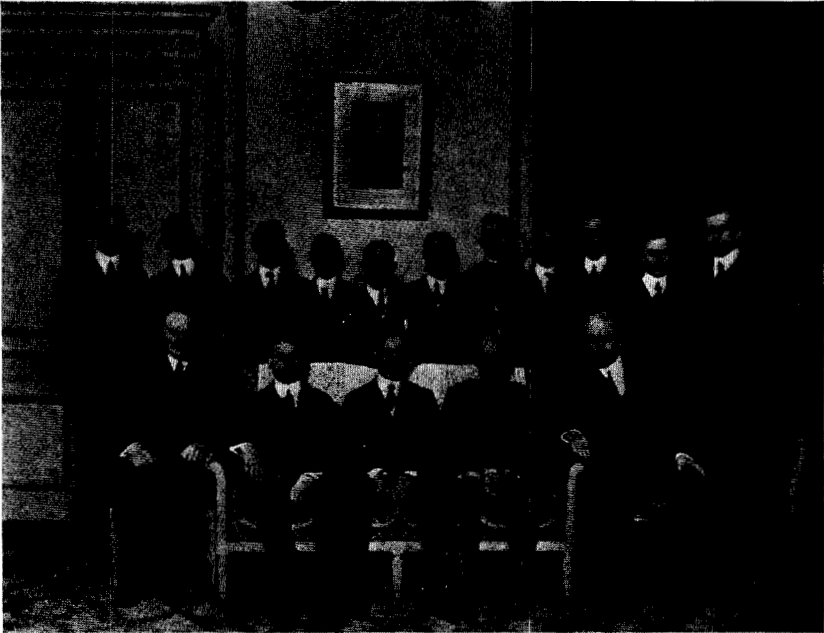
I have spent yesterday and to-day in formulating a draft of a Convention for a League of Nations.

I will not send it to you until Monday or Tuesday, for I would like a day or two to lapse before reading it over and making any corrections which seem pertinent. A memorandum will also be attached explaining the reason for each article where it is not obvious.

The draft was written without reference to the British Covenant [Phillimore Report] which you sent. When finished the two were compared and several of the Articles of the British were incorporated as a whole. In my opinion the British document would not at all meet the requirements of the situation. The reason I wrote the draft without reference to the British was to keep from getting entangled with their plan.

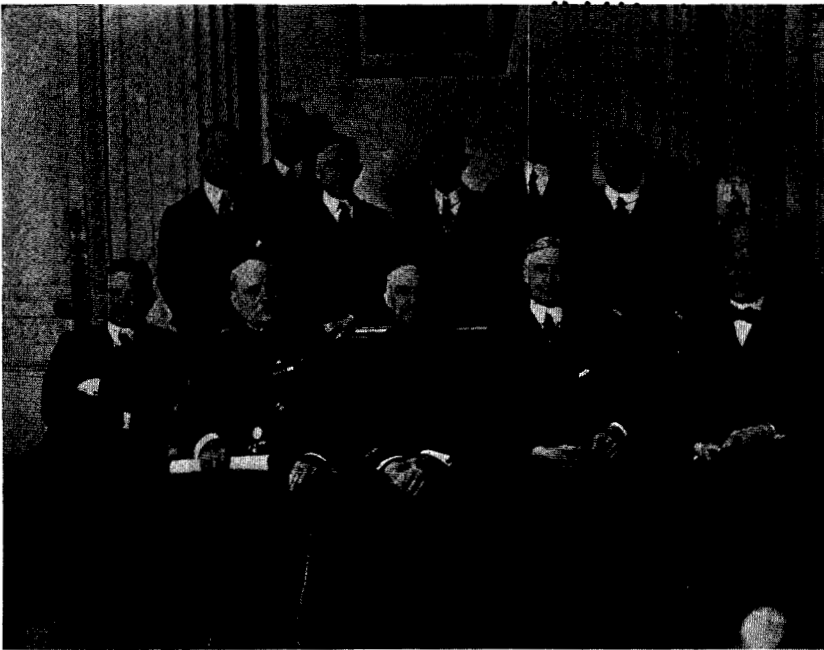
If you approve of the draft I believe it would be wise for you to take some means of giving it to the world, and as quickly as possible, in order to let thought crystallize around your plan instead of some other. It would be better, I think, to do this without consultation with any foreign government and so state in your announcement. If you take it up with the British or French there will be heart-burnings if the others are not brought into it.

It is written with a view of not hurting the sensibilities of any nation either in the Entente or the Central Powers. It is also written with a view that the League might be confined to the Great Powers, giving the smaller powers every benefit that may be derived therefrom. If the smaller nations are taken in, the question of equal voting power is an almost insurmountable obstacle. Several of the smaller nations have indicated a willingness to come into a League of Nations only



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upon condition that the voting power of each country shall be the same — notably Switzerland.

If this were agreed upon, Mexico and the Central American States could out-vote Germany, England, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States, and yet in the enforcement of peace or of any of the decrees of the League of Nations they would not only be impotent but unwilling to share the responsibility.

These smaller nations might become neutralized as Belgium and Switzerland were, with representation [but] without voting power, just as our Territories have had representation in Congress without votes.

I believe you will find the draft a basis of a practical working arrangement.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The letter is interesting, since it indicates that at this time House had in mind restricting the League to the Great Powers. On the face of it the plan seemed illiberal. It apparently ran directly counter to President Wilson's constant plea for the recognition of the smaller nations as having equal rights with the Great Powers; later at the Peace Conference House himself consistently defended the claims of the smaller nations, as in the cases of Belgium and Poland. House evidently based his argument upon the practical consideration that control must go with responsibility and upon the assumption that the smaller states would be actually safer under the protection of the large than under a régime of rivalry among themselves.

'The Great Powers at the Peace Conference should put out a plan so just,' he wrote in his diary of July 5, 1918, 'that all the smaller nations will be glad to concur in it. It has been shown in this war that the smaller nations like Holland,

Denmark, and Switzerland will not participate in a general war unless they are compelled to do so by the exigencies of the occasion. Therefore why permit them to exercise a directing hand upon the nations having to furnish not only the financial but the physical force necessary to maintain order and peace? I am sorry to come to this conclusion, because it does not seem toward the trend of liberalism. However, the idealist who is not practical oftentimes does a cause more harm than those frankly reactionary.'

Colonel House's argument against the admission of the smaller nations on the basis of equal rights with the larger, was later met by the plans of Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts, in which House himself enthusiastically concurred. The war experience of the Entente Powers taught them methods of international control in which the influence of the larger and smaller states was weighted roughly according to their strength. From this experience was evolved the plan of an executive council with representatives from the smaller states but dominated by the Great Powers, and an assembly to which all member states of the League, large or small, were admitted upon an equal basis. Thus the League was ultimately founded upon the principle of that 'practical idealism' which House had approved.¹

¹ House's first draft of the Covenant was, of course, written hurriedly in two days as a memorandum for the President. It was not intended to represent his final thoughts on the subject.

CHAPTER II

FIRST AMERICAN DRAFTS OF THE COVENANT

'The requisite change is . . . a universal formal and irrevocable acceptance and declaration of the view that an international breach of the peace is a matter which concerns every member of the Community of Nations. . . .'

Senator Elihu Root to Colonel House, August 16, 1918

I

ON July 16, 1918, House sent to the President his draft of what he called the 'Covenant of a League of Nations.' This is apparently the first time that the word 'Covenant' was used to describe specifically the proposed agreement among the nations. Mr. Baker states that the President requested that House compile 'a new draft of a "covenant" — the word was his [Wilson's] own. . . .'¹ But in his letter to House, Wilson specifically uses the word 'constitution.'² House, of course, derived from Wilson's speeches the idea of utilizing this well-adapted word for the instrument, since it is certain that it is one for which the President always had some fondness.³

The draft of this Covenant, with House's annotations which were contained in the enclosing letter, follows. It consists of twenty-three articles, of which all but five were checked by Wilson to indicate his approval and were utilized in his own first draft.

¹ *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 218.

² Wilson to House, July 8, 1918.

³ In his speech of January 22, 1917, Wilson uses the phrase 'covenant of coöperative peace.' Replying to the Pope, August 27, 1917: 'covenants to set up arbitration in the place of force.' In his message to Congress, December 4, 1917: 'covenanted peace.' In his speech of the Fourteen Points, January 8, 1918: 'A general association of nations . . . under specific covenants . . .' etc.

*Suggestion for a Covenant of a League of Nations**Preamble*

International civilization having proved a failure because there has not been constructed a fabric of law to which nations have yielded with the same obedience and deference as individuals submit to intra-national laws, and because public opinion has sanctioned unmoral acts relating to international affairs, it is the purpose of the States signatory to this Convention to form a League of Nations having for its purpose the maintenance throughout the world of peace, security, progress, and orderly government. Therefore it is agreed as follows:

Article 1. The same standards of honor and ethics shall prevail internationally and in affairs of nations as in other matters. The agreement or promise of a Power shall be inviolate.

Article 2. No official of a Power shall either directly or by indirection on behalf of his Government, be expected or permitted to act or communicate other than consistently with the truth, the honor, and the obligation of the Power which he represents.

Article 3. Any attempt by a Power, either openly or in secret, whether by propaganda or otherwise, to influence one Power or nation against another shall be deemed dishonorable.¹

Article 4. Any open or direct inquiry regarding the acts or purposes of a Power may be made by another Power as of

¹ 'The Preamble,' wrote House to Wilson, 'and Articles 1, 2, and 3 are the keystone of the arch. It is absolutely essential for the peoples of the world to realize that they can never have international peace and order if they permit their representatives to sanction the unmoral practices of the past. Every large nation, as you know, has been guilty. . . . Articles 1, 2, and 3 might well come under the Preamble. The reason they are segregated is that it gives them emphasis and makes the pledge binding.' In Wilson's draft the spirit of these articles is retained in the Preamble, but the wording is not used.

course, and shall be regarded as an act of friendship tending to promote frankness in international relations, but any secret inquiry to such end shall be deemed dishonorable.¹

Article 5. Any war or threat of war is a matter of concern to the League of Nations, and to the Powers members thereof.²

Article 6. The Ambassadors and Ministers of the Contracting Powers to X and the Minister for the Foreign Affairs for X shall act as the respective delegates of the Powers in the League of Nations. The meetings of the delegates shall be held at the seat of government of X, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of X shall be the presiding officer.

If the Delegates deem it necessary or advisable, they may meet temporarily at the seat of government of Y or Z, in which case the Ambassador or Minister to X of the country in which the meeting is held shall be the presiding officer *pro tempore*.³

¹ 'No. 4,' wrote House, 'was written with the intention of satisfying those who would be distrustful of Germany in the event she became a signatory Power. It is necessary, I think, to do away with the abominable custom of espionage, but to abolish it and leave some dishonorable nation free to surreptitiously prepare for war would be a mistake. It is to be remembered that nations are even more suspicious of one another than individuals, and such suspicion, as in the case of individuals, is nine times out of ten unfounded. Instead of letting this condition grow there should be some way in which the truth could be openly arrived at.'

This was one of the articles left unchecked by President Wilson. Perhaps he felt that its purpose was covered by the following article. He certainly approved of the motive behind it, for on the *George Washington*, December 10, 1918, he explained privately that his idea of an effective League carried with it the assumption that any nation would have the right 'to butt in' (the word was his own), if it suspected the purposes of another Power. [Notes made by C. S., December 10, 1918.]

² This became Article VIII of Wilson's first draft of the Covenant and Article XI of the final Covenant.

³ 'No. 6,' wrote Colonel House, 'is taken largely from Article 5 of the British draft. Two alternatives are named for the seat of meetings because it is conceivable that there might be trouble between Holland

Article 7. The Delegates shall meet in the interests of peace whenever war is rumored or threatened, and also whenever a Delegate of any power shall inform the Delegates that a meeting in the interests of peace is advisable.

Article 8. The Delegates shall also meet at such other times as they shall from time to time determine.¹

Article 9. The Delegates shall regulate their own procedure and may appoint committees to inquire and report. The Delegates shall constitute a Secretariat and fix the duties thereof and all expenses of the Secretariat shall be paid by the Contracting Powers as the Delegates may determine. In all matters covered by this article the Delegates may decide by the votes of a majority of the Contracting Powers represented.²

Article 10. An International Court composed of not more than fifteen members shall be constituted, which shall have jurisdiction to determine any difference between nations which has not been settled by diplomacy, arbitration, or otherwise, and which relates to the existence, interpretation, or effect of a treaty, or which may be submitted by consent, and Belgium, and if either of them represented X or Y it might be necessary to move the conference to Z.'

This became Article I of Wilson's draft. In the later British drafts and in the final Covenant it was changed to provide for a Council and the seat of the League set at Geneva.

¹ Articles 7 and 8 were incorporated in Article VIII in the Wilson draft, and in Articles III and IV of the final draft of the Covenant.

² 'The first and last sentence in this,' wrote House, 'are taken verbatim from Article 7 of the British draft. I interlarded a sentence providing for a Secretariat and for the funds to maintain it.

'To all intents and purposes the representatives of the Contracting Powers become automatically an International Parliament, and I am sure it will be necessary for them to be in almost continuous session. I believe that it will be a place of such power and consequence that the contracting parties will send their leading statesmen to represent them. It will be a greater honor to become a member of this body than to hold any other appointive position in the world, and it is probable that ex-Presidents, ex-Prime Ministers, and ex-Chancellors will be chosen.'

This Article became Article II in the Wilson draft. It was elaborated in Article VI of the final draft.

or which relates to matters of commerce, including in such matters, the validity or effect internationally of a statute regulation or practice. The Delegates may at their discretion submit to the Court such other questions as may seem to them advisable.

The judges of the International Court shall, both originally and from time to time as vacancies may occur, be chosen by the Delegates. A judge of the International Court shall retire from office when he has reached the age of seventy-two years, and may be so retired at any time by a vote of two thirds of the Delegates, but in case of retirement of a judge from office, the salary paid to him shall be continued to be so paid during his natural life.

A judge may be removed by a vote of two thirds of the Delegates. The International Court shall formulate its own rules of procedure.¹

Article 11. Any difference between nations relating to matters of commerce and which involves the validity or effect internationally of a statute regulation or practice, shall, if the Power having adopted such statute, regulation, or practice so request, be submitted to its highest national court for decision, before submission to the International Court.²

Article 12. The highest national court of each Contracting

¹ 'No. 10,' wrote House, 'provides for an International Court to have jurisdiction to determine certain questions which are now determined in many countries in courts of last resort. This court should be smaller than fifteen members.'

'In the past I have been opposed to a court, but in working the matter out it has seemed to me a necessary part of the machinery. In time the court might well prove the strongest part of it.'

This article and the two following were not checked by the President to indicate his approval; nor in his revised draft did he include an international court. It was only after discussions began at Paris that he accepted it.

² 'No. 11,' wrote House, 'was written largely to conform with the laws and practices of certain nations, particularly, the Latin American Republics.'

Power shall have jurisdiction to hear and finally determine any international dispute which may be submitted for its decision.¹

Article 13. The Contracting Powers agree that all disputes between them or any of them of any nature whatsoever which shall not be settled by diplomacy and which are not within the provisions of Article 10 shall be referred for arbitration before three arbitrators, one to be selected by each party to the dispute and one to be chosen by two arbitrators so selected, or, in the event of their failure to agree to such choice, the third arbitrator shall be selected by the Delegates.

The decision of the arbitrators may be set aside on the appeal of a party to the dispute, by a vote of three fourths of the Delegates, if the decision of the arbitrators was unanimous, and by a vote of two thirds of the Delegates if the decision of the arbitrators was not unanimous, but shall otherwise be finally binding and conclusive.

When any decision of the arbitrators shall have been set aside by the Delegates, the dispute shall again be submitted to arbitration before three arbitrators, chosen as heretofore provided, but none of them shall have previously acted as such and the decision of the arbitrators upon the second arbitration shall be finally binding and conclusive without any right of appeal.²

Article 14. Any Power which the Delegates determine shall have failed to submit to the International Court any dispute which that Court has jurisdiction as of course, or

¹ 'No. 12,' wrote House, 'has in mind the possibility of using, if desired, courts of last resort now in being as a medium for the settlement of disputes in the event other methods prescribed do not appeal to certain nations. I also had in mind that if such provision were a part of the Covenant, it would have a tendency to make all courts of last appeal broader and less biased in passing upon international questions.'

Neither Article 11 nor 12 found a place in the final Covenant.

² This became Article V in the first Wilson draft.

failed or neglected to carry out any decision of that Court, or of a national Court to which a dispute has been submitted by consent for decision, or failed to submit to arbitration any dispute pursuant to Article 13, hereof, or failed to carry out any decision of the arbitrators, shall thereupon lose and be deprived of all rights of commerce and intercourse with the Contracting Powers.¹

Article 15. If any Power shall declare war or begin hostilities before submitting a dispute with another Power as the case may be, either to the International Court or to Arbitrators, as herein provided, or shall declare war or begin hostilities in regard to any dispute which has been decided adversely to it by said Court or by Arbitrators or pursuant to Article 12 hereof, as the case may be, the Contracting Powers shall not only cease all commerce and intercourse with that Power as in Article 14 provided, but shall also arrange to blockade and close the frontiers of that power to commerce and intercourse with the world.²

Article 16. As regards disputes between one of the Contracting Powers and a Power not a party to this Convention, the Contracting Power shall endeavor to obtain submission of the dispute to judicial decision or to arbitration. If the other state will not agree to submit the dispute to judicial decision or to arbitration the Contracting Power shall bring it before the Delegates. In the latter event the Delegates shall in the name of the League of Nations invite the state not a party to this Convention to become *ad hoc* a party and to submit its case to judicial decision or to arbitration and in such case the provisions hereinbefore contained shall be applicable to the dispute both against and in favor of such state as if it were a party to this Convention.

¹ This became Article VI in the first Wilson draft, reference to the Court being omitted.

² This article became Article VII in the Wilson draft. The President added the idea of military sanctions by completing the sentence with: 'and to use any force that may be necessary to accomplish that object.'

Article 17. If the state not a party to this Convention will not accept the invitation to become *ad hoc* a party, the Delegates shall inquire into the dispute and shall make a recommendation in respect thereof.¹

Article 18. If hostilities shall be commenced against the Contracting Power by the other state before a decision of the dispute, or before the recommendation made by the delegates in respect thereof, or contrary to such recommendation, the Contracting Powers will thereupon cease all commerce and intercourse with the other state and will also arrange to blockade and close the frontiers of that state to commerce and intercourse with the world and any of the Contracting Powers may come to the assistance of the Contracting Power against which hostilities have been commenced.²

Article 19. In the case of a dispute between states not parties to this Convention, any Power may bring the matter before the Delegates, who shall tender the good offices of the League of Nations with a view to the peaceable settlement of the dispute.

If one of the Powers, party to the dispute, shall offer and agree to submit its interests and course of action thereto wholly to the control and decision of the League of Nations, that Power shall *ad hoc* be deemed a Contracting Power. If no one of the Powers, parties to such dispute shall so offer and agree, the Delegates shall take such action and make such recommendations to their Governments as will preserve peace and prevent hostilities and result in the settlement of the dispute.³

¹ Articles 16 and 17 became Article IX in the Wilson draft and were incorporated in Article XVII of the final Covenant.

² Article 18 became Article X in the Wilson draft and was incorporated in Article XVII of the final Covenant.

³ 'Nos. 16, 17, 18, and 19 are obvious,' wrote Colonel House, 'and in the event that it is desirable to have a League limited to the Great Powers, these articles would force every nation not a member of the League

Article 20. The Contracting Powers unite in several guarantees to each other of their territorial integrity and political independence, subject, however, to such territorial modifications, if any, as may become necessary in the future by reason of changes in present racial conditions and aspirations, pursuant to the principle of self-determination and as shall also be regarded by three fourths of the Delegates as necessary and proper for the welfare of the peoples concerned; recognizing also that all territorial changes involve equitable compensation and that the peace of the world is superior in importance and interest to all questions of boundary.¹

Article 21. The Contracting Powers recognize the principle that permanent peace will require that national armaments shall be reduced to the lowest point consistent with safety, and the Delegates are directed to formulate at once a plan by which such a reduction may be brought about. The plan so formulated shall not be binding until and unless unanimously approved by the Governments signatory to this Covenant.

to submit their disputes to the League, or use the forms of settlement prescribed by it.

'Articles 13, 14, and 16 of the British draft seek in a measure to accomplish the same purpose, but in an entirely different way.'

According to Ray Stannard Baker (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 86) Article 19 of the House draft was not checked by President Wilson to indicate his approval. This article, however, was included by the President in his first draft as Article XI, and it was ultimately incorporated in Article XVII of the final draft of the Covenant.

¹ 'No. 20,' wrote House, 'was written with the thought that it would not do to have territorial guarantees inflexible. It is quite conceivable that conditions might so change in the course of time as to make it a serious hardship for certain portions of one nation to continue under the government of that nation.'

This article was incorporated by Wilson as Article III of his draft, and the first phrase, modified in language, became the famous Article X of the final draft: 'to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League.' Much to House's regret the last portion of the article, providing for a certain elasticity, was not incorporated in the final Covenant.

The Contracting Powers agree that munitions and implements of war shall not be manufactured by private enterprise and that publicity as to all national armaments and programmes is essential.¹

Article 22. Any Power not a party to this Convention may apply to the Delegates for leave to become a party. The Delegates may act favorably on the application if they shall regard the granting thereof as tending to promote the peace and security of the world.

Article 23. A. The Contracting Powers severally agree that the present Convention abrogates all treaty obligations *inter se* inconsistent with the terms thereof, and that they will not enter into any engagements inconsistent with the terms hereof.

B. Where any of the Contracting Powers, before becoming party to this Convention, shall have entered into any treaty imposing upon it obligations inconsistent with the terms of this Convention, it shall be the duty of such Power to take immediate steps to procure its release from such obligations.²

II

It is no part of the purpose of this chapter to trace the ultimate ancestry of the Covenant of the League of Nations as written in the peace treaties. Obviously no single one of the various plans drafted in 1918 was wholly original and no one of them can claim exclusive parentage of the final Covenant. The importance of the House draft lies in the fact that

¹ Article 21 was incorporated in the Wilson draft as Article IV and in the final draft of the Covenant in Articles VIII and IX, except that the veto upon private manufacture of armament was eliminated.

² 'No. 22. The first sentence of this article,' wrote House, 'is taken verbatim from the British Article 17. I did not use their second sentence for the reason that it seemed to point to Germany, and I have worded the second sentence of No. 22 differently to avoid this.'

'No. 23 is almost a verbatim copy of Article 1 of the British.'

These two articles were incorporated in the Wilson draft as Articles XII and XIII, and in the final draft as Articles I and XX.

it was utilized by President Wilson as the basis for what may be termed the first official American draft; that draft, in turn, was merely contributory to the joint Anglo-American plan presented to the League of Nations Commission in Paris, which was destined to be the immediate predecessor of the Covenant.

House's draft of July, 1918, was much more ambitious than the original British plan as contained in the Phillimore Report. The latter was carefully designed to avoid the appearance of attempting to create a formal confederation of states with a pooling of sovereignty; it proposed rather a diplomatic alliance for the purpose of preventing war by a guaranteed process of arbitration. House's plan went much farther along the path towards an actual association of nations; indeed to some it might seem to threaten the creation of a super-state: he added a secretariat and a permanent international court; he regarded the assembly of delegates as a sort of permanent world-parliament. He accepted the British principle of a guaranteed process of arbitration to prevent war, but he also provided a direct guarantee of 'political independence and territorial integrity,' the same formula as that used by President Wilson in December, 1914, when he first sketched the Pan-American Pact, a guarantee which House meant to render less inflexible by the provisions for peaceful modification of territorial possessions as changing conditions of the future might demand. In the House draft, as in the Phillimore plan, were also incorporated the principle of compulsory arbitration and criteria for determining the aggressor state, characteristic of the Protocol of 1924.

In another respect Colonel House's plan was more ambitious than the Phillimore Report. He added a provision recognizing that permanent peace depended upon a limitation of armament, and he entrusted to the League the function of carrying such limitation into effect. His plan also

carried with it the abolition of the manufacture of munitions of war by private firms, and emphasized the principle of complete publicity as to national armaments.

Judging from President Wilson's letter which Colonel House read to Root, Lowell, and Taft at the April luncheon, the President had not expected that House would elaborate the Covenant in so much detail. In that letter Wilson objected to anything like a formal constitution and insisted that the League must grow gradually. None the less he approved the House draft almost in its entirety, and his own rewriting of it was practically confined to phraseology. He made only two changes of any importance when he came to the construction of his own first draft: he omitted the international court and the two articles dealing with the use of national courts by members of the League; he expanded House's suggested sanctions, which were purely economic in character, so as to include the use of military force when necessary to exert the authority of the League against a recalcitrant member.

In the mean time a French Government committee, under the chairmanship of Léon Bourgeois, had studied plans for a League and drafted a report which was sent to Wilson and House. The French draft was essentially the same as that presented to the League of Nations Commission at Paris, during the Peace Conference, and it does not seem to have modified the ideas of either the British or the Americans. Its outstanding characteristic was the provision for international military forces under a permanent staff. To such a proposal neither of the Anglo-Saxon nations was likely to agree.

Colonel House was quite aware of the various objections that would be raised to certain aspects of his plan, especially to the direct guarantee of territorial integrity which he had included. He discussed the Covenant with Lord Reading and studied carefully the comments of authoritative stu-

dents of international affairs. Both Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Elihu Root sent him long letters, which carry the interest and historical importance that go with the judgment of outstanding leaders of opinion in this matter.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

LONDON, July 22, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I am extremely grateful to you for your letter of June 24.

There are indeed a large number of opinions about a league of nations, but I am struck with the fact that certain broad principles seem pretty generally accepted. One is that international disputes may be divided into classes, though it is obvious that the definition of classes must be rather nebulous. Still, broadly, almost every one thinks that only the less important disputes can really be disposed of by a tribunal of arbitration, and that I am sure is true. In any dispute between two nations involving vital national interests neither of them would be ready to accept the decision of any external tribunal. Nor do I understand that you disagree with that view, though you believe that it might be useful to have a preliminary discussion before a tribunal, and then a reference to a council of the nations. You may be right, but I have a kind of feeling that it would be impossible to construct, even for this purpose, a tribunal that would command sufficient confidence to do useful work in vital international disputes.

The Phillimore scheme, as you will remember, proceeds on a different path. It relies on making the two disputing nations, or group of nations, bring their quarrel for open discussion before an international conference. This very much carries out your idea that we must rely on international public opinion as our chief guarantee of peace. The real trouble is, how are we to secure that the disputants *shall* bring their dispute before the council of the nations? For

that purpose, according to the Phillimore scheme, coercion is to be employed.

Since I sent you our scheme I have seen the French proposals. Generally speaking, I am not very much impressed with them, but there is one suggestion which seems to me very important, and that is that we should utilise the international organisations which we are now constructing for the control of raw materials and other things as a lever to compel the nations of the world to accept a league of peace. The suggestion is that we might make participation in those international organisations dependent on adherence to the league of peace, which seems a very fruitful suggestion and well worth investigation.

I notice that you propose that the components of the league should make a profession of faith to the effect that they will abide by a code of honour. I think it would be all to the good to have such a profession included in the instrument by which the league of peace was constructed, but I am afraid I do not think that by itself it could be relied upon. The example of Germany in this war shows that under pressure of false teaching and national danger there is no crime which a civilised nation will not commit, and the same has been found true over and over again in history.

I am convinced that unless some form of coercion can be devised which will work more or less automatically no league of peace will endure. You refer to the history of the civilisation of individuals; but surely the great instrument of law and order has been the establishment of the doctrine of the supremacy of the law. So long as codes of law were only, or mainly, codes of honour or good conduct they were always disobeyed by any one who was sufficiently powerful to do so, with the result that we in this country had to endure periods of anarchy culminating in the Wars of the Roses. On the Continent things were even worse, and it was very largely the luck of having here so vigorous a ruler as Henry

VII, combined with his skill in devising a means of coercing the barons and feudal chiefs that really laid the foundations of our present civilisation. The Star Chamber by its subsequent history achieved an evil reputation, but at the time of its institution by Henry VII it was a most valuable instrument for coercing the forces of disorder.

I admit that I do not see my way to the institution of an international Star Chamber, but I do believe that the means of control conferred by the complications of modern finance and modern commerce should be very powerful, and if they could be strengthened by such a scheme as the French propose, I do believe that we might devise an efficient sanction for the commands of a league of peace. One great danger, however, I see in its way: the French suggest that it should be confined to democratically governed nations — at least so I understand them.

I cannot help feeling that this is a most dangerous path for us to travel. After the Napoleonic wars public opinion in Europe believed that Jacobinism was the great danger to peace, just as now we believe, with more justification, that Prussian Militarism is what we have mainly to fear. Accordingly, the principal nations entered into the Holy Alliance, with a view to suppressing Jacobinism whenever they saw it raising its head. Very soon Great Britain withdrew from the League, but it persisted with the most disastrous results for many years in Europe. I am dreadfully afraid that we may make the same mistake now. Prussian militarism is indeed a portentous evil, but if, misled by our fear of it, we try to impose on all the nations of the world a form of government which has been indeed admirably successful in America and this country, but is not necessarily suited for all others, I am convinced we shall plant the seeds of very serious international trouble.

It is for the same reason that I am reluctant even to accept your principle that we ought to guarantee each

other's territorial integrity. I am sure we ought to guarantee, as far as it can be done, the observance of all treaties, and as a corollary we ought to provide means for their periodical reviewal, but I do not know that territorial integrity should be specially singled out from other treaty obligations and as it were crystallised for all time.

I hope these observations will not seem to you very desultory and unintelligible, but the subject is a difficult and complicated one.

Again thanking you very warmly for sending me your letter, Believe me,

Yours very sincerely

ROBERT CECIL

I am in hopes that this Government will adopt the Phillimore Report as a basis of discussion with their allies.

'*July 28, 1918:* [Conference between House and Reading.] The President,' wrote House in his diary, 'had told Reading of my letter to Lord Robert Cecil and of his intention to formulate a plan for a league of nations. I thereupon let Reading read my letter to Lord Robert and then read to him the greater part of the suggested Covenant for a League of Nations which I had sent the President.

'We discussed the matter at length. I desired to get Reading's legal mind to bear upon the different points. He expressed himself as pleased with the document as a whole. His feeling, however, was that unless Germany changed her form of government and its personnel, it would be useless to include her in the League. Reading thought the subject might be brought up in Parliament before it adjourned early in August and that the report of the Committee, of which Lord Phillimore is the head, might be published. I advised him to send a cable to-night, when he reached New York, asking that this should not be done. We do not want them to anticipate the President.'

Senator Root to Colonel House

CLINTON, NEW YORK
August 16, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I promised to give you in writing the substance of some things I said during the luncheon at your apartment some time ago.

The first requisite for any durable concert of peaceable nations to prevent war is a fundamental change in the principle to be applied to international breaches of the peace.

The view now assumed and generally applied is that the use of force by one nation towards another is a matter in which only the two nations concerned are primarily interested, and if any other nation claims a right to be heard on the subject it must show some specific interest of its own in the controversy. That burden of proof rests upon any other nation which seeks to take part if it will relieve itself of the charge of impertinent interference and avoid the resentment which always meets impertinent interference in the affairs of an independent sovereign state. This view was illustrated by Germany in July, 1914, when she insisted that the invasion of Serbia by Austria-Hungary was a matter which solely concerned those two States, and upon substantially that ground refused to agree to the conference proposed by Sir Edward Grey. The requisite change is an abandonment of this view, and a universal formal and irrevocable acceptance and declaration of the view that an international breach of the peace is a matter which concerns every member of the Community of Nations — a matter in which every nation has a direct interest, and to which every nation has a right to object.

These two views correspond to the two kinds of responsibility in municipal law which we call civil responsibility and criminal responsibility. If I make a contract with you and break it, it is no business of our neighbor. You can sue me or

submit, and he has nothing to say about it. On the other hand, if I assault and batter you, every neighbor has an interest in having me arrested and punished, because his own safety requires that violence shall be restrained. At the basis of every community lies the idea of organization to preserve the peace. Without that idea really active and controlling there can be no community of individuals or of nations. It is the gradual growth and substitution of this idea of community interest in preventing and punishing breaches of the peace which has done away with private war among civilized peoples.

The Monroe Doctrine asserted a specific interest on the part of the United States in preventing certain gross breaches of the peace on the American Continent; and when President Wilson suggested an enlargement of the Monroe Doctrine to take in the whole world, his proposal carried by necessary implication the change of doctrine which I am discussing. The change may seem so natural as to be unimportant, but it is really crucial, for the old doctrine is asserted and the broader doctrine is denied by approximately half the military power of the world, and the question between the two is one of the things about which this war is being fought. The change involves a limitation of sovereignty, making every sovereign state subject to the superior right of a community of sovereign states to have the peace preserved. The acceptance of any such principle would be fatal to the whole Prussian theory of the state and of government. When you have got this principle accepted openly, expressly, distinctly, unequivocally by the whole civilized world, you will for the first time have a Community of Nations, and the practical results which will naturally develop will be as different from those which have come from the old view of national responsibility as are the results which flow from the American Declaration of Independence compared with the results which flow from the Divine Right of Kings.

The second proposition which I made was that the public opinion of the free peoples of the world in favor of having peace preserved must have institutions through which it may receive effect. No lesson from history is clearer than this. Very strong public feeling may produce a mob which is simply destructive, or a multitude of expressions of opinion which get nowhere by themselves; but to accomplish anything affirmative some particular person must have delegated to him authority to do some particular thing in behalf of the multitude. The original forms of the institutions of government have grown from very simple beginnings developing to meet requirements from generation to generation. The important thing is that there are officers who have the right to act and the duty to act in doing things which are necessary to preserve the peace.

Some rudimentary institutions have already been developed by agreement among the nations. Provision has been made by the Hague Convention for machinery making it very easy to submit questions of international rights to a tribunal for decision. It has also been made easy to determine the truth when there is a dispute about facts through a Commission of Enquiry, as in the Dogger Bank case.

International usage arising under the concert of European powers has also made it a natural and customary thing for the powers to meet in conference when any serious exigency arises for the purpose of discussing the way to avoid general injury. All of these inchoate institutions, however — the Arbitral Tribunal, the Commission of Enquiry, the Conference of Nations — depend entirely upon individual national initiative. No one has any authority to invoke them in the name or interest of the Community of Nations which is interested in the preservation of peace. The first and natural step in the development of these institutions after the adoption of the new principle of community interest in the preservation of peace will be an agreement upon some one

or some group whose duty it will be to speak for the whole community in calling upon any two nations who appear to be about to fight to submit their claims to the consideration (I do not now say 'decision,' but consideration) of the Tribunal as it is now or may hereafter be organized, or the Commission of Enquiry, or the Conference, as the case may require. It will be exceedingly difficult for any nation which has explicitly acknowledged the community interest and right, to refuse such a demand in the name of the community, and it could not do so without clearly putting itself in the wrong in the eyes of the entire world. I do not say that it would be impossible for a nation to reject such a demand, but it would be much more difficult than it is now, and much more improbable; for example, the whole contention upon which Germany sought to save her face while she was using the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia as the occasion for going into a general war would be completely destroyed. Behind such a demand of course should stand also an agreement by the powers to act together in support of the demand made in their name and in dealing with the consequences of it.

The question how far that agreement should go brings me to the third proposition which I made, and that is that no agreement in the way of a league of peace or under whatever name should be contemplated which will probably not be kept when the time comes for acting under it. Nothing can be worse in international affairs than to make agreements and break them. It would be folly, therefore, for the United States in order to preserve or enforce peace after this War is over to enter into an agreement which the people of the United States would not regard as binding upon them. I think that observation applies to making a hard and fast agreement to go to war upon the happening of some future international event beyond the control of the United States. I think that the question whether the people of the

Country would stand by such an agreement made by the President and Senate would depend upon the way they looked at the event calling for their action at that future time when the event occurs — that they would fight if at that time they were convinced they ought to, and they would not fight if at that time they were convinced that they ought not to. It may be that an international community system may be developed hereafter which will make it possible to say 'We bind ourselves to fight upon the happening of some particular event,' but I do not think that system has so far developed that it is now practicable to make such an agreement. Of course, it may become so before this War is over. No one can tell. We are certainly rather nearer to that point than we were two or three years ago.

I think this covers what I said. I have not undertaken to add to it anything about disarmament, which I consider essential, nor about the necessity of wiping out the military autocracies who have brought on this War. I think that must be done in order to have secured peace. So long as Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs remain on the throne, we shall have to be perpetually on the alert against unrepentant professional criminals. Their agreements will always be worthless; their purposes will always be sinister; and, while we can make it much more difficult, we can never make it impossible for them to start again to shoot up the world.

Faithfully yours

ELIHU ROOT

Colonel House to Senator Root

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 23, 1918

DEAR SENATOR ROOT:

Fortunately, your letter of August 16 having to do with a Community of Nations came while the President was here. We read it together and discussed it in detail.

I do not believe there will be much difficulty in bringing our minds in harmony upon some plan. When I return to New York at the end of September I think a further exchange of views between us will be profitable.

I have given the subject considerable thought since we talked of it in the spring, and I have come to a fairly definite conclusion in my own mind. I have the report which the Phillimore Commission made to the British Government, and which I would like you to read if you have not already done so. It is a document which seems to me too weak to satisfy the hopes of the Entente world.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

III

'*August 14, 1918:* The White House telephoned,' wrote House in his diary, 'that the President would be here in the morning. It was short notice, but we at once notified Mrs. Coolidge¹ and everything is in readiness for their arrival to-morrow morning. The Secret Service men have been out from Boston, Associated Press and other newspaper people have been notified what to say and what not to say. The Presidential party will come by special train which will be placed on a siding at Magnolia station, and the entire crew will remain during the President's visit.

'*August 15, 1918:* The President and his party arrived this morning on schedule time, around nine o'clock. . . . The President was at breakfast when we arrived. I sat with him until he had finished. . . . He led the way to the Coolidge home and to the beautiful loggia overlooking the sea, and we at once plunged into a discussion of the League of Nations. I knew intuitively that this was the purpose of his visit. . . . He started off by saying that he had written the Platform

¹ The home of Mr. T. Jefferson Coolidge was put at the President's disposal during his visit.

for the Indiana Democratic Convention of the other day and received the report on it: "We put it through just as you wrote it except we cut your six pages down to three." "This," the President said, "is what I have done with your constitution of a league of nations."¹ He then proceeded to read it as he had rewritten it. As a matter of fact, he has cut but little except he has tried to reduce the number of articles to thirteen, his lucky number. To bring this about he has been compelled to have an addendum.

"He takes two or three of the first clauses and incorporates them into the "Preamble." He has cut out the Court. We were in absolute disagreement about this. . . . The balance of the document is about as I wrote it. The only change of note is that I provided for only two belligerent nations and he makes the machinery include two or more, which is as it should be."²

"We discussed the advisability of making a statement in regard to it, and he agreed that it would be best not to do so. He has delayed it so long that the British are pressing to put out the Phillimore Report, and it would not do to anticipate them since I have asked the British Government not to make the report public. The President gave even a better reason. He thought if it were published in advance of the Peace Conference it would cause so much criticism in this country, particularly by Senators of the Lodge type, that it would make it difficult to do what he has in mind at the Peace Conference. He also thought that some of the American group favorable to a league would feel that we had not gone far enough and others would feel that we had gone too far. He concluded that if a governmental report was made by any of the Allied nations at this time it would inevitably

¹ The President's draft was 10 printed lines shorter than House's; 210 in place of 220.

² House overlooks the important change that Wilson made in adding military sanctions to economic.

cause more or less friction and would increase the difficulties of getting a proper measure through at the Peace Conference. I am sure this is true just now. . . .

'The President thinks that a league of nations might be incorporated in the Peace Treaty. In our discussion I stated that in my opinion it seemed impracticable to think of the smaller nations as members of the league on equal terms with the larger ones. He dissented quite warmly and said to exclude them would be to go contrary to all our protestations concerning them. I agreed to this and said when I sat down to write the Covenant I had in mind the participation of every nation, both great and small. However, the difficulties were so apparent that I was afraid it was an idealistic dream that could not be made practical. There are fifty-odd nations, and of these there are not more than twelve at the outside that would do any serious fighting in the event of a great war, or be of service in fighting it, and yet the forty, under the plan we have drawn up and to which we both agree, could overrule and direct the twelve.

'The President was deeply concerned. . . . He wondered if we could not include all the nations that would be at the Peace Conference, with a tentative understanding that other nations might be taken in later.¹ . . .

'August 16, 1918: . . . When we [the President's party] drove up in two automobiles and went into the house,² a policeman on the beat eyed us with suspicion. After remaining in the house a few minutes the President, Grayson, and I walked out the back way, strolling around the grounds and taking a walk in the neighborhood. We did not know until after we returned that the policeman had followed us and had stopped one of the Secret Service men to tell of his suspicions. He said he knew the owners of the house were away, and having seen us drive up to the front door with

¹ Cf. above, p. 24.

² Of Mr. Randolph Tucker, Colonel House's son-in-law.

two machines, one of which he thought was for the "loot," and then come out the back way bareheaded, he was convinced something was wrong and was about to put us under arrest. The Secret Service man had some difficulty in making him believe that it was the President of the United States he had under suspicion.'

President Wilson used this visit at Magnolia, as he had his earlier visits, for complete relaxation and especially for separating himself from the detailed problems of war administration, so that he might readjust his perspective. Sir William Wiseman, who happened to be with House on the North Shore during the President's visit, made the following memorandum:

'Withdrawn for a brief space from the atmosphere of Washington, Wilson was able to discuss with House, and give his mind to, the broader questions of war aims and the League. I remember one afternoon in particular the President and Colonel House sat on the lawn in front of House's cottage with maps of Europe spread out before them, discussing ways and means of organizing Liberal opinion to break down the German military machine, and how the nations which had suffered from oppression might be safeguarded in the future. The Allied embassies in Washington were keenly interested and somewhat disturbed about the conferences at Magnolia. Rumors of peace overtures were flying around, and, with one excuse or another, various embassies tried to reach that part of the North Shore where they felt the destinies of Europe were being decided.'

Because of President Wilson's conviction that public discussion of the American and British plans for a League at this time would stimulate controversy rather than useful

suggestions, the British Government agreed to postpone publication of the Phillimore Report. Lord Reading, who was in England, cabled the existence of a strong demand for publication; he knew Wilson's desire to delay open debate upon the details of a League, and had urged it upon his Government. At Wilson's request, Colonel House drafted a telegram to Lord Reading, in conjunction with Sir William Wiseman under whose name it was sent, which explained the President's position in detail.

Sir William Wiseman to Lord Reading

[Cablegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 16, 1918

Saturday I showed the President a copy of your cable. Colonel House was present at the interview.

The President remarked that he was glad of an opportunity of further discussion because when he saw you he had not read the Phillimore Report. He told me that he does not intend to make any public statement at present regarding the Constitution of a League of Nations.

In the first place such a statement on his part would be a target for criticism here — one section of opinion declaring that he had gone too far and another that he had not gone far enough. The whole scheme would suffer by arousing such controversy at this time.

Further he has not yet determined in his own mind the best method of constituting the League. He has his ideas on the subject but not worked out in detail. He has two main principles in view: There must be a League of Nations and it must be virile.

The President does not favour the idea of appointing an American Committee similar to the Phillimore, but says he would like nothing better than to discuss the whole problem

perfectly frankly with Mr. Lloyd George. As this is impossible at present, he will be glad to discuss the matter with any one the British Government send to him.

I gather that the President does not altogether agree with the Phillimore Report. He thinks it is too indefinite and lacking that virility which is needed in a programme for which all supporters of the project must be called upon to fight with enthusiasm.

The President asked me to urge you to persuade the Government not to publish the Report — at any rate not at this time. He sees grave dangers in public discussions as to details and methods. Each nation might become committed to its own plan and find fundamental objections in the proposals of the others. Delicate questions of national sentiment and prejudice might be stirred up, and while all the difficult problems must eventually be faced, they should not now be allowed to endanger the solidarity of the nations fighting Germany. There can be no advantage but only danger in the official publication of conclusions which must be necessarily, at this stage, immature.

I hope that I have been able to convey to you the very earnest views which the President expressed. He has formed no hasty judgment, and his considered opinion is that the publication of official views regarding the Constitution and details of a League of Nations would greatly prejudice the success of the whole scheme.

The President asked Colonel House this morning whether I had cabled you and expressed himself as much relieved, feeling that you will appreciate his point of view and be able to persuade H.M.G. not to publish the report.

We should bear in mind that the Report would certainly cause considerable controversy in this country and it is doubtful whether the President could avoid expressing his opinion about it — in which event he would be bound to say that he could not endorse the report. This could be mag-

nified by mischief makers into an important divergence of view between the two Governments.

WISEMAN

Thus President Wilson succeeded in postponing public discussion of the details of a League, and he does not seem to have studied the problem with any care after this until his arrival at the Peace Conference. At some period previous to sailing for France in December, he took over the idea of mandatories to administer conquered territory in the name of the League.¹ But it was only after reaching Paris that he accepted the British suggestion of a Council in addition to the Assembly, as well as the whole series of articles providing for the League's supervision of international bureaux, of labor activities and the Red Cross, which ultimately were included in the four last articles of the final Covenant. At Paris also, as a result of the contributions of Lord Robert Cecil, General Smuts, Mr. Balfour, Sir Eric Drummond, and many others, the rather crude machinery of the League as planned in the House draft, which the President had accepted in his own first draft, was transformed and enormously improved.

It is not true, however, as has sometimes been asserted, that the President left for the Peace Conference without any specific plan for a League. Its essential features were sketched and a draft Covenant in his files long before he embarked upon the *George Washington*.

¹ Mr. Baker states (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, 1, 224-27) that the President took over the idea of mandatories from General Smuts after he reached Europe. He doubtless sharpened his ideas regarding the mandatory principle as a result of his study of General Smuts's pamphlet on the League, but he certainly had it in mind before he reached Europe. On December 10, on the *George Washington*, he explained his hope that territories conquered from the enemy, especially in backward portions of the world, should become the property of the League. 'Nothing stabilizes an institution so much,' he said, 'as the possession of property.' He argued at that time that these territories should be administered not by the Great Powers but by the smaller states, mentioning the Scandinavian in particular. [Notes made by C. S., December 10, 1918.]

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

If Germany was beaten, she would accept any terms. If she was not beaten he [President Wilson] did not wish to make terms with her.

Colonel House's Diary, October 15, 1918

I

WHILE President Wilson was on his way to Magnolia to discuss with Colonel House the first American draft of the Covenant, significant debates were taking place at the German General Headquarters at Spa. There were gathered the dignitaries, political and military, of the Central Powers: the Kaiser, von Hindenburg, Ludendorff, von Hertling, the Chancellor, and von Hintze, the new Foreign Secretary. On August 14 they were joined by the Emperor of Austria and his Foreign Minister, Burian.¹ Ludendorff confessed that he had given up hope of a crushing military triumph. The great German offensive of the spring had been stopped; Foch had taken the initiative and had driven the Germans back across the Marne and the Vesle. The British, on August 8, had begun an offensive which in his memoirs Ludendorff describes as the opening of 'the last phase.'

'I reviewed the military situation,' writes Ludendorff, 'the condition of the army, and the position of our allies, and explained that it was no longer possible by an offensive to force the enemy to sue for peace. Defense alone could hardly achieve this object, and so the termination of the war would have to be brought about by diplomacy. . . . The Emperor was very calm . . . and instructed him [the Foreign Secretary] to open up peace negotiations, if possible, through the medium of the Queen of the Netherlands.'²

¹ Czernin had resigned in April, following the disclosure of the secret peace negotiations with Prince Sixtus.

² *Ludendorff's Own Story*, II, 334-35.

No mention was made of surrender during the deliberations of the Crown Council. The powers given to von Hintze were limited by the maintenance of the war aims established in view of victory. Marshal Hindenburg expressed his hope that 'it would be possible to remain fixed on French territory, and thereby in the end enforce our will upon the enemy.'¹ But the military tide had plainly turned. It was with difficulty that the Austrians were persuaded not to issue a direct appeal to the belligerents for peace. Ludendorff complains in his memoirs of the sinking morale of the German nation behind the lines. The advance of the Allies continued. During the last of August and early September they pushed the Germans to the Aisne; the Franco-American attack of September 12 cleared the St. Mihiel salient; the Franco-British attack of September 22 pierced the Hindenburg line between St. Quentin and Cambrai. Ludendorff warned the Foreign Minister that there was no chance of victory by a sudden 'come-back.' On the 10th of September Hindenburg used the word 'immediate' in connection with the necessity of negotiations.²

As yet, however, the German leaders failed to realize how close the army and nation were to collapse. The Allied leaders were even further from that realization. They were without reliable information as to what was going on behind the lines in Germany. For all they knew the German forces might be retiring, as in 1917, to prepared positions from which they could be driven only by months of costly attacks. With the knowledge we now possess there was every reason for Allied optimism, but at the moment no one knew how long the Germans could hold out. On September 12 Lord Reading cabled to Wiseman from London, for House's information:

¹ *Preliminary History of the Armistice: Official Documents Published by the German National Chancellery by Order of the Ministry of State*, 19.

² *Ibid.*, 27.

'The general view among military chiefs in France is that with great effort the war might be ended in 1919 and that all energy should be concentrated in this direction. A definite policy to this effect has not yet been recorded or even agreed between all the Allies, but tendencies are in this direction.'

Only a week later there came news from the Macedonian front which suddenly inspired even the most cautious of Allied leaders with the feeling that their case was better than they had dared to hope. On September 17 the Allied forces north of Salonika attacked the Bulgars and Germans, drove them from defenses which had been reckoned impregnable, and in two days put them to headlong flight.

Since the early spring of 1918 the British and French had watched the increasing discontent of Bulgaria, and at various times entered into plans for arranging a separate peace. These failing, they had urged the United States to declare war upon the Bulgarians. 'It would be a severe blow to their confidence in the future,' Mr. Balfour cabled to House, 'if they once realized clearly that they were counted among the enemies of America.' The President desired to avoid a declaration of war. He laid emphasis upon the traditional American-Bulgar friendship, and he failed to see the value of a declaration as propaganda; would it not rather reaffirm the loyalty of the wavering Bulgarian people? On September 18 Sir William Wiseman brought to House another message from Mr. Balfour:

'You may inform the President for his personal and most confidential information that a general offensive is about to take place on the Macedonian front, and that it would, in my opinion, be of value if a threat could be conveyed to Bulgaria without delay, so as to weaken Bulgarian morale and resistance before the offensive matures.'

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, September 18, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am enclosing a telegram which has just come from Mr. Balfour to Wiseman.

There is a feeling in Entente circles that the Bulgarian Government are much strengthened by being able to announce that they are friends with the United States, and that the one thing they are afraid of is a declaration of war by the United States. They tell their countrymen that they have not only secured territorial expansion at the expense of Serbia and Greece but they have done so while keeping on good terms with the United States, which will mean after war reconstruction and financing.

If you desire to make a threat I would suggest that you give it as wide publicity in Bulgaria as possible, so that the effect desired on the people may be had. The Government would naturally conceal it if possible.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

But military events marched so rapidly that action by the United States was unnecessary. The entire Bulgarian front crumbled. German control in southeastern Europe was broken. The Salonika 'side-show' justified itself. On September 26 a Bulgarian officer appearing under a flag of truce at the headquarters of General Milne, commander of British forces in Macedonia, was referred to General Franchet d'Esperey, the Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces. He asked for a suspension of hostilities for forty-eight hours. The French general refused the armistice but agreed to receive authorized Bulgarian delegates. In the mean time the Bulgarian Minister at The Hague appealed to the American Minister to ask Wilson to use his good offices as intermediary

to obtain an armistice. The message reached Washington while President Wilson was on his way to New York, where he was to make his Liberty Loan speech; it was telephoned to Colonel House.

'September 27, 1918: I met the Presidential party at 1.20,' wrote House in his diary. 'There was a great throng around the Pennsylvania Station when we arrived, and a greater one when the President came out. We drove directly to the Waldorf Hotel, but before we left the train I had an opportunity to tell him of the Bulgarian *débâcle*. He was intensely interested. Gordon had read me all the cables over the telephone from Washington, and we brought the President to our apartment so that he might have them read to him over the private wire. . . .

'In coming up I had told the President of Lansing's idea that he should reply [to the appeal of the Bulgarian Minister] by saying he would intercede for an armistice, provided the Bulgarians would evacuate Serbia and permit the Allies access to Bulgaria in the event it was necessary to help Bulgaria defend her territory against the Central Powers. The President sat down at the desk and wrote the following:

"Appreciate the confidence reposed in me and am willing to urge an armistice upon the Entente if Bulgarian Government will agree now that the immediate terms of peace pending the final determinations of the general peace conference shall include the evacuation by the Bulgarian forces of Serbia and Macedonia and the Epirus and permission to the Entente Allies to enter Bulgaria if and when necessary to defend her territory against the Central Powers.

W. W."

'The President handed this to me for my opinion. I thought we did not know enough about conditions to specify the terms. Not only that, no Bulgarian Government would dare go before their people having accepted such terms. I

advised telling them he would be willing to act as they desired, provided they would leave it to his judgment as to the terms of the armistice.

'He argued the matter for a few minutes, saying he was afraid it would look like leaving too much to him. I replied that they would prefer this rather than having to consent to such terms as he had outlined; that the Government could go before the Bulgarian people claiming that he, the President, had not been fair with them; that they had reposed confidence in him believing he was a friend of Bulgaria. In other words, they would make whatever excuse they liked to their people. The President saw the force of this argument and wrote the following:

"I appreciate the confidence reposed in me and am willing to urge an armistice upon the Entente if the Bulgarian Government will authorize me to say that the conditions of the armistice are left to me for decision and that the Bulgarian Government will accept the conditions I impose. Otherwise, I should not be hopeful of result of mediation on my part at this juncture in so vital a matter."

The Bulgarian troops, however, were in such a hurry to surrender that they lacked time to avail themselves of the good offices of Wilson for which their Minister at The Hague had asked. On September 28 two Bulgarian delegates presented themselves at Franchet d'Esperey's headquarters and accepted terms which amounted to unconditional surrender: the demobilization of their army, evacuation of all Greek and Serbian territory, Bulgarian territory to be available for Allied operations and her means of transport placed at the disposal of the Allies, strategic points to be occupied by British, French, or Italian troops. On September 30 these terms were ratified by the Allied Governments, and the armistice was signed at Salonika

II

The downfall of Bulgaria threatened to open Austria-Hungary to the Allied advance, which during the succeeding weeks was rapidly pushed forward. It was accompanied by the good news of Allenby's victorious progress in Syria. Already on September 16 Austria had put forth a direct appeal for peace, immediately refused by Wilson because it included no definite statement of terms; it marked the increasing desperation of the Hapsburg Government. Germany's allies were breaking or had already given up the struggle.

The continued success of Allied armies, together with the increasing hope of a sudden German collapse, inevitably raised once more the problem of war aims. Colonel House recognized clearly the existence in Europe of a spirit quite inconsistent with Wilson's Fourteen Points, and he knew that strong pressure would be brought upon the Entente Governments to capitalize victory and to impose upon Germany crushing terms of peace. There was the danger that public opinion would be intoxicated by military triumph to such an extent that the promises of a just peace which Wilson had guaranteed would be forgotten.

During the summer very marked difference between the Allies and the United States developed regarding the economic policy to be adopted towards Germany after the war. President Wilson was well aware of the power of the economic weapons which the victorious Allies and America might utilize, and he was anxious to keep in line with the Allies so that politically an undivided front might be presented to the enemy; but he was convinced that to threaten Germany at this juncture would, in the diplomatic sense, be as unwise as the continuation of 'the war after the war' would be unjust. As Wiseman wrote later: 'He viewed with alarm the rising feeling among the Allies which was being communicated to the United States, that Germany should

be crushed economically after the war. Wilson and House foresaw the futility and danger of this policy, which was not realized until much later by the Allied leaders.' Hence the President asked Colonel House to intimate as much unofficially to the British Government. This House did through a cable which he and Wiseman prepared and which was sent over the name of the latter to Lord Reading.

Sir William Wiseman to Lord Reading

[Cablegram]

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
August 16, 1918

The President has asked me to cable you regarding the economic policy of the Allies toward Germany. He had understood that the Allied Governments decided they would not officially endorse the punitive trade policy advocated by the Paris Conference. He was disturbed, therefore, on reading the reports of Mr. Lloyd George's speech of July 31st to the National Union of Manufacturers, which seemed to recommend the crushing of Germany's trade after the war. I gather that the President's views on the subject are substantially as follows:

He fully appreciates the value of the economic weapon which the Allies, particularly Great Britain and the United States, possess, and he is in favour of using that weapon to the full in order to bring Germany to her senses and to secure that a just peace when signed will be scrupulously observed. He is convinced, however, that it is a great mistake to threaten Germany now with any kind of punitive post-war measures against her trade. In his view this threat is one of the strongest levers with which the German militarists suppress the growth of any Liberal movement in Germany. They point out, he thinks, to their people that the Allies, especially Great Britain, are manifestly jealous of Germany's commercial position, and that if the Allies are

not forced to accept a German peace they will crush Germany's trade. The President thinks we ought to adopt the line that we have no desire to deny Germany her fair share of the world's commerce, and that it is her own militarists who are ruining her trade by prolonging the war and obliging us to maintain a blockade. It is true that the Allies will come to the Peace Conference practically controlling the supply of the world's raw material, but there will be no need to advertise that fact or to threaten any one. Every one — especially the Germans — will be quite aware of the facts. For your own private information, I may tell you that the President will try to get Congress to give powers to the Executive to control American raw-material exports for a period of years after peace. While this would not be openly aimed at Germany, it would be a formidable weapon for the United States to bring to the Peace Conference.

The President hopes you will take this up with the Prime Minister so that Great Britain and the United States can arrive at some common policy on this important and far-reaching question.

Colonel House says he fears that if the Allies persist in making similar statements regarding their economic policy, the President will feel obliged, as he did once before,¹ to make some statement disassociating this country with that policy.

WISEMAN

It was obvious that this divergence of opinion between the Allies and the United States regarding economic policy was merely an indication of a fundamental difference of attitude towards the principles of the peace settlement as a whole. It was important that before Germany became helpless some arrangement should be reached. During the spring and summer Colonel House had remained convinced of the unwisdom of pressing the Allies to accept Wilson's earlier statement of

¹ See Volume III, p. 364.

peace conditions, lest the controversy which might result should injure the coöperation of effort that was essential if German defeat were to be assured. But by early September House reached the conclusion that it was time to make an attempt to secure Allied approval of Wilson's terms. He laid especial stress upon the value of agreeing upon a League of Nations, which he contended might be a going concern when the Peace Conference gathered.

Colonel House's personal fondness for Clemenceau, which later ripened into real friendship, did not blind him to the fact that the 'Father of Victory' was not likely to sympathize with the Wilsonian programme, and his admiration for those qualities in Lloyd George which had stiffened the determination of the Entente in the black days of the spring did not remove his fear that the British Prime Minister might yield to reactionary demands in Great Britain.

Colonel House to the President

MAGNOLIA, MASSACHUSETTS
September 3, 1918

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Do you not think the time has come for you to consider whether it would not be wise to try to commit the Allies to some of the things for which we are fighting?

As the Allies succeed, your influence will diminish. This is inevitable. By the time of the Peace Conference you will be nearing the end of your second term and this too will be something of a challenge to those, both at home and abroad, who have the will to oppose you. Therefore I believe that you should commit the Allies now to as much of your programme as possible. It is not probable that the personnel of the Allied Governments will be changed if things continue to go well. . . . This would mean a hostile rather than a sympathetic membership.

While the liberals are largely with you at present, I have a

feeling that you are not so strong among Labor circles of either France or England as you were a few months ago. Such support, in the nature of things, is uncertain and erratic, and I do not believe will be steadfast or powerful enough to compel the reactionaries in authority to yield at the Peace Conference to American aims.

Could not a plan be thought out by which the Entente would be committed to certain things for which we stand and which are so essential, from our point of view, to the reconstruction of the world?

If the group I have mentioned come to the Congress flushed with victory, no appeal that you can make over their heads will be successful. In each country there will be men of vision and loftiness of purpose who will rally to your support, but they will be in the minority and their voices will be heard faintly by the great exultant throng intoxicated not alone by victory but by the thought of freedom from war.

If you read what Sir William Tyrrell said . . . in the recent letters I sent you, you will be interested in his argument for forming a League of Nations now. It is not what Tyrrell says that impresses me so much as the thought of what may be done at this time with a League of Nations and kindred things which may not be possible of accomplishment at the Peace Conference.

To agree with France, England, Italy, and Japan upon the Covenant for a League of Nations would not prevent its incorporation into the peace treaty. It would rather make it the more certain. The Central Powers could not object to a statement by the Allies as to a League of Nations and their conception of what it should be, and stating at the same time that they would propose its incorporation in the peace treaty. If such a document as we have in mind should be accepted and made public, it could not have any but a good effect in the Central Powers and should shorten the war. If the Cove-

nant were published in agreement with England, France, Italy, and Japan, there would be no opposition in this country worth mentioning.

If you are to take your Western trip, many things could be said in your speeches to clear the way for further action. I shall hope to be in Washington before you leave and to talk these things over in person.

With deep affection,

Devotedly yours

E. M. HOUSE

President Wilson did not allow himself to be shaken from his determination not to proceed to an agreement upon the specific terms of a constitution for a League. But he was impressed by House's argument that the time had come to pledge the Allies to his principles and to the renunciation of imperialistic peace proposals. He pondered means by which this could be accomplished. Direct negotiations with the British and French for such a purpose, which was the method House had in mind, he discarded. After a delay of three weeks he summoned House to Washington, to discuss the possibility of an address which would define the principles of a desirable peace settlement and to which the Allies might be invited to give their approval. Colonel House noted in his diary on September 24 the gist of his talk with the President.

'I am just back from Washington. When I arrived there Sunday morning and had had breakfast, the President came to my room. . . .

'He had been thinking, he said, of the letter I wrote him from Magnolia September 3, and he had written a speech which he thought would cover the case provided he could get the Allies to agree to it. He wished me to read the speech so

as to get my judgment of it and also as to when and where it should be delivered. He said Benjamin Strong, of the Federal Reserve Bank in New York, had asked him to open the Liberty Loan drive with a speech in New York, but he had declined because he did not consider it a suitable occasion. He was wondering if the Economic Club of New York would do.

'I thought the Liberty Loan drive would be an admirable occasion. It could be arranged for Friday night of this week. He could devote one sentence to the Liberty Loan, telling how necessary it was to raise the money because this country had in mind certain things which should be done to prevent future wars. He could then launch out on his subject and not refer to the loan again. It could be done as he did it in Baltimore last spring.

'The President agreed to this and asked me to make arrangements. We discussed who should speak with him, the length of time his speech should take, when it should begin and when it should end.

'After lunch the President and I went to his library, where he read his speech. . . . He gave me the speech to read again on Monday, after he had made changes, and it seemed to me without objections excepting one word, for which he substituted another. The address concerns the League of Nations and, while he does not go into it to the core, he makes it clear the kind of league we must have.

'We discussed the sentiment for this measure as it exists throughout the world. I had some data upon this subject which I gave him to read aloud. In addition I had the French conception of what a league should be, which he had not seen. . . .

'The President spoke of politics in general and expressed an earnest desire that a Democratic Congress should be elected. He said he intended making a speech or writing a letter about two weeks before the elections, asking the

people to return a Democratic House. I did not express any opinion as to the wisdom of this.¹ . . .

'After dinner Sunday night, we talked of history, literature, art, and what influences brought forth the best. The President called attention to the fact that when Italy was broken up into small kingdoms and republics, literature and art flourished best, and that in England during the Elizabethan period, when the country had become stabilized but when adventure was still rife, Shakespeare and his contemporaries did their best work. We wondered what was in store for America in this direction and when it would come, if ever.

'September 25, 1918: I telephoned Frank Cobb and asked him to come by this morning, in order to discuss the kind of editorial that should be written after the President's Liberty Loan address.'

Wilson's speech of September 27 was given as planned, at the Metropolitan Opera House, as the opening of the

¹ When House advised with the President, silence invariably expressed dissent. Nothing more was said to House about this, and he was on the Atlantic when the appeal was issued. On October 25 he wrote in his diary:

'I have been greatly disturbed by the President's appeal for a Democratic Congress. All he says is true, but it is a political error to appeal for a partisan Congress. If he had asked the voters to support members of Congress and the Senate who had supported the American war aims, regardless of party, he would be in a safe position. In this way he would avoid partisan feeling and would win no matter which party controlled Congress, provided those selected had been loyal to our war aims. Here again, the President has taken a great gamble. If it turns out well, he will be acclaimed a bold and forceful leader; if it turns out badly, an opposite view will be taken.

'It seems to me a needless venture, and if I had been at home I should have counseled against it. He mentioned, the last time I was in Washington, that he thought of making an appeal. I made no reply, which always indicates to him my disapproval. As a matter of fact, we were so absorbed with the German notes that I brushed the question aside and gave it but little attention. I am sorry now that I did not discuss it with him to a finish.'

Liberty Loan drive. Governor Benjamin Strong presided. It proved to be a speech only second in importance to that of the Fourteen Points. It was directed in part against the military rulers of Germany, in part against Allied imperialists, in part as an appeal to the German people. It was at about this time that the propaganda, directed by Northcliffe and based upon the President's speeches, began to have its effect in Germany; discontent spread from behind the lines up to the troops in the trenches, as Ludendorff's memoirs make plain. At the time, those in Allied countries could only speculate as to what the effect of the propaganda might be.

President Wilson began his speech by insisting upon the need of clarifying war issues, which must be settled 'with a full and unequivocal acceptance of the principle that the interest of the weakest is as sacred as the interest of the strongest.' There could be no bargain or compromise with the Governments of the Central Empires. 'We cannot "come to terms" with them.' But the Allies also must realize that obligations rested upon them:

'If it be indeed and in truth,' said Wilson, 'the common object of the Governments associated against Germany and of the nations whom they govern, as I believe it to be, to achieve by the coming settlements a secure and lasting peace, it will be necessary that all who sit down at the peace table shall come ready and willing to pay the price, the only price, that will procure it; and ready and willing, also, to create in some virile fashion the only instrumentality by which it can be made certain that the agreements of the peace will be honored and fulfilled.

'That price' is impartial justice in every item of the settlement, no matter whose interest is crossed; and not only impartial justice, but also the satisfaction of the several peoples whose fortunes are dealt with. That indispensable

instrumentality is a League of Nations formed under covenants that will be efficacious. . . . And, as I see it, the constitution of that League of Nations and the clear definition of its objects must be a part, is in a sense the most essential part, of the peace settlement itself.'

The President then went on to a redefinition of the underlying principles, stated in view of the special circumstances of the moment:

'First, the impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that plays no favorites and knows no standard but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.

'Second, no special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all.

'Third, there can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the league of nations.

'Fourth, and more specifically, there can be no special, selfish economic combinations within the league and no employment of any form of economic boycott or exclusion except as the power of economic penalty by exclusion from the markets of the world may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control.

'Fifth, all international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world.'

The President concluded with an appeal to the Allied leaders which he evidently hoped might fulfill the purpose that House had in mind when he urged steps to win their acquiescence in Wilsonian principles:

'I believe that the leaders of the Governments with which we are associated will speak as they have occasion, as plainly as I have tried to speak. I hope that they will feel free to say whether they think that I am in any degree mistaken in my interpretation of the issues involved or in my purpose with regard to the means by which a satisfactory settlement of those issues may be obtained. Unity of purpose and of counsel are as imperatively necessary in this war as was unity of command in the battlefield. . . .'

'*September 27, 1918*: Governor Strong called for the President at 8.15,' wrote House in his diary, 'and our entire party motored to the Metropolitan Opera House. It was an historic occasion. The house was beautifully decorated, and was crowded with the most important people of New York, including the Governor of the State and other officials. Governor Strong made an excellent speech. . . . He did not finish writing his speech until late this afternoon and yet he delivered it with but few references to his notes. Not being a public speaker, this seemed to me quite a feat of memory.'

'The President read his address. Most of it seemed somewhat over the heads of his audience, the parts which were unimportant bringing the most vigorous applause.'

'We are all wondering how the press will receive it. After the speaking the President asked me to ride with him to the Waldorf. We went to the sitting-room and discussed the address for some minutes. He was flushed with excitement and altogether pleased with the day's effort.'

The applause given the President's speech during its delivery was echoed throughout the country, but generally with the same lack of discrimination that House observed. America was naturally teeming with the emotions of war and feared above everything else to be caught in a German 'peace-trap.' Hence it rejoiced when the President declared

that there could be no bargaining with those in power in Germany, and looked upon the rest of the speech as rather abstract. Abroad, liberal leaders were enthusiastic and more discriminating. Lord Grey sent messages of warm congratulation to House, and Lord Robert Cecil despatched a special cable.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

[Cablegram]

LONDON, September 28, 1918

If not improper I should be very glad if you could convey to President Wilson my personal deep appreciation of his speech of last night. It is, if I may say so, the finest description of our war aims yet uttered, and will give us all renewed courage to face horrors of war.

ROBERT CECIL

Any approval of Wilson's speech of September 27 expressed by Allied leaders was merely unofficial. The address helped to crystallize public opinion upon liberal war aims, and it was ultimately accepted, together with the speech of the Fourteen Points, as expressing the principles of the peace settlement to which both the Allies and Germany agreed. But so far as the speech was designed to secure an immediate unification of Allied policy, it failed, for the Entente Powers took no step to endorse officially Wilson's statement of policy. Some days later the *London Daily News* pleaded for such an endorsement:

'It is unfortunate that this critical moment finds the Allies without an agreed and declared policy, and within the last week or two that obvious requirement has been put forward in quarters hitherto hostile to a declaration of aims. . . . We can no longer dwell in the atmosphere of vague phrases. We must say whether President Wilson speaks for

us or for himself alone. . . . There is no policy before the world except that of the President, and there is no other policy that would be tolerated by the democracy of any allied country. Its immediate endorsement is vital.'¹

Another month passed, however, before the European Allies finally agreed to accept Wilsonian principles as the basis of the peace, and then only after prolonged negotiations with Colonel House as the President's representative. The event which compelled the Allies and the United States to reach agreement was the German demand for an armistice.

III

For some weeks the German Foreign Secretary had been vainly seeking the mediation of a neutral Power through whom peace negotiations might be inaugurated. As the desperate nature of the military situation was realized, the German military authorities themselves approved the suggestion that President Wilson should be approached.² On October 1, Ludendorff urged haste: 'To-day the troops are holding their own; what may happen to-morrow cannot be foreseen. . . . The line might be broken at any moment and then our proposal would come at the most unfavorable time. . . . Our proposal must be forwarded immediately from Berne to Washington. The army could not wait forty-eight hours longer.'³

At Berlin a new Government was in process of formation under the chancellorship of Prince Max of Baden and with

¹ *Daily News* editorial, October 8, 1918.

² On September 21, Lersner telegraphed from General Headquarters to the Foreign Office: 'General Ludendorff has asked me whether Your Excellency intended to approach America on the subject of peace negotiations through Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg at Berne.' *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 34.

³ *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 40, 41, 42.

the approval of the Reichstag. The Prince was something of a parlor liberal, and the concurrence of the Reichstag gave to the new Government a sort of parliamentary similitude, which, it was hoped, would satisfy Wilson's demand for the overthrow of the old German régime. Prince Max, who formally became Chancellor on October 4, was confused by the sharpness of the army's demand for peace, which was reiterated even before the parliamentary crisis was settled. He asked for delay. But the High Command was all the more insistent for immediate negotiations. On October 3, Hindenburg telegraphed to Max: 'The situation is daily growing more acute and may force the Supreme Army Command to very serious decisions. Under these circumstances it is imperative to bring the struggle to an end in order to spare the German people and their allies useless sacrifice. Every day's delay costs the lives of thousands of brave soldiers.'¹

The Chancellor yielded and on October 5 sent through the Swiss Government a note to President Wilson, urging him to invite the belligerents to enter peace negotiations on the basis of the Fourteen Points and to conclude an armistice at once. The Austro-Hungarian Government associated itself with the German plea.

Colonel House received the news by telephone from Washington, with a request from the President for his advice. It was hard to believe that the demand for an armistice really meant that the Germans were ready to surrender, despite their offer to accept the Fourteen Points and subsequent conditions of Wilson; it was impossible to grant an armistice without adequate guarantees that it would not be used to save the German army. Yet an abrupt refusal might stiffen the waning determination of the German people and prolong the war unnecessarily. House replied to Wilson's request

¹ *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 48.

with a telegram and a letter. The President had already intimated that he expected to send him to Paris at once to take part in Allied deliberations.

Colonel House to the President

[Telegram]

NEW YORK, *October 6, 1918*

I would suggest making no direct reply to the German note. A statement from the White House saying, 'The President will at once confer with the Allies regarding the communication received from the German Government,' should be sufficient.

I would advise that you ask the Allies to confer with me in Paris at the earliest opportunity. I have a feeling that they will want to throw the burden on you,¹ but I hope to be able to show them how unwise this would be. They should accept their full responsibility.

If the Entente permit this opportunity to go by and if the German resistance should stiffen, I am confident that there would be such a demand for peace this winter in those countries that their Governments would be compelled to give Germany better terms than could now be made.

EDWARD HOUSE

NEW YORK, *October 6, 1918*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

It is stirring news that comes to-day. An armistice such as the Germans and Austrians ask for seems to me impossible, and yet a refusal should be couched in such terms as to leave the advantage with you.

If you could get the Central Powers to accept the terms of the note which you sent from here to Bulgaria, it would, I

¹ Colonel House was in error in this supposition. The diary of Sir Henry Wilson indicates that the Allies feared rather lest President Wilson might make decisions without consultation with them.

believe, place you in the best possible position. The Germans will want immediate action and will probably suggest many expedients looking to an early preliminary conference. Our position, I think, should be one of delay without seeming so.

With Foch hammering on the West and with you driving the diplomatic wedge deeper, it is within the range of possibilities that the war may be over by the end of the year. . . .¹

With deep affection, I am

Your devoted

E. M. HOUSE

Opinion was general that the German offer was a trap designed to catch Wilson in a 'negotiated peace,' which would save Germany from defeat. The American press spoke of it almost unanimously as a 'maneuver.' Despatches from abroad indicated that Allied opinion expected and hoped that the President would send back a brusque refusal to consider an armistice. 'Germany's peace offer,' said the *Tribune*, October 8, 'was peremptorily spurned to-day in the Senate. In spirited discussion of the latest enemy proposals, Senators participating in a two hours' debate declared it an insidious attack and voiced a demand for its immediate rejection. . . . The speakers were unanimous in declaring that a crushing military victory must be preliminary to peace negotiations.' Little did the Senators realize that on the testimony of the German High Command the Allies had already won the victory.

'Don't you think,' suggested Senator Lodge, 'that the plain English of it is that an armistice now would mean the loss of the war?' 'I do not think that is too strong a statement,' replied Senator Poindexter.

¹ House had just received a cable from Frazier, of October 5, who reported of an interview with Foch: 'The Marshal seemed delighted . . . and said, "We are on the slope of victory, and victory has sometimes a way of galloping."'

On Monday, October 7, House received by telephone a call to Washington. He left the same afternoon and arrived in the capital to find the President troubled, keenly aware of the danger of weakening the military position of the Allies by failing to secure adequate guarantees, but determined not to destroy the chance of negotiations through a categorical refusal to consider Germany's request. House emphasized the need of insisting upon the most ironclad guarantees from Germany, before agreeing to take up the question of an armistice with the Allies. He summarized the discussion in his diary of October 9:

'I arrived at the White House as the clock was striking nine o'clock. . . . The President met me and we went into his study. He said he had asked Lansing to come over and he arrived within a few minutes. The President had prepared his reply to the German Chancellor, Prince Maximilien of Baden, and read it to us.¹ He seemed much disturbed when I expressed a decided disapproval of it. I did not believe the country would approve of what he had written. After arguing the matter some half hour or more, he said that I might be able to write something and embody what I had in mind, but he had to confess his inability to do so. . . .

'After breakfast on Tuesday, Dr. Grayson came in with the expectation of playing golf with the President. When I had finished breakfast, the President appeared and announced that he had given up the idea of going out and asked me to go with him to his study. We read what the papers had to say; I called attention to what the French Socialists' Convention said upon the subject in Paris, and the comments of the Manchester *Guardian* and London *Daily*

¹ 'The President's first draft of a reply to Germany was mild in tone and did not emphasize the need of guarantees providing for thoroughgoing acceptance of Wilson's peace conditions.' This sentence is found in a memorandum later [1922] drafted by Colonel House.

News.¹ He, on his part, read me the debate which took place in the Senate Monday.

'He then began to amend his draft and before he finished with it the next day, there was not much left of the original. He worked on it steadily until nearly one o'clock Monday night. I then suggested we leave it until morning. He replied that he had thought of playing golf, as he had had no exercise either on Sunday or Monday and was feeling the need of it. I advised him to go to the links, and disagreed with him as to the necessity for haste in giving an answer. He evidently wished to have it ready for the Tuesday morning papers if possible, and certainly not later than the editions Tuesday afternoon.

'I took this occasion to tell him I thought his answer to the last Austrian note was a mistake, not only in the celerity with which it was answered but also the manner of it. He said, 'What would you have done?' I replied that I would have answered it in some such way as his speech in New York, September 27. . . .

'I found the President's viewpoint had changed during the night. . . . He did not seem to realize before, the nearly unanimous sentiment in this country against anything but unconditional surrender.² He did not realize how war-mad

¹ Both represented the liberal opinion in England from which Wilson expected to draw support. The *Daily News* editorial chimed closely with Wilson's own thoughts: 'President Wilson has insisted that no peace can be made which rests on the word of the military rulers of Germany. . . . Prince Max . . . asks the President, in effect, to treat not with the Kaiser and Ludendorff but with the people of Germany. . . . Militarism and the doctrine of might are repudiated, and moral law is accepted as the gospel of international relationships. President Wilson and the Allies will want guarantees of the reality of this vast revolution. . . . The world will await the reply of President Wilson with confidence in its wisdom. . . .' On the other hand the diary of Sir Henry Wilson makes clear that such confidence was by no means universal. 'Am certain,' he wrote on October 6, 'that a few good home truths would do the President good.' Callwell, *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, II, 134.

² In support of this view the *New York Times*, on October 8, published a despatch from London: 'Any idea that the proposal for an armistice

our people have become. This had to be taken into consideration, but not, of course, to the extent of meeting it where it was wrong.

'The President thought if such an offer had been made by a reputable government, it would be impossible to decline it. After he had gotten the note into its final form, he suggested sending for Tumulty to try it out on him. Tumulty had just written the President urging that he should not give in in any particular but make a decided refusal. Tumulty's letter and the note were not in harmony, and we were therefore anxious to see what he would think of it.¹ Much to the surprise of both of us, Tumulty thought the country would accept the note favorably, not enthusiastically at first, but that it would appeal to the sober-minded and, later, to every one.

'The President was not happy over this effort. . . . That it has taken with the public as well as it has, makes me content.'

The reply did not indeed fulfill expectations. On Tuesday morning the *New York Times* announced: 'The reply of President Wilson to the Austro-German peace proposals will be a decided rejection, in the convinced opinion of Washington.' Wilson did not, however, reject the proposal; he intimated rather that the United States was ready to consider it seriously, only the Central Powers must first furnish adequate guarantees: a clear-cut agreement to accept the Fourteen Points and subsequent addresses of the President as the basis of the peace; the assurance that the Chancellor could find favorable consideration for a moment in Washington is scouted. According to *The Evening News*, both Lloyd George and Clemenceau are of the opinion that the proposal to suspend military operations, which is regarded everywhere as impelled by military necessity, and a scheme by which Germany hoped to be able to extricate and regroup her armies, ought to have been addressed to Marshal Foch. . . .'

¹ Mr. Tumulty's letter is published in his *Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him*, 315.

spoke in the name of the German people and not of those who so far had been responsible for the conduct of the war; finally, evacuation of invaded territories.

President Wilson has often been praised, notably by André Tardieu, for the political astuteness with which he met the German peace offer, an offer designed by Ludendorff, at least, as a means to save the German army. It was, however, not so much astuteness as a simple adherence to his principles. This doctrinaire method defeated the more experienced diplomats of the Central Powers and had all the effects of diplomatic finesse. The negotiations were maintained and nothing of military value was conceded to Germany.

IV

The best evidence that simplicity may be regarded as a capital virtue in diplomacy is to be found in the consternation that greeted the reception of Wilson's note in German Headquarters. The Ministers, having started negotiations, did not, in view of the popular demand for peace, dare break them off. But the Army Command, which had demanded their inauguration evidently hoping that Wilson would agree at once to an armistice, were embarrassed. A breathing-space they must have, but they were not prepared to yield to the conditions which Wilson seemed to suggest.

'I do not fear a catastrophe,' said Colonel Heye, with the approval of Ludendorff, 'but I want to save the army, so that we can use it as a means of pressure during the peace negotiations.'¹

Thus the German army leaders confessed what the Allies suspected: the Germans wanted an armistice in order to save time, troops, and supplies. Scarcely veiled, this hope appeared in the answer to Wilson's note which the Germans sent on October 12. They accepted all three of the Presi-

¹ *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 55.

dent's conditions, but as to the process of evacuation they suggested that there should be preliminary negotiations which ought to be handled by a mixed commission. Herein lay the trap. If the President agreed to suspend hostilities while the mixed commission debated the conditions of evacuation, Ludendorff would have time to withdraw his armies and escape the devastating pressure of Foch. The snare was laid in full view; even American inexperience in European diplomacy was not deceived.

President Wilson had come to New York the day before the German reply was sent, and the news of it reached him while at dinner on the 13th. To the Colonel it seemed clear that Germany was delivered into Allied hands, since after going so far the German leaders could not draw back, no matter what conditions the President might impose.

'October 13, 1918: We dined with the President and Mrs. Wilson at the Waldorf Hotel,' wrote House in his diary. 'Just before dinner was announced, Tumulty came in with the news that Germany had accepted the President's terms. The Military Intelligence Bureau had telephoned it over from Washington. We wondered whether the news was authentic, but concluded from its construction that it was. When we went in to the table the President wrote me a little note in which he said, "Tell Mrs. W." and signed it "W. W." . . .

'After dinner we went almost immediately to the Italian Fête at the Metropolitan Opera House. There was an enormous crowd which cheered the President with much enthusiasm. I was so stirred by the news that had come from Berlin that I could not listen to the programme. Tumulty and I went to the Director's Room in the Opera House, called up Washington and received confirmation from Frank Polk and the *Washington Post*. Shortly after ten o'clock I returned home. . . . Frank Polk called over the telephone

at 10.30 (over the private wire), and we had a long talk. It was decided that Joe Grew should keep in touch with the Swiss Legation and let us know the official text as soon as it came.

'I did not try to sleep for a long while, for it seemed to me that the war was finished, certainly finished if we have the judgment to garner victory.'

House returned to Washington with the President, who regarded the moment as one of real crisis in the war and insisted on keeping House by his side for consultation. Mr. Wilson was determined to issue his reply without loss of time; every hour saved might also save innumerable lives. Wilson was clear that he would avoid any discussion with the Germans as to the technical question of evacuation; that must be left to Allied military leaders. Germany must not be allowed to maneuver into a position where she could renew the war. But the reply must be sufficiently encouraging to the Germans to bring negotiations to a successful and immediate culmination. Colonel House's diary records the President's point of view.

'*October 15, 1918*: Yesterday was one of the stirring days of my life. The President and I got together directly after breakfast. I never saw him more disturbed. He said he did not know where to make the entrance in order to reach the heart of the thing. He wanted to make his reply final so there would be no exchange of notes. It reminded him, he said, of a maze. If one went in at the right entrance, he reached the center, but if one took the wrong turning, it was necessary to go out again and do it over. He said that many times in making extemporaneous speeches he had gone into the wrong entrance and had to flounder out as best he could. . . .

'I thought he should make one condition to a discussion

of armistice, and that was the immediate cessation of all atrocities both on land and sea. He agreed to this and it stands in the note.

'He went into the question of the German Government and decided to use what he said in his Fourth of July speech about autocracies. . . . We were anxious not to close the door, and yet desired to make the note as strong as the occasion required. He fell back time and again on the theory offered when the last note was written: that was, if Germany was beaten, she would accept any terms. If she was not beaten, he did not wish to make terms with her. At the same time, neither the President nor I desired to make a vengeful peace. Neither did he desire to have the Allied armies ravage Germany as Germany has ravaged the countries she has invaded. The President was especially insistent that no stain of this sort should rest upon the Allied arms. He is very fine in this feeling and I am sorry he is hampered in any way by the Allies and the vociferous outcry in this country. It is difficult to do the right thing in the right way with people clamoring for the undesirable and impossible.

'The President soon formulated the points which appear in the note, and he then decided to send for Lansing, Baker, and Daniels to hear their reactions. . . . Lansing and Baker arrived first and discussed the note for a half hour before Daniels came. . . .'

Late in the afternoon of the 14th the note was sent. It did not follow the demand for 'unconditional surrender' which appeared in most of the Metropolitan and Eastern newspapers and on the floor of the Senate; but it outlined distinctly the guarantees which were necessary before Wilson would pass the request for an armistice on to the Allies. There could be no mixed commission to negotiate the terms of evacuation. That 'must be left to the judgment and advice of the military advisers of the Government of the

United States and the allied Governments.' No armistice would be granted which did not provide 'absolutely satisfactory safeguards and guarantees of the maintenance of the present military supremacy of the armies of the United States and of the Allies in the field.' No armistice would be granted so long 'as the armed forces of Germany continue the illegal and inhuman practices which they persist in.' The note concluded with the warning that the whole character of the peace would depend upon the character of the German Government. 'It is indispensable that the Governments associated against Germany should know beyond a peradventure with whom they are dealing.'

'In a single page,' writes Tardieu, 'the whole poor scaffolding of the German Great General Staff is overthrown. The armistice and peace are not to be means of delaying a disaster and of preparing revenge. On the main question itself the reply must be Yes or No! If it is no, war will continue, as it has gone on for the last three months, by Allied victories. If it is yes, the military capitulation must be immediate and complete by the acceptance pure and simple of terms which will be fixed by the military advisers of the Allies alone.'¹

Wilson's diplomacy compelled a categoric reply, and for a week the German leaders debated. Ludendorff, who had first demanded the armistice, now recoiled before the logical development of the situation. Brought to Berlin on the 17th, he asked for reënforcements.

'Before accepting the conditions of this note, which are too severe,' he told the Government, 'we should say to the enemy: Win such terms by fighting for them. . . . I believe now as before, that if it is in any way possible, we must bring

¹ Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 54.

about negotiations for an armistice. But we should only enter upon such armistice negotiations as will permit an orderly evacuation of the country — consequently a respite of at least two or three months. Further we should not accept any conditions that would appear to make the resumption of hostilities impossible. That this is the intention, we cannot fail to see from the note. The terms are meant to put us out of the fight. . . . We should not break off with Wilson abruptly. On the contrary say: "Just tell us, what are we to do anyway? If you demand anything that is contrary to our national honor, if you want to render us incapable of fighting, then the answer is certainly, No."”¹

To Ludendorff's plea that acceptance of Wilson's note would leave Germany helpless, von Hindenburg added a warning sent by telephone to the Chancellor, on October 20: 'Even if we should be beaten, we should not really be worse off than if we were to accept everything at present.'²

But the Ministers thought otherwise. If, as the army chiefs had insisted, the situation was dangerous at the beginning of October, it was very much worse at the end of the month. The Ministers regarded Ludendorff's judgment as erratic. The Foreign Secretary wrote that he had received 'intimations from a most impartial source, according to which the hopes expressed yesterday by General Ludendorff are not shared even by his *entourage*.'³ The concentric attack of Foch threatened a complete disaster to the retreating German armies. A fresh army was ready to launch an attack in Lorraine. There were no reënforcements for Ludendorff, no hope of raising the national morale so as to stage a 'back-to-the-wall' resistance of the German people. The Ministers decided to yield and on October 20

¹ *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, 98-99.

² *Ibid.*, 105.

³ *Ibid.*, 104.

agreed to all of Wilson's conditions. The terms of the armistice would be left to the military advisers of the Allies; orders had been given to submarines to spare passenger ships, and to the retreating forces to respect private property; arbitrary power had been abolished in Germany and the Government was free from military influence. 'This time,' says Tardieu, 'Germany, bound hand and foot is rivetted to Wilsonian dialectics. Since she does not break, she gives herself up.'¹

On October 23 the President communicated his correspondence with Germany to the Allies, at the same time repeating in a last note to Germany the fundamental conditions which she had accepted. It was now for the Allies, in conference at Paris and Versailles, to determine whether there should be an armistice and, if so, what its terms; to determine also whether, like Germany, they would agree to accept the Fourteen Points as the basis of the peace.

v

Colonel House was already nearing the shores of France when this final interchange of notes took place. Whether or not the war would end must depend upon the deliberations of the Supreme War Council, and it was vital that a political representative of the United States should sit in the approaching sessions. Since House's visit to Europe in November of the preceding year, the United States had been represented only in purely military questions, by General Bliss. As soon as it appeared probable that the correspondence with Germany would actually result in serious consideration of an armistice, President Wilson notified Colonel House that he was to leave at once for Versailles to represent the United States. He gave him a commission as 'Special Representative of the Government of the United States of America,' and also a letter appointing him the 'personal representative' of the President, a virtual power of attorney.

¹ Tardieu, *op. cit.*, 58.

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WASHINGTON, *October 14, 1918**To Whom It May Concern*

Mr. Edward M. House, the bearer of this letter, is my personal representative and I have asked him to take part as such in the conferences of the Supreme War Council and in any other conferences in which it may be serviceable for him to represent me. I commend him to the confidence of all representatives of the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated in the war.

WOODROW WILSON

WASHINGTON, *October 16, 1918*

KNOW YE, That reposing special trust and confidence in the Integrity and Ability of Edward M. House, of Texas, I do appoint him a Special Representative of the Government of the United States of America in Europe in matters relating to the war, and do authorize and empower him to execute and fulfill the duties of this commission with all the powers and privileges thereunto of right appertaining during the pleasure of the President of the United States. . . .

WOODROW WILSON

Colonel House thus came to Europe with official standing and invested with all the authority of the President of the United States. It was as the official spokesman for Wilson and the American Government that he sat on the Supreme War Council with the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France, and Italy. The mission upon which the President sent him was at once the most important and the most difficult of his career: he must maintain Wilsonian principles without causing a break in the political unanimity of the Allies and, if possible, without any loss of cordiality. Characteristically the President gave him no instructions of any kind, apparently certain that House understood exactly what was in his mind.

'I spoke of having arranged a secret code between us,' wrote House in his diary of his final conference with Wilson. 'As I was leaving he said, "I have not given you any instructions because I feel you will know what to do." I had been thinking of this before he spoke and wondered at the strange situation our relations had brought about. I am going on one of the most important missions any one ever undertook, and yet there is no word of direction, advice, or discussion between us. He knows that our minds are generally parallel, and he also knows that where they diverge I will follow his bent rather than my own. . . .'

CHAPTER IV

ARMISTICE CONFERENCES

... This being achieved, no man has the right to cause another drop of blood to be shed.

Marshal Foch to Colonel House, November 1, 1918

I

STORIES current at the time and since have laid upon President Wilson the responsibility for a premature peace. Except for his influence upon Allied leaders, it has been asserted, Foch would have led his triumphant armies across the Rhine and dictated peace in Berlin. It is a myth. What the President offered Germany in his October notes was not peace nor even an armistice, but merely the privilege of applying to the Allied and Associated Powers at Versailles for an armistice. That application he passed on without comment or advice. Wilson gave no instructions to House nor did he himself exercise any direct influence upon Allied leaders. He merely made peace possible by putting Germany's request before them. They were free to accept or refuse it. In the end it was the opinion of Marshal Foch himself that prevailed.

These facts have frequently been blurred, either through ignorance or malice, and the belief has been current that for some sinister purpose the United States sought to rob the Allies of victory by insisting upon the cessation of fighting, against the will of the Allied military commanders. This belief was expressed in an alleged interview with a distinguished writer, who was quoted as saying, 'America had forced the Allies into making peace at the first opportunity instead of insisting upon finishing in Berlin. America quit the day of the Armistice without waiting to see the thing

through.' Whether or not the quotation is exact, it represents the charge so often made by writers and speakers.

It is important to remember that on October 23, President Wilson turned over to the Allies the decision as to whether or not there should be an armistice. His note of that date reads: 'The President has, therefore, transmitted his correspondence with the present German authorities to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, with the suggestion that, *if those Governments are disposed to effect peace* upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as will fully protect the interests of the peoples involved and ensure to the associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government has agreed, provided they deem such an armistice possible from the military point of view.' In this note President Wilson left the Allies free to decide not to grant an armistice if they disapproved it. 'Then,' as General Bliss later wrote, 'was the time for the Allied Governments or any one of them to say "No, we are not disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated" and "we shall not ask our advisers to submit for our approval the necessary terms for such an armistice nor of any armistice."' As a matter of fact, the Allied and Associated Powers immediately consulted their military advisers.¹

As he had indicated to President Wilson before leaving the United States, Colonel House was determined that the full responsibility for deciding upon an armistice should be

¹ Tasker H. Bliss, 'The Armistices,' in *The American Journal of International Law*, 16, p. 512. This article is an authoritative and critical study of the drafting of the armistices, of inestimable value to the historian.

accepted by the Allies. It was with this in mind that in a conference of political and military leaders he put to Marshal Foch the famous question, Foch's answer to which is in itself a complete reply to the charges raised against America.

'Will you tell us, M. le Maréchal,' said House, 'solely from the military point of view, apart from any other consideration, whether you would prefer the Germans to reject or to sign the armistice as outlined here?'

'Fighting,' replied Foch, 'means struggling for certain results.¹ If the Germans now sign an armistice under the general conditions we have just determined, those results are in our possession. This being achieved, no man has the right to cause another drop of blood to be shed.'²

'One of the Prime Ministers,' writes Mantoux, 'I think it was Mr. Lloyd George, asked him what would happen if the Germans refused to sign, and how long it would take to drive them back across the Rhine. He answered, opening both arms, a familiar gesture with him: "Maybe three, maybe four or five months. Who knows?" He never alluded to a final blow in the next few days. When he brought from Versailles his draft of the military terms of the Armistice Convention he simply said this: "The terms your military advisers are agreed upon are those we should be in a position to enforce after the success of our next operations."

'There were discussions, of course, about details of the Convention, but there seemed to be perfect agreement both between the Allied Governments and between the soldiers and statesmen as to the desirability of concluding the armistice, provided, of course, that Germany accepted the

¹ *'On ne fait la guerre que pour ses résultats.'*

² Question and answer are quoted from a letter of Paul Mantoux to Colonel House, July 6, 1920. M. Mantoux was interpreter for the Supreme War Council, and later for the Council of Ten and the Council of Four at the Peace Conference.

conditions laid down, which amounted to little less than capitulation.'¹

II

Colonel House arrived in Paris on October 26, and immediately set himself to discover the feeling of Allied leaders as to the reply that should be given the Germans. He realized that there were three different questions that must be answered. Should an armistice be granted on any terms to Germany? If the answer was in the affirmative, upon what terms should the armistice be accorded? Finally, were the Allies, like Germany, ready to accept President Wilson's Fourteen Points and later speeches as the basis for the peace? The third question was of quite a different nature from the first two, since it touched not the terms upon which fighting would stop but the ultimate settlement. The Allies could not avoid facing this last question, however, since the Germans had based their request for an armistice upon the understanding that Wilsonian principles would be taken as the foundation of the settlement.

The two days following House's arrival were packed with interviews, of which his diary gives a brief résumé:

'October 26, 1918: I do not know how I have lived through the day. I saw newspaper people at twelve o'clock and distinguished Americans and foreigners from hour to hour. Among them were H. P. Davison of the Red Cross, General Clarence Edwards, Ambassador Sharp, and an infinite number of others.

'Field Marshal Haig, Lord Milner, Secretary of State for War, Admiral Benson, and Robert Bacon, who is liaison officer between the British troops and ours, took lunch with me. It was a delightful and important meeting. . . . I find Milner moderate, and was surprised to find Haig equally so.

¹ Mantoux to House, July 6, 1920.

He does not consider the German military situation warrants their complete surrender. . . . I did a great deal of the talking. I desired to frame the case as the President wished it, and wanted to convince both Milner and Haig he was right, in order that we might have the benefit of their support on Tuesday.

'I saw Clemenceau at six o'clock. . . . He gave in the gravest confidence Marshal Foch's terms for an armistice. No one had seen the document excepting himself, not even the President of the French Republic. He asked that it be kept in confidence except as far as President Wilson was concerned. I am to return it to him to-morrow at nine after taking a copy, which he said I might do if I did it in my own hand. . . .

'Clemenceau expressed his belief, which was also that of Marshal Foch, that Germany was so thoroughly beaten she would accept any terms offered. Haig does not agree with this conclusion. . . .

'I went from the War Office to the Foreign Office to pay my respects to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Pichon. Just before going in I met Venizelos, Greek Prime Minister. We had a few minutes' conversation. He said he was leaving for London Monday and would like to call upon me. We fixed the engagement for to-morrow at 10.30. I remained with Pichon not more than five minutes. I expressed a hope that at the Peace Conference we would work together as cordially as at the Interallied Conference last year, in which event I thought matters could be greatly expedited.

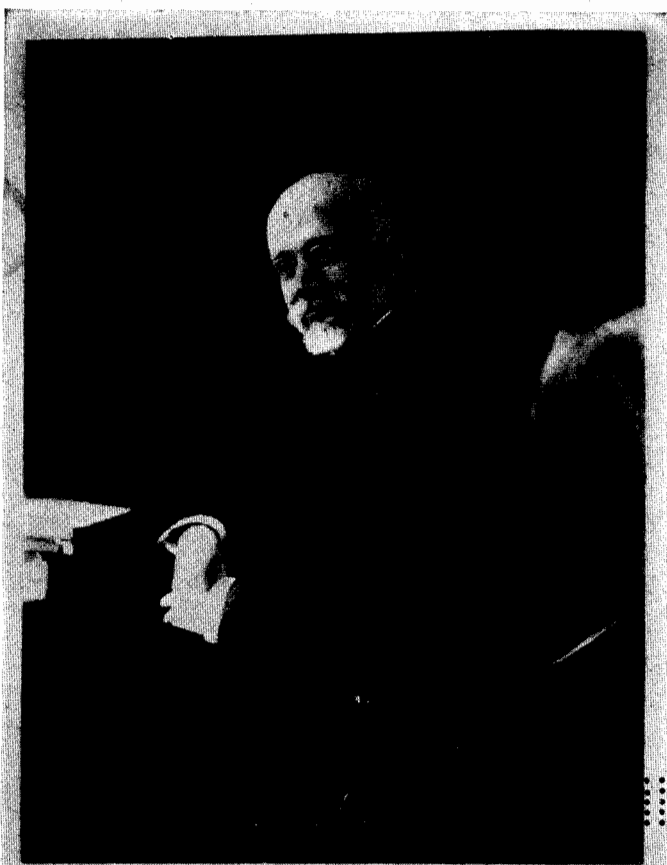
'*October 27, 1918:* . . . Venizelos followed. He explained the claims of Greece on certain parts of Syria. He expressed an intention of visiting the United States in order to see the President and explain these matters to him. He was surprised to learn that for more than a year all such questions had been under my direction and there was a large organiza-

tion now in New York working them out. I advised him not to undertake to see the President. . . . The President was now concerned with war measures. If an armistice came, then he would be ready to take up such matters as Venizelos had in mind.

'General Bliss came before Venizelos left. We discussed the question of an armistice at much length. Bliss thinks it would be better to ask for general disarmament without specifying terms.'

Despite the difference in feeling as to the degree of severity that should characterize the terms to be granted Germany, House found almost complete agreement that the German request for an armistice should not be refused. Among the political leaders it was generally taken for granted that terms would be given to Germany. Two days after his arrival, House cabled to the President: 'Things are moving so fast that the question of a place for the Peace Conference is on us.' This resulted from Clemenceau's assumption that the Germans would accept any terms. What Poincaré's opinion was, House did not learn. A fortnight previous, Foch and Pichon had discussed possible terms with the President of the Republic, who did not hesitate to express himself forcibly to Clemenceau to the effect that the time for an armistice had not arrived. The Premier replied sharply that the decision must be made by the responsible Ministers, and he intimated that any interference by Poincaré would lead to his own resignation. Poincaré apparently withdrew his protests, for the resignation of Clemenceau would have been disastrous. Whether the President of the Republic changed his mind as to the inadvisability of granting an armistice, is not clear.¹

¹ Gabriel Terrail, *Les négociations secrètes et les quatre armistices*, 221-22. Terrail, who writes under the pseudonym Mermeix, is well informed and accurate. It is obvious that he has had access to the *procès-verbaux* of the armistice conversations, many of which he quotes *verbatim*.



To Colonel E. M. House,
in remembrance of our
collaboration in drafting
the Covenant of the League
of Nations

E. K. Venizelos

Paris, April 11th, 1919

ELEUTHERIOS VENIZELOS

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Of the military leaders, Sir Douglas Haig and General Bliss agreed with both Foch and Pétain that the German demand for an armistice must be accepted, although they differed as to terms. Field Marshal Haig not merely desired it, but was willing to offer conditions that would best facilitate the withdrawal of the German armies intact. General Bliss insisted upon stringent conditions, but recognized the futility and crime of continuing the fighting for a single hour after the Germans were made powerless to resume the war. 'We should have to go back to the days of Rome or earlier,' he said subsequently, 'to find a civilized nation refusing even to discuss terms upon which fighting might cease. It would be unheard of to say: "No, we haven't killed enough of you, there are some towns we want to burn."' ¹

The single important exception among the military leaders was General Pershing. At the meeting of Foch with the national commanders at Senlis on October 25, he apparently concurred with the others as to the nature of the conditions laid down. It was therefore with some surprise that five days later, on October 30, Colonel House received from him a letter protesting against granting any armistice, although he stated that if his opinion were overruled he approved the conditions of Marshal Foch. His letter was accompanied by a lengthy memorandum which was cabled to Washington, in which he set forth his reasons for believing that fighting should continue. The memorandum emphasized the favorable military situation of the Allies and the danger that German armies might, if permitted an armistice, be enabled to withdraw from a critical situation to one in which they could resume hostilities.

General Pershing's belated protest against any armistice produced no effect. Colonel House laid it before Clemenceau and Lloyd George, but they apparently preferred to trust

¹ To C. S., June 22, 1928.

Foch's assurance that all the material benefits of victory would be conferred by his terms as completely as by a victorious but costly invasion. Foch called attention to the inconsistencies between the memorandum and letter, both written on the same day: the first insisting that an armistice would jeopardize victory and imperil the peace, the second approving the Foch conditions as a complete guarantee of ability to impose on Germany a peace satisfactory to the Allied Governments.

President Wilson in Washington was no more affected by the Pershing memorandum than the Allied leaders in Paris. He was entirely averse from any interference that might lead to a continuation of the war against their decision, especially when it was enforced by the judgment of Foch. 'Apart from purely military considerations,' wrote Paul Mantoux, 'there was in the minds of the statesmen a strong feeling that the populations, after showing themselves ready to accept every sacrifice for a just cause, would never forgive their leaders if they thought the fighting had been prolonged beyond the limits of necessity.'¹

'The human mind,' said John Buchan, 'loves a dramatic *finale*, and asks for the ostensible signs of victory. But to such an argument there are two replies. The Germans were indeed beaten, but the Allies were not far from the limits of their strength, and before a further advance could be made would have been compelled to halt and re-form, and so give the enemy a breathing-space. In a month or two they would have achieved their purpose, but it would have been at the cost of further losses. The encircling movement at Metz, fixed by Foch for the 14th, would certainly have succeeded, but the fruit of it could not have been immediately reaped by the main armies, for, except for Haig's two divisions of cavalry, they were not in a position for swift pursuit. The

¹ Mantoux to House, July 6, 1920.

railway systems of France and Belgium had been strained to their uttermost; the enemy had destroyed most of the communications in the evacuated districts; in the British area railhead was nowhere less than thirty-five miles behind the front, and the distance had to be bridged by motor transport over damaged roads; while behind the French lines the situation was worse. The Allies were not in a position for a rapid and sustained advance. That is one justification for the grant of an armistice. The second is that the request could not decently have been refused, when it gave to the Allies all that they desired — all, indeed, that Germany could give. No honest man could for the sake of a more dramatic close condemn many thousands more to death and suffering. The armistice had all the substance of an unconditional surrender, except that it was negotiated before the hands of the fighting men were formally held up in the field.’¹

III

The first of the formal sessions of the Allied Council was held on October 31. By this time it had already been decided in quite informal conferences to reply to Germany’s request for an armistice with a statement of terms. The more difficult task was to formulate conditions which would at the same time prove acceptable to the Germans and yet deprive them of the power to resume the conflict later on. This task was left to the army and navy chiefs, who drafted the essential terms to be included in the armistice and presented them to the political leaders, first in informal conversations, finally at the formal meetings at Versailles.

Technically the Allied Council which assumed responsibility for the armistice was still the Supreme War Council,

¹ John Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, iv, 416. General Bliss does not accept the contention that the terms of the armistice were sufficient to render Germany helpless. But his protest is directed against the *form* and not the *fact* of the armistice. See *American Journal of International Law*, 16, pp. 509 ff.

enlarged on the political side by the representatives of Japan and the smaller Powers that were called in to its sessions. It met in the large room on the main floor of the Trianon Palace Hotel in Versailles, with its windows overlooking the gardens. Down the length of the room extended a wide mahogany table, across which the delegates conversed; in the center sat Clemenceau and directly opposite him, Colonel House, next to the Italian Prime Minister, Orlando. Color was added by the uniforms of the generals and admirals, but the prevailing tone was somber and business-like, just as the predominant note of the discussions was that of a board of directors in a joint-stock company.

The Allied Council did not, as a matter of fact, draft the terms of the armistices. When it met, drafts were already prepared. 'Its sole function,' writes General Bliss, 'was to trim the edges and round off the corners, in doing which there was an opportunity to consider points raised by the smaller Powers that had not been represented in the preparation of the drafts.'¹ The actual decisions were taken not in the formal meetings at Versailles but in the more informal conversations between the Prime Ministers and House, beginning on October 29. The formation of this steering committee resulted almost inevitably from the circumstances of the moment, which demanded speed and an absence of red-tape. In the full Council, enlarged as it was by delegates from the smaller Powers, there was danger also that time might be lost in speech-making. 'As soon as you get more than ten men in a room,' House protested, 'every one wants to make a speech.' He had the warm sympathy of Clemenceau, whose ability to make a good speech was equalled or excelled by his insistence upon rapid results. The experience of the Paris conferences of November of the previous year emphasized the value of such informal conversations.

The meetings of the Prime Ministers and House, which

¹ *The American Journal of International Law*, 16, p. 509.

generally included also Balfour, Pichon, and Sonnino, the Foreign Secretaries, and almost invariably Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the British War Cabinet, were sometimes held in Pichon's study at the Quai d'Orsay, where they gathered in a semicircle around the great flat-topped desk in front of the fireplace. Sometimes they met in Clemenceau's room at the War Office; more frequently in the salon of Colonel House's headquarters, at 78 rue de l'Université. By gathering in a private house the political leaders were able to emphasize the informal character of the conversations, and to invite or exclude whom they chose, without hurting the feelings of any.

The meetings of this steering committee were generally held in the morning, and in these they discussed the topics to be formally approved by the Supreme War Council in the afternoon. Almost invariably the decisions reached by the small committee proved to be final. Clemenceau was a realist. On one occasion after the formal afternoon meeting, Lord Milner protested to Clemenceau: 'You drew up resolutions at your morning meeting which have not been adopted here at the meeting of the Supreme War Council.' But the Prime Minister replied very definitely: 'That is not necessary. The Supreme War Council met this morning and passed upon those questions. Whenever the Prime Ministers and Colonel House meet, the Supreme War Council meets, and what we do is final.'

In this committee is to be found the prototype of the Council of Four of the Peace Conference, and in the speed of its decisions there was good argument for the creation of the Council of Four in the following spring. There was this difference. In spite of Clemenceau's dictum, the decisions of the small steering committee were later discussed and confirmed in the afternoon meetings, and sometimes amendments were made, whereas the Peace Conference was not permitted to know what the Four meditated and had no opportunity to alter their decisions.

The first problem which must be faced was that of the relations between the great and the smaller Powers of the Allies. At the informal conversation in Pichon's study, on October 29, the French Foreign Secretary stated that Belgium, like the other Powers, had received from Wilson the correspondence with the Germans; what ought she to do? Ought she not to have a representative present in the discussions, especially when it came to the evacuation of Belgium? Japan, also, had suggested that she be consulted.

'Would not other Powers have to be admitted, when we discuss Austria?' asked Balfour.

'Yes,' said Lloyd George, 'Serbia and Greece will certainly be in the same category as Belgium.'

'If you admit Belgium,' said Sonnino, 'you cannot possibly exclude the others.'

Lloyd George then suggested the principle which was ultimately to prevail. Preliminary conferences should take place between the four Powers then debating (France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States). There should be no meeting at Versailles until the general lines of agreement had been concerted. At the more formal conferences at Versailles, Japan should be represented. He himself saw no reason why all the minor nations should not be represented when questions which affected them were being discussed. They need not be present for the whole discussion.

Sonnino thought that if all the smaller nations were invited to take part in the armistice discussions, there would never be any agreement. The Council would be too unwieldy. He proposed that the minor nations should be asked merely to present their views.

Pichon proposed that only those states which had been invaded should be invited. This, however, as Balfour pointed out, would include Montenegro and exclude Great Britain.

'Why not include,' said Lloyd George, 'simply those states

who had made heavy sacrifices for the cause of the Allies?' 'Would that include Portugal and Brazil?' was the natural rejoinder.

The question was difficult to answer, and it was finally decided that Belgium and Japan, who had asked to be consulted, should send representatives. Other nations, which had made great sacrifices or suffered severely for the cause of the Allies, such as Greece and Serbia, should be represented if they demanded it. Lloyd George's suggestion that the smaller nations should be represented only when their particular interests were in question, was significant, since it was the basis of the arrangement finally adopted at the Peace Conference.

IV

The Supreme War Council and its steering committee worked under tremendous pressure, for they had multiple functions. Not merely must they decide the military terms of the armistice with Germany and the larger question as to whether they would accept the Fourteen Points; they had also a vast amount of executive business. They must conduct the war to its conclusion, and the war was a political and economic as well as a military affair. They were not dealing with a single enemy, for the Austrians had not yet surrendered at the time when House arrived in France; indeed, strange to say, for several days after his arrival the Allied leaders were not certain that they would surrender. If Austria held out, the terms to Germany might be of a different character than if she yielded. If Austria agreed to yield and Germany held out, there must be drafted a military plan of campaign directed against Germany from the south. When the collapse of Austria-Hungary completed the revolutionary movements, there arose the problem of the disposal of the Austrian fleet, which had been handed over to the Jugo-Slavs. There was also the problem of the Turkish armistice.

At the outset of the conversations the question arose as to how the Allies should deal with the various demands for an armistice, from Germany, Austria, and Turkey. It was discussed in Pichon's study at the Quai d'Orsay, on October 29.

Clemenceau pointed out that the only communication before them was from President Wilson, who had transmitted the Austro-German demand. It was now for them to reply to the President stating their terms. Many people, he said, had suggested that the whole matter should be referred to Foch. The Marshal, however, was only a judge of purely military questions on the front where he was Commander-in-Chief, and many other questions were involved, such as naval and political matters. 'If Foch decides, then the Governments are suppressed. I propose that we consult Marshal Foch and all others whose advice may be essential. Then we will transmit our conclusions to President Wilson.'

The British expressed some surprise at the suggestion of treating through the President instead of directly with the Germans. Lloyd George pointed out that if the terms were transmitted through the President, there could be no give and take. The enemy would have to accept or refuse outright. Yet there might be included in the conditions some clauses which would especially offend German susceptibilities, and they would not be able to propose any alternative, even though it might be acceptable to the Allies, because of public opinion. If the terms were published and the Allied Governments did not insist upon their integral acceptance, public opinion would be aroused to a pitch of frenzy, and yet the point of difference might be of no importance.

Colonel House then suggested the course ultimately followed, that the terms should be communicated to Wilson for his endorsement, and that he should inform the Germans that their request for an armistice would be granted. The terms in detail, however, would be given directly to Ger-

many by the Allies; they ought not to be published at this stage.

Lloyd George agreed, but Clemenceau objected to inviting the Germans to an armistice. 'I find the arguments of Mr. Lloyd George excellent,' he said, 'and I cannot refute them. But there is one objection to his proposition: it is impossible. If we follow it out, it will be necessary for Marshal Foch to send a parliamentary to go to the German lines with a white flag to ask for an armistice. Marshal Foch would never do this and I would never permit him to do it.'

'No,' said Lloyd George, 'we would merely ask President Wilson to ask the Germans to send a parliamentary with a white flag to approach Marshal Foch. We would communicate with the President, and if he approves he would notify the Germans to send across a man with a white flag.'

This was entirely acceptable to Clemenceau, and it was thus decided. Sonnino, representing Italy in the absence of Orlando who had not yet arrived in Paris, was troubled by the possibility that Germany might accept and Austria refuse! Negotiations for an armistice with both Austria and Germany should take place at the same time and in the same manner. 'Supposing,' he said, 'we were to make an armistice with one of those nations and not with the other, then the peoples which had made peace would say they could not continue fighting with their ally still left at war for this or that object. Suppose we had an armistice and peace with Germany, the rest of the Allies would say that they could not continue the war, and would leave Italy and Austria to fight it out by themselves.'

To this Colonel House replied that two days previous Austria had agreed to make a separate peace, regardless of Germany, and to accept Wilson's conditions whatever they might be. She was certainly in a state of exhaustion.

'Yes,' said Sonnino, 'but if Germany accepts first, what will happen? The very next day she will send Germans

dressed as Austrians, as she did before she was at war with Italy, to fight against the Italian army. Moreover, Austrian divisions would be withdrawn from the Western Front and used against the Italians. If France and Great Britain have made peace with Germany, public opinion in those countries will not stand troops being sent to the Italian Front.'

The Italian Foreign Minister, however, was reassured by Clemenceau and Lloyd George, who promised that President Wilson would instruct the Austrians to send an officer to ask General Diaz for terms at the same time that the Germans sent a parliamentary to Foch. The conference then adopted the following resolution to determine its procedure:

'That the associated Governments should consider the terms of an armistice with Germany and the terms of an armistice with Austria. They should then forward these to President Wilson. If President Wilson agreed in the terms he should not notify them to the German or Austrian Governments, but should advise these Governments that their next step was to send parlementaires to Marshal Foch and General Diaz respectively.'

The Austrians, however, were too sorely in need of an immediate cessation of hostilities to await the development of this process. At the conference of October 30, Orlando arrived from Italy with the news that as he passed through Turin, General Diaz had telephoned him that an Austrian officer had crossed the line with a letter from an Austrian general, not the Commander-in-Chief, asking for terms immediately. Diaz had replied that if a properly accredited envoy brought the demand, he would treat with him after receiving instructions from his Government. The following wireless had also been received from the Emperor Karl:

The Austrian Emperor to the Italian Supreme Command
If evacuation of Venetia is carried out under the pressure

of the Italian Army, that is, in the course of continuous fighting and battles, destruction and severe damage would be inevitable to the villages, bridges and railways. If, on the other hand, hostilities were to be suspended, the evacuation of the well-cultivated plains with rich crops would take place without any damage whatever to the country. For these reasons the Supreme Command desires to bring about an immediate suspension of hostilities.

CHARLES, *Emperor*

The Italians regarded the letter in the nature of blackmail, in order to precipitate a suspension of arms and permit the Austrians to effectuate a safe retreat, after which they might refuse the terms of an armistice. They had therefore refused to listen to the general without proper credentials.

‘I would listen to that general,’ said Clemenceau.

‘I would certainly listen to him,’ added Lloyd George. He went on to elaborate a suggestion he had already put before Clemenceau and House, to the effect that it would be a great advantage to settle completely with Austria before dealing with Germany. He urged that the Allied generals prepare at once terms for Austria. ‘I propose,’ he said, ‘that these terms be submitted straightaway to Austria. As soon as Austria is out, Germany will capitulate at once. Therefore we ought to act before President Wilson has time to answer.’

The proposition was at once accepted by House who, interested as he was in the endorsement of the Fourteen Points before signing an armistice, realized that it would be easier to take them up in connection with the German armistice than the Austrian, and appreciated keenly the value of securing the surrender of Austria before terms were presented to Germany. The military advisers proceeded at once to draft the military terms while the conference took up the naval terms for Austria, which provided for the surrender of all the submarines completed since 1910, six battleships, four cruis-

ers, and nine destroyers. 'We have left the breeches of the Emperor,' remarked Clemenceau, 'and nothing else.' The terms were completed after further consultation with the military and naval experts and presented to the first meeting of the Supreme War Council on the afternoon of the following day. They were approved, with slight changes, and sent to General Diaz the same day.¹

Thus it came about that the procedure of negotiation with Austria was quite different from that followed in the case of Germany. In the latter case, the notification to the enemy that he might ask for terms of an armistice was sent through President Wilson, and the notification was accompanied by a formal acceptance of the Fourteen Points, with two reservations. In the case of Austria, the Hapsburg Commander did not wait for any notification through Wilson, but sent his white flag at once to Diaz, who communicated the armistice terms, which were accepted on November 3. Nothing was said of the Fourteen Points nor of any reservation to them. Did the Fourteen Points, upon which as a basis Austria had originally sued for an armistice, apply to Austria? It was a problem which later was to vex the Peace Conference.

v

With the Bulgars and the Turks out of the war, and the terms of the Armistice delivered to Austria, Allied leaders were able to concentrate upon the negotiations with Germany. The discussions very early developed agreement upon two points. The military and naval terms must be of the sort defined by Wilson in his replies to Germany; that is, they must fully maintain the existing military superiority of the Allies; but they must, if possible, be framed so that Germany would be willing to accept them. There was no certainty that

¹ The essential portions of the *procès-verbal* of the meeting of the Supreme War Council are printed in Terrail, *op. cit.*, 205 ff.

the Germans would not attempt a last-ditch stand, for the leaders in Paris could not appreciate the demoralization into which the German nation had fallen, nor the complete pessimism of the German Government. On November 1, Clemenceau communicated a report which he had received from Switzerland, indicating that internal conditions in Germany made surrender inevitable, and in reply to a question he stated his belief that the Germans would sign any sort of armistice, no matter how severe the terms. Field Marshal Haig, however, insisted that their army was far from disorganized, and Mr. Balfour stated his belief that there was serious danger of their refusing to sign.

Hence it seemed necessary to be prepared for a refusal and for the prosecution of the war. Foch was ready to make his great drive with fresh American and French armies in Lorraine. With the collapse of Austria becoming hourly more apparent, the possibility of an attack upon Germany from the south was considered. The question occupied much of the discussion in the informal conference of November 2, which was held in Clemenceau's room at the War Office, and almost the entire discussion in the conference of November 4 in Colonel House's headquarters.

At the first meeting, which included only Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando, and House, Lloyd George raised the question of methods of attack upon Germany:

'Should the Allies advance,' he asked, 'by Bavaria or Bohemia? . . . What action should be taken if Austria went to pieces and guerilla warfare broke out? In such an event would it not be possible to utilize the forces of the constituent nations of Austria friendly to the Allies?'

These questions were referred to the military chiefs for consideration and, on the morning of November 4, they met with the four political leaders to consider the plan of cam-

paign. Edouard Beneš, representing the Czecho-Slovaks, was also called in. The Generals proposed a concentric attack against Munich by three Allied armies, one advancing from the south (the Inn valley) and two from the east (Salzburg-Linz). They would be under the immediate command of an Italian, but the operations as a whole would be directed by Foch. The plan called also for reënforcements drawn from the Czecho-Slovak divisions in Italy and from the Allied 'army of Salonika.' The concentration of the main force would take at least thirty to thirty-five days.

The discussion which followed these proposals was desultory and not of importance, except that it indicates the seriousness with which Allied leaders considered the possibility of Germany's refusal of armistice terms, a week before the signature of the armistice. Lloyd George urged the occupation of strategic points in Austria, so as to intercept the transport of oil to Germany from Galicia. 'As M. Beneš was present, he asked whether it would not be possible to consider the question of bombarding Berlin by sending squadrons of heavy bombing aeroplanes to Prague?'

Clemenceau interpolated that he was 'delighted with this suggestion.'

Beneš was indefinite. The Czech districts were now entirely independent of German-Austrian control, but the entire Czecho-Slovak nation was in a state of anxiety lest Bohemia be occupied by the German armies. Bohemia was one of the most important metallurgical centers. In it were the Skoda Works. The Czechs had no arms with which to oppose a German invasion. What forces the Germans could send against them he did not know.

'None,' replied Foch.

In any case, Beneš continued, if the Allies would send airplanes, arms, and some troops around whom the Czechs might rally, he agreed that a Czech army could be formed from the soldiers released by the demobilization of the Austrian army.

Lloyd George also laid stress upon the army of Franchet d'Esperey, which he thought might be directed into Bohemia; if it were not used against Germany, it would at any rate protect the coal.

Orlando accepted the plan, in principle, 'with the reservation that he wished to consult his Chief of Staff on the question in deference to his opinion. He also wished to point out that the Italian Army was tired by the initial battle it had just fought and by pursuit of the enemy.'

'Victory,' said Foch, 'is winged and abolishes weariness.'

With this poetical maxim of strategy in their ears, the political chiefs approved the Generals' plan and authorized them to study the following questions:

'The possibility of taking immediate steps to send a force which shall include the Czecho-Slovak forces on the French and Italian fronts to Bohemia and Galicia with the following objects: To organize these countries against invasion by Germany. To prevent the export to Germany of oil, coal, or any other material and to render these available to the Allied Forces. To establish aerodromes for the purpose of bombing Germany.

'The immediate coöperation of General Franchet d'Esperey in these objects.'

The crushing of Germany was inevitable.¹ 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 which Foch laid before the Supreme War Council.

¹ 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 that might have been proposed in the armistice with it.' *American Journal of International Law*, 16, p. 510.

CHAPTER V

GERMANY SURRENDERS

Autocracy is dead. . . .
Colonel House to President Wilson, November 11, 1918

I

THE military terms of the German armistice were drafted by Marshal Foch, after consultation with his colleagues, and they were approved with no material change by the political chiefs of the Allied and Associated Powers. The legend that pictures the United States as pleading for softer terms has no historical foundation. President Wilson sent Colonel House to the Supreme War Council with a free hand, entirely without instructions; and House from first to last made it clear that in all military matters the United States Government was inclined to accept the recommendations of Foch.

The only indication of Wilson's desires was contained in a cable which the President sent to House on October 29 and which was entirely in line with his public statements. The official paraphrase of the cipher cable is as follows:

My deliberate judgment is that our whole weight should be thrown for an armistice which will not permit a renewal of hostilities by Germany, but which will be as moderate and reasonable as possible within that condition, because lately I am certain that too much severity on the part of the Allies will make a genuine peace settlement exceedingly difficult if not impossible. . . . Foresight is better than immediate advantage.¹

Colonel House found no disagreement with this attitude on

¹ Wilson to House, October 29, 1918.

the part of Clemenceau and Lloyd George; on November 1, he cabled to Wilson that they both 'realize that the terms should not be harsher than is necessary to fulfill your conditions regarding the making of it impossible for Germany to renew hostilities.' At the same time Wilson insisted that expert military judgment ought to determine the terms technically necessary to render Germany helpless, and he accepted it as final. During the course of the first discussion of the Allied political chiefs regarding the German armistice, House said to Clemenceau and Lloyd George: 'The President is willing to leave the terms of the armistice to Marshal Foch, General Pershing, Field Marshal Haig, General Diaz, and General Pétain.'

Ever since the first interchange of notes between Germany and President Wilson, the political and military leaders of the Allies had been discussing armistice terms. As early as October 6 the Prime Ministers, then meeting in Paris, agreed upon principles for the basis of an armistice and requested the military advisers to elaborate them in some detail. General Bliss had been given no instructions and thus could not approve the draft of the military advisers; he cabled it to Washington so that the American Government was fully informed of the general military opinions of the Allies.

On October 23 came Wilson's note turning the matter of an armistice over to the Council in Versailles.¹ It might have been expected that a formal committee of military and naval advisers would have been constituted to draft terms. So far as the military clauses were concerned, the matter was left in

¹ '... that if those [Allied] Governments are disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as will fully protect the interests of the peoples involved and ensure to the associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government has agreed, provided they deem such an armistice possible from the military point of view.'

the hands of Marshal Foch, who contented himself by calling upon the national commanders individually for their views. On October 25 he called General Pétain, Field Marshal Haig, General Diaz, and General Pershing to Senlis, where each expressed his opinion.

The chief difference of opinion arose between the French and the British; the former insisted on much more rigorous conditions than the latter. General Pétain 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 time 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 armies not only of the left bank of the Rhine but of a zone fifty kilometers wide on the right bank; at the same time the delivery of 5000 locomotives and 100,000 cars should be demanded. General Pétain adds, however, that, although these conditions are indispensable in his opinion, it is hardly expected that the Germans will accept them.'¹

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 Americans. 'In his view the armistice should be concluded and concluded on very moderate terms. The victorious Allied armies are extenuated. The units need to be reorganized. Germany is not broken in the military sense. During the last weeks her armies have withdrawn fighting very bravely and in excellent order. Therefore, if it is really desired to conclude

¹ Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 61.

an armistice — and this in his view 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 feeling, with very doubtful results. For the evacuation of all invaded territories and of Alsace-Lorraine is sufficient to seal the victory.’¹

These opinions were couched in general terms. Pershing declared himself on the whole in accord with Pétain. 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 he advised.² Haig’s conditions 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 to disarm the enemy completely, nor did he deem it essential to accept Pétain’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

¹ Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 61.

² See appendix to this chapter for the text of the letter.

unnecessarily severe, General Bliss believed that 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.¹

General Bliss had already 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 was at that moment in session in the dining-room of his house on the rue de l'Université 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 being discussed. On the side of the Allies, the armistice will be

¹ See appendix to this chapter for General Bliss's terms and his comments thereon.

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, the right man with the right war cry 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 that she has captured from you and the British, Russians, Italians, etc.?" His reply was that they knew every piece of equipment that Germany could lay her hands on, and that it was absolutely impossible for her to reëquip herself.

'Purely as an *obiter 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 wasn't the partial disarmament of Germany that protected the Allies from this danger so much as it was the complete internal disruption of Germany following the signing of the armistice.'¹

The opinions of the British military leaders as to General Bliss's plan were communicated to House in a short note of October 28.

¹ General Bliss to C. S., June 14, 1928.

General Bliss to Colonel House

PARIS, October 28, 1918

DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have had a long conference to-day with Lord Milner, General Sir Henry Wilson, and General Spears, Chief of the British Mission in Paris. General Spears fully agrees with the views expressed in the memorandum I handed you; Lord M. is disposed to object to demobilization (thinking that Germany may have to be the bulwark against Russian Bolshevism) and Wilson agrees with him. The latter believes in disarmament as to field artillery and machine-guns, but would let the Germans withdraw with the honors of war, i.e., drums beating, colors flying and infantry armament.

Sincerely

TASKER H. BLISS ¹

¹ 'This note to Colonel House,' writes General Bliss on June 14, 1928, 'as I now see, gives the impression that I had a formal interview at the same time with Milner, Wilson, and Spears. This is not correct. I saw Spears separately at his own house. Wilson I met by accident. I had no special reason for seeking his views because I already knew them and with many of them I did not agree.'

'My memorandum dated October 28 was written in pencil-draught on the evening of the 27th; given to my secretary early on the morning of the 28th and dated by him when he typed it; and the same morning handed by me to Mr. House. Later in the day he told me that the Prime Ministers were disposed to agree with Marshal Foch who insisted that the Germans would not accept complete disarmament.'

'I had been invited to a formal luncheon at the British Embassy. Knowing that Lord Milner was staying there, I took my memorandum with me hoping to have a chance to talk with him about it. After the luncheon, he took me out on the balcony outside the dining-room windows and overlooking the Embassy garden. Sitting there he read the paper very carefully. He said that as to the general idea he entirely agreed with me. He had no doubt that the Germans would accept complete disarmament. He then talked at length about Russia. He would not agree with me that, while there might be much danger of a moral penetration of Bolshevistic ideas, there was no present danger of Russian action by force of arms.'

'While we were talking, Wilson, who wanted to see Milner about a different matter and was told by Lord Derby that he would find him on the balcony, opened the Venetian shutter of the window and stuck out his head, but seeing me talking with Milner, turned away. Milner called to

II

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 protest 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 suggested by the Naval Council, which called for the surrender of one hundred and fifty submarines, ten battleships, and six battle cruisers, besides lighter craft.

him, "Come out here, Wilson; I want you to read this paper that Bliss has brought to me." Wilson read it and said in substance what I put in the note to Mr. House. He concluded by saying, "to get them out of France I would build a golden bridge for them across the Rhine."

'As to the idea of not demobilizing the Germans on account of Bolshevism, I couldn't get from either of them anything definite as to the force they would allow the Germans to retain nor the amount and character of their equipment. It looked to me as though they would leave the Germans practically fully armed and mobilized, with no assurance whatever that they might not combine later against the Allies or whatever of the latter might be left.'

'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 1871; 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 too 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 unwise to insist on the occupation of the east bank of the Rhine.¹ 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

¹ To this occupation Wilson also had objected.

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

On November 1, the heads of government and House met with Foch, Weygand, and Sir Eric Geddes representing the Naval Council, at House's headquarters, in preparation for the formal meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles in the afternoon. . . . They first took up the recommendations of Foch. Despite the fact that the latter had agreed to omit a bridgehead at Strassburg as originally planned, Lloyd George stated that the terms seemed 'rather stiff' to him. 'All the great cities of western Germany will be in Allied hands. The Conference must realize that we are making a very stiff demand. I ask Marshal Foch if it would not be possible to secure the bridgeheads required for military purposes without occupying the great cities.'

'Mainz,' said Foch, 'is absolutely indispensable. Frankfurt will not be occupied, although I admit that it will be within two miles of the occupied territory and under the guns of the Allies. I must insist also that Cologne is of tremendous importance, as it is the junction of many railways and the focus of the land communications of the Palatinate; therefore I regard Cologne as an indispensable bridgehead.'

Evidently what chiefly troubled the British was the occupation of German territory by Allied armies. They feared lest by asking more than was absolutely essential the chance of an armistice might be lost and unnecessary difficulties raised in relations with Germany. Foch was at pains to show that without occupation, Allied military supremacy could not be maintained. The course of the discussion is worded as follows:

'Marshal Foch said that Field Marshal Haig had taken the view that it was only necessary for the Allies to occupy Belgium, Luxemburg, and Alsace-Lorraine, and not to advance to the left bank of the Rhine. He had replied that he could never agree to this. If Field Marshal Haig's proposals were adopted, the enemy would be in a better defensive situation than they were in now, since they would be able to retire to the right bank of the Rhine and prepare a strong line of defense there. Consequently, he could never accept this proposal.

'Mr. Lloyd George said that Field Marshal Haig had argued somewhat as follows: Why do you wish to take more than the territories he had proposed? If you had these you would have in hand everything you desired in the West at the Peace Conference, and if the Armistice broke down it would not be necessary for you to attack, but for the enemy to do so.

'Marshal Foch said that the principle on which he had based his terms for an armistice was that you must not place the enemy in a better position than he now occupied to resume the contest in the event of a breakdown of the armistice. Field Marshal Haig's proposals violated this principle, since they put the enemy in a better position. If Germany should break off the peace negotiations, the Allies ought to be in a position to destroy her. The whole of the German system of defense, however, is based on the Rhine, and we cannot settle down during an armistice unless our perspective embraces the bridgeheads on the Rhine.

'Colonel House said that he was not disposed to take from Germany more than was absolutely necessary, but he was disposed to leave the matter in Marshal Foch's hands.

'Marshal Foch said that if we had to begin fighting again, in his view it was indispensable to hold the bridgeheads. If peace followed the armistice, then we should have the territory we wanted in hand, even under Field Marshal Haig's

conditions. But, he asked, what gages and guarantees should we have to secure the indemnities we required?

'Mr. Lloyd George said that before a final decision was taken he wished to put the whole of Field Marshal Haig's case before his colleagues. Field Marshal Haig had attended two meetings of the War Cabinet, and had put his case. Marshal Foch had summed it up very fairly, but, nevertheless, he would like to put it more fully. Field Marshal Haig took the view that the German army was by no means broken. Wherever you hit them they hit back hard and inflicted heavy casualties. They were being gradually pushed back, but were not in any sense a defeated army like the Austrians. They showed none of the ordinary symptoms of a disorganized army. Their retirement was effected in perfect order and was conducted with the greatest skill. Field Marshal Haig had told him that, although earlier in the fighting we had made great captures of guns, we were now only picking up a few here and there, most of which had been damaged by our own artillery, and were not worth taking away. Sir Douglas Haig considered that they would retreat from their present line of 400 kilometers to one of 245 kilometers, and that nothing the Allies could do would prevent it. On this shorter line they would save seventy divisions and would be able to hold on. He would like his colleagues to consider this view carefully before taking a final decision. There were, therefore, three views before the Conference: General Pershing's view, which was that we should demand almost unlimited terms of an armistice;¹ Marshal Foch's view, which he had expounded; Field Marshal Haig's view, which was the most moderate of all.

'M. Orlando suggested that a middle course might be adopted, namely, that the Germans should evacuate terri-

¹ This statement is not in accord with Pershing's letter of October 30 to House expressing general approval of the Foch terms. It might be applied more accurately to General Bliss's terms.

tory and retire to the east bank of the Rhine, leaving a neutral belt on the west bank.

'Marshal Foch said that when the three Commanders-in-Chief had discussed the question, General Pershing and General Pétain had agreed with him, and Field Marshal Haig alone had had a different point of view. He quite agreed with all Field Marshal Haig said about the German army not being disorganized or beaten. But this did not give us the right to place the German army in a better position for defense than it now occupied.

'Colonel House asked if this could be prevented? Was it certain that the German army could not resist on its own borders?

'Marshal Foch said that the German frontier, prior to 1870, was only a conventional line devoid of military importance. If we were to stop still on that frontier and have a neutral zone on the west bank of the Rhine, as M. Orlando had suggested, the enemy would be able to entrench himself strongly on the right bank of the Rhine, and, in order to attack him, we should have to cross the Rhine.

'Mr. Lloyd George said that Field Marshal Haig did not assert that we should not be much better off if we could get the bridgeheads. The question he did raise, however, was as to whether the German army was in such a condition that the German Government would concede these drastic terms. Field Marshal Haig pointed out that the British and French armies were very tired, and that their man-power situation next year would be very difficult. The American army, of course, had unlimited man-power, but it was inexperienced and would only be buying its experience next year. The material was splendid, but time was required to train the staffs. The French had had a fully trained army at the beginning of the war, but it had taken us two or three years to reach the same pitch of excellence. Hence Field Marshal Haig, while admitting that bridgeheads were desirable, considered that

if we were not in a position to secure them, we ought to demand less drastic terms.

'M. Clemenceau, after summing up Field Marshal Haig's case as set forth by Mr. Lloyd George, said that while the *moral* of the Allied armies was excellent at present, nevertheless, if an armistice was made it would be difficult to get the armies to fight again. If, however, it leaked out to the soldiers that the terms advised by Marshal Foch had been rejected, it would be still harder to make them fight. On the other hand, if we had secured bridgeheads on the Rhine the armies might well have the confidence to advance again. It would never do, however, to raise doubts in the minds of the soldiers.

'Mr. Lloyd George said that the real point was as to whether we were in a position to enforce Marshal Foch's terms?

'Marshal Foch said that if he was asked whether the German army was now on its way (*en train*) to accept, his answer would be "No." Without the bridgeheads we could never be master of Germany. It was essential first to be master of the Rhine. . . .

'Mr. Lloyd George asked if, in Marshal Foch's view, it was possible for Germany to take up a new and strong position somewhere this side of the Rhine? Or, to put the question in another way, could Marshal Foch continue to drive the Germans back all through the winter?

'Marshal Foch said that the German army could undoubtedly take up a new position, and that we could not prevent it. But he did not want to facilitate them in this task, as would be done by Field Marshal Haig's terms. If these were adopted, the Germans would have an opportunity to re-form and prepare a new entrenchment. His answer to the question as to whether he could continue driving the Germans back during the winter was in the affirmative. He could do so, and ought to do so, until we

were in a more favorable position than we should be if we accepted Field Marshal Haig's conditions.

'Mr. Lloyd George asked if Marshal Foch was of opinion that the collapse on the eastern and southern borders of Austria would affect the question?

'Marshal Foch said that undoubtedly this would make a difference. The collapse of Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey would enable the Allies to concentrate all the forces released against the Germans.

'M. Clemenceau said that the situation of the Allies *vis-à-vis* the enemy had never been so crushing before. The American effectives were enormous. To-morrow the Allies would be able to march across Austria against Germany. He had little doubt that the first reply of the German Government would be to refuse our terms, but as we increased our advantages they would concede them.

'Mr. Lloyd George said that, after hearing the whole discussion, he was prepared to stand by Marshal Foch's document. He felt, however, that if, as the result of our demands, Germany should make up her mind to continue fighting, it was most important to let it be known to our soldiers that we had fully examined the contrary point of view put forward by Field Marshal Haig. It might leak out that Field Marshal Haig had not agreed in Marshal Foch's terms. Consequently, he would like it to be known that this view had been most carefully considered, and that a contrary decision had only been taken after all the generals had been consulted and on the unanimous decision of the Supreme War Council.'

The approval of the Prime Ministers for the Foch terms thus secured, the articles of the Armistice which embodied them were brought before the formal meeting of the Supreme War Council during the afternoon session of November 1. They were adopted with but little discussion. It was agreed

that consideration of the articles referring to the evacuation of Russia and Rumania should be postponed until a later meeting.

Upon one point Clemenceau was insistent; namely, that there should be a clause in the Armistice demanding reparation for damages. To this Lloyd George objected that he was willing to insert a clause covering restitution of stolen property, but that reparation was rather a condition of peace. House added, and Sonnino agreed, that the subject was so large that it would threaten to hold up the Armistice indefinitely.

On the afternoon of November 2, Clemenceau returned to his demand for a reference to reparations in the Armistice. 'It would not be understood in France,' he said, 'if we omitted such a clause. All I am asking is simply the addition of three words, "reparation for damages," without other commentary.'

'Can that be made a condition of the Armistice?' asked Hymans, representing Belgium.

'It is rather a condition of peace,' said Sonnino.

'It is useless,' said Bonar Law, 'to insert in the Armistice a clause which cannot be immediately carried out.'

'I wish only to make mention of the principle,' returned Clemenceau. 'You must not forget that the French people are among those who have suffered most; they would not understand our failure to allude to this matter.'

'If you are going to deal with the question of reparation for damages on land, you must also mention the question of reparation for ships sunk,' said Lloyd George.

'That is all covered in my formula of three words,' said Clemenceau, "reparation for damages," and I beg the Council to comprehend the feeling of the French people.'

'Yes, and of the Belgian,' interjected Hymans. 'And the Serbs,' said Vesnitch. 'Italians also,' added Sonnino.

Once more Bonar Law objected that reparations was not

properly a topic to be introduced into the Armistice clauses; that special mention was made of it as an underlying condition of peace in the note which was to be sent to President Wilson and that it was useless to repeat it.

But the insistence of Clemenceau carried the Council. At the close of the session an addition was made to the clause, which had momentous consequences. 'It would be prudent,' said Klotz, French Minister for Finance, 'to put at the head of the financial section a clause reserving future claims of the Allies and I propose the following text: "With the reservation that any future claims or demands on the part of the Allies remain unaffected."' The clause was accepted, and upon this apparently innocent sentence was later based the French claim that, as regards reparations, they were not bound by the terms of the pre-Armistice agreement, but were authorized to insert in the conditions of peace any terms that seemed to them justified by circumstances.

Colonel House made no further objection to the French demand for the insertion of the topic of reparations in the Armistice. In fact it was he who at the close of the discussion, appreciating the insistence of Clemenceau, proposed the adoption of the French Prime Minister's formula. His feeling was that, although out of place in the Armistice, it was harmless and, as Clemenceau indicated, a sop to French sentiment. The basis for the peace, House argued, was to be found not in the Armistice clauses, which merely put an end to the war, but rather in the pre-Armistice correspondence between the Allies, President Wilson, and Germany, in which the principles of the settlement were carefully defined. But the references to reparations in the Armistice Convention were destined to return to plague the American delegates at the Peace Conference.

III

If the military conditions drafted by Foch produced long

debate by the heads of government, the naval conditions drafted by the representatives of the Allied navies resulted in even more protracted discussion. They were taken up in the small conference which met in Colonel House's headquarters on the morning of November 1. 'Geddes presented the naval programme,' wrote House, 'which the Interallied Naval Council offered for our consideration. We thought it too drastic.'

'The list of ships to be surrendered,' said Geddes, 'has been drawn up on the basis that if the [British] Grand Fleet and the [German] High Sea Fleet were to fight a battle, the German fleet would come out of it with the loss of the equivalent of these ships. A second reason is that if President Wilson's conditions are to be fulfilled and the Germans are not to be in a position to renew the war under better conditions than those at present existing, their fleet must be cut down as proposed. A final reason is that the German fleet is superior in battle cruisers to the Allies, and if these were not handed over, the Allies would have to start to build battle cruisers.'

Each branch of the service is naturally insistent upon its own importance, and to the military advisers it seemed that the naval experts asked more than was really necessary to disable Germany, in demanding the surrender of battleships and battle cruisers as well as submarines. Foch appreciated the threat of the submarines, but he could not recognize the need of surrendering the surface fleet which had been shut up in German harbors during the war. He was anxious that German acquiescence in the military terms he had drafted should not be endangered by the drastic demands of the navy.

'As for the German surface fleet,' Foch asked, 'what do you fear from it? During the whole war only a few of its units have ventured from their ports. The surrender of

these units will be merely a manifestation, which will please the public but nothing more. Why make the armistice harder, for I repeat its sole object is to place Germany *hors de combat*? What will you do if the Germans, after having accepted the severe and ample conditions that I propose, refuse to subscribe to the additional humiliations you suggest? Will you on that account run the risk of a renewal of hostilities with the useless sacrifices of thousands of lives?' ¹

'It is necessary,' added Foch, according to House's record of the conversation, 'to deprive the enemy of the means by which he can hurt us. Up to now the submarines have undoubtedly hurt us most, and are still hurting us. These therefore should be taken without question. From an outside point of view, however, I do not understand why we should demand the battle cruisers, and I myself am opposed to it. It would not be right to ask the armies to fight again in order to secure these conditions.'

Geddes retorted that it was an error to suppose that the surface fleet of Germany had not been and might not yet be a factor of tremendous importance:

'Marshal Foch is wrong in saying that the submarines alone have hurt us. But for the Grand Fleet the ships it is now proposed to take would have been out on the trade routes and inflicting great destruction on the Allies. They would even interrupt the arrival of American troops. Marshal Foch has no idea how much trouble the High Sea Fleet has given us, because the Grand Fleet has always held it in check. If these ships are not surrendered, the Grand Fleet during the armistice will be in the same state of tension as that of two armies opposed to each other in battle array in trenches.'

¹ Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 67.

Foch then proposed to shut the High Sea Fleet up in certain designated ports. The German ships might be confined to the Baltic, while the Allies took Heligoland and Cuxhaven as a gage. To this Geddes replied that it would be then necessary to watch the Belts closely and all the strain of war would be continued for the navy.

Lloyd George intervened to suggest a compromise based upon the surrender of submarines and battle cruisers, leaving the battleships to be interned. Like Foch, he was anxious that Germany's acceptance of the Armistice should not be endangered by asking anything that was not absolutely necessary.

'The terms proposed by the Allied Naval Council,' Lloyd George said, 'are rather excessive. I suggest that the Allied Naval Council should meet again and reëxamine the question on the basis that all the submarines are to be surrendered. I fear it is unavoidable to obtain the battle cruisers. The Germans have a large number of battle cruisers now, and several more upon the stocks. Consequently, in 1919, they will have as many as all the Allies put together, and will even get ahead in the North Sea. We cannot alter this balance against us before 1921. I suggest therefore that the second basis should be the surrender of the battle cruisers. These vessels are possessed of great speed and nothing that the Allies have afloat can catch them. The British have fortunately built some battle cruisers, but neither the American nor the French navies have any at all. I am inclined, however, to agree with Marshal Foch about the battleships. In this respect we have an overwhelming superiority. I propose that the battleships might be interned in neutral ports with nucleus crews on board. These conditions will appear much less hard to the Germans who, while they will know that they will never get the battle cruisers back, will assume that the battleships will be returned to them.'

Thus the question was referred back to the Naval Council, which much against the desires of its members was forced to consider how the naval terms might be made more palatable to Germany. At the meeting of the Supreme War Council on the afternoon of November 2, Clemenceau asked Admiral Hope, representing the Naval Council, to explain the situation.

Hope presented the matter much as Geddes had done to the Prime Ministers. Unless Germany were deprived of the ships demanded by the Naval Council, she would come out of the war stronger than at the beginning and would remain a permanent menace to the peace of the world. The British Admiralty insisted that the German fleet must be rendered innocuous for the period of the Armistice. Either the ships designated must be surrendered or must be interned under Allied surveillance in a neutral port, on the understanding that they should not be returned to Germany. Surrender he regarded as the preferable plan.

Much against House's wish, Lloyd George insisted upon further postponement. He still opposed the drastic conditions of the Naval Council, but he wished to avoid an open disagreement with his own naval advisers.

'I attended the Supreme War Council,' wrote House, 'at Versailles at three o'clock. . . . Lloyd George insisted upon postponing the naval part of the programme until Monday. He contended that if Austria accepted our armistice, we could then put stiffer terms to Germany. I contended that we might as well send in our terms now and not wait until [we know] what Austria will do. We have given Austria an ultimatum which expires Sunday at midnight. Germany will know whether Austria accepts our terms before she receives the terms of the armistice being sent her, and if Austria declines the conditions we have laid down, then Germany will certainly decline the conditions laid down for

her. It seems to me a useless waste of time to defer action.'

On November 3 the Prime Ministers met again with their naval and military experts to discuss naval terms. Mr. Lloyd George cast about to find a compromise acceptable to naval experts who insisted upon the surrender of the battle cruisers and battleships. 'Our admirals,' he said, 'have their tails up and will not move. We might suggest that instead of confiscating cruisers and battleships we intern the whole lot.'

'That is what I think,' said House, 'and leave the ultimate disposition of these ships to the Peace Conference.'

'There will be no place in the Society of Nations,' added Clemenceau, 'for a country with thirty-two dreadnoughts,' evidently feeling that surrender of the ships would mean their addition to existing European navies.

The compromise advocated by Mr. Lloyd George was supported by Admiral Benson, in whom Colonel House placed great confidence. 'I was in favor of sinking all German war craft,' wrote Admiral Benson later. 'The majority of the Committee on naval terms wanted the vessels divided up. I did not feel that after peace any naval armaments should be increased.'¹ Unable to secure acquiescence in his plan for immediately sinking the German navy, Admiral Benson was able at least to assure himself that the Allied navies would not ultimately be increased by the addition of the German ships, and that the term 'surrender' was used merely to show Germany she need not expect the return of her navy.

Admiral Benson to Colonel House

PARIS, November 2, 1918

I have had a full and frank discussion with Sir Eric Geddes on the question of the ships [to be] surrendered. He assured

¹ Admiral Benson to C. S., June 16, 1928.

me with the utmost frankness and candor that the disposition of these ships should not be used for augmenting European armament after the war and that in his opinion none of the European Powers have so anticipated. He stated frankly that in his opinion they should be destroyed when final decision is reached. I believe that he is fully informed of the attitude of the other Associated Powers.

The word 'surrendered' was used in order that there might be no possible misinterpretation by Germany as to the terms imposed.

W. S. BENSON

Admiral Benson believed that if the German ships were never to be returned to the Germans, and if the omission of the word 'surrender' would ease German sensibilities, it might be possible to intern them as Mr. Lloyd George suggested. On November 4 he presented to the chiefs of state and Colonel House the advantages of the compromise proposed.

'It is held that it is impossible,' Benson told the heads of government, 'to decrease the number of vessels to be surrendered. As a matter of fact all of the German fleet will, by the requirements, be rendered harmless under either condition imposed.'

'The point at issue is, shall the ten battleships be surrendered or shall they be interned in a neutral port?'

'In any case the final disposal of all vessels must be decided by the Peace Conference.'

'To intern the ten battleships will increase the probability of acceptance of the terms of the Armistice. In order to save life every possible effort should be made to submit such terms as will satisfy our requirements and at the same time bring an end to hostilities.'

'The British, French, and Italian proposals consider the

surrender to the Allies and to the United States of sixteen dreadnoughts [six battle cruisers, ten battleships], eight light cruisers including two minelayers, and fifty destroyers. These proposals are in complete agreement with my own, except in respect to the sixteen dreadnoughts which I wish to have interned and not surrendered to the Allies. I think that the internment of all the dreadnoughts might be required rather than the surrender of sixteen.'

Again Marshal Foch protested against the recommendation of the naval experts, even though softened by Benson's suggestion. 'Shall the war be continued for the sole advantage of interning these ships in a neutral port? I myself cannot see the advantage of this, especially as the ships have never been used.'

'Yes,' said Lloyd George, 'but if these German battleships had not existed, Great Britain could have furnished 350,000 more men, possibly 500,000, and we should have had ample supplies of coal, oil, and other commodities.'

'But the German battleships,' retorted Foch, 'never left their ports and naval warfare now is conducted by submarines. German battleships have no doubt kept the British fleet in home waters, but their action was virtual not actual. Are we to continue the war simply to suppress this virtual influence? Should the Germans refuse to surrender their fleet, what should we do? If we obtain satisfaction for our military conditions the war is ended whether the enemy accepts the naval clauses or not. Otherwise we should continue the war to pursue the capture of ships which are blockaded in their ports, when the acceptance of the military conditions alone is enough to carry the day.'

There were thus three plans before the heads of government: that of Foch, who protested the uselessness and danger of even interning the German battleships; that of the

Naval Council, which demanded their surrender; that of Mr. Lloyd George supported by Admiral Benson, advocating their internment. After listening to Marshal Foch, Mr. Lloyd George proposed that Germany should surrender the stipulated number of submarines, but that all the other war craft in question, battle cruisers as well as battleships, should merely be interned in a neutral port. Clemenceau, Orlando, and House agreed that this course should be followed, if the naval advisers could be persuaded to yield.

This solution was laid before the Supreme War Council in the afternoon of November 4, at the final reading of the armistice terms. Lloyd George in the mean time had left for England, and the remaining British representatives made it perfectly plain that the responsibility for softening the naval terms must rest with the Prime Minister. Geddes in very pointed fashion asked whether the heads of government and Colonel House had 'decided' that surrender of the German warships in question was impossible and that they should be interned. Colonel House replied that such was his impression and that Mr. Lloyd George, who had made the proposal, had left in the belief that internment had been substituted for surrender.

Clemenceau agreed with House, but stated that the Council was free to change the decision. The draft of the terms revised in the sense suggested by Lloyd George was then read and approved by the Council. Both Geddes and Admiral de Bon for France made it clear that they did not like the change and acquiesced only because of the definite decision of the heads of government. 'I want to state,' said Geddes with emphasis, 'that the Naval Council, withholding its approval, is merely submitting to the decision of the Ministers.'¹

¹ The essential discussions taking place in this and preceding meetings of the Supreme War Council are published in Gabriel Terrail, *Les négociations secrètes et les quatre armistices*, 226-66.

The naval terms of the armistice, as agreed upon, included the following reading for the clause which had given so much difficulty:

'The following German surface warships, which shall be designated by the Allies and the United States of America, shall forthwith be disarmed and thereafter interned in neutral ports to be designated by the Allies and the United States of America and placed under surveillance of the Allies and the United States of America, only caretakers being left on board, namely: six battle cruisers, ten battleships, eight light cruisers including two minelayers, fifty destroyers of the most modern types.'

The difficulty of finding an adequate neutral port for the internment of the German fleet led to the insertion of a phrase permitting internment in Allied ports.¹ It thus came about that ultimately the German fleet found itself at Scapa Flow. When, in the following spring, the caretakers on board the warships opened the cocks and sank the fleet, much unmerited criticism was laid at the door of the United States, since it was believed that it had been the insistence of President Wilson which had led to merely the internment of the fleet and not to its surrender. The record shows, however, that in this matter the Americans did no more than accept the proposal of the British Prime Minister. Had Lloyd George stood with his naval experts, House would have supported him.

'November 4, 1918: Sir Eric Geddes,' wrote House, 'asked to call just before dinner and he was with me for more than a half-hour. He came to bid me good-bye. . . . I frankly told him that I preferred the resolution offered by George which we adopted, but that I would [in any case] have followed

¹ The phrase ran as follows: 'or failing them, Allied ports.'

England in the naval terms as I had followed Marshal Foch in the military terms.'

IV

With the final decision upon the naval clauses settled, the Supreme War Council approved the Armistice terms as a whole, and the comments of the Allied Governments upon the correspondence between Wilson and the Germans were given to Colonel House. On the evening of November 4 he telegraphed them to Washington with the covering telegram that follows:

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 4, 1918

In order that there may be no misunderstanding, I venture to repeat the procedure agreed upon for the handling of the armistice negotiations with Germany. The terms of the armistice to be offered Germany, and the memorandum of the observations of the Allied Governments on the correspondence which has passed between the President and the German Government both having been communicated by me to the President and having been accepted by him, the President is expected to proceed as follows:

1. To notify the German Government to send a parlementaire to Marshal Foch, who has been advised of the views of the Allied and United States Governments respecting the terms of the armistice to be offered Germany;
2. To forward to Germany together with the communication mentioned in 1, *supra*, the memorandum of observations by the Allied Governments on the correspondence which has passed between the President and the German Government.

It must be clearly understood that the terms of the armistice to be offered Germany are not to be made public until these terms have been accepted by Germany.

EDWARD HOUSE

This procedure was followed exactly by President Wilson, who on November 5 informed the Germans that Foch awaited any representatives they might send to ask for an armistice. The German delegates left Berlin on the afternoon of November 6 and arrived within the French lines on the evening of the 7th. On Friday, the 8th, they were taken to a train in the forest of Compiègne, in which Foch, representing the Allied armies, and Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, representing the Allied navies, received them. The following report of the conversation which ensued was sent to Colonel House the next morning by M. Clemenceau:

Report of Conversation with the German Delegates

'They take places at the table.

'Marshal Foch asks the German delegates the purpose of their visit.

'M. Erzberger replies that the delegation has come to receive the propositions of the Allied Powers so as to arrive at an armistice on land, on sea, and in the air, on all the fronts and in the colonies.

'Marshal Foch replies that he has no proposition to make.

'Count Oberdorff asks how they should express themselves. He himself is not apt at phrases. He may say that the delegation asks the conditions of the armistice.

'Marshal Foch replies that he has no conditions to offer.

'M. Erzberger reads the text of the last note of President Wilson saying that Marshal Foch is authorized to make known the conditions of the armistice.

'Marshal Foch replies that he is authorized to make known those conditions if the German delegates ask for the armistice. "Do you ask for the armistice? If you ask for it, I can make known the conditions under which it may be obtained."

'M. Erzberger and Count Oberdorff declare that they ask for the armistice.

'Marshal Foch then declares that he will have the conditions read. As the text is rather long, the principal paragraphs will first be read by themselves. The entire text will then be handed to the delegates.

'General Weygand reads the principal clauses of the armistice conditions.

'General de Winterfeldt declares that he is entrusted with a special mission by the High Command and the German Government. He reads the following declaration:

"The armistice conditions which we have just listened to demand careful examination. In view of our intention to reach a settlement the examination will be made as rapidly as possible; all the same, it will require a certain amount of time, so much the more since it will be necessary to consult with our Government and the High Command.

"During this time the struggle between our armies will continue and will demand necessarily numerous victims among the troops and the people, who will have fallen uselessly at the last minute and who might be saved for their families.

"In these circumstances the German Government and the High Military Command have the honor to revive the propositions they made day before yesterday by radio telegram; to wit, that Marshal Foch might agree to fix immediately and for the entire front a provisional suspension of hostilities, to begin to-day at a certain hour and the details of which might be arranged as soon as possible."

'Marshal Foch replies: "I am General-in-Chief of the Allied armies and representative of the Allied Governments. The Governments have drawn up their conditions. Hostilities cannot cease before the signing of the armistice. I too am indeed anxious to reach a conclusion and I will help you so far as possible. But hostilities cannot cease before the signing of the armistice."

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, November 9, 1918

If the Germans refuse the armistice we shall publish nothing. But I regard it as almost certain that they will accept. If they communicate the clauses of the armistice to foreign newspapers, we will permit our papers to copy them, reserving for the Chamber the news of the signing when it takes place.

I have just seen Foch who has given me a *procès-verbal* [of the interview with the German delegates] which I shall send you as soon as it is typewritten. They made no observation with regard to either the bridgeheads or the fleet. Their line is to say that they will be overwhelmed by Bolshevism if we do not help them resist it, and that afterward we shall be invaded by the same plague. They asked that they be permitted to retire more slowly from the left bank of the Rhine, saying that they must have the means to combat Bolshevism and to reestablish order. Foch replied that they could form their army on the right bank. They also objected that we were taking too many machine-guns and that they would have none left with which to fire on their compatriots. Foch replied that they had their rifles. They also asked what we were going to do with the left bank of the Rhine. Foch answered that he didn't know and that it was not his business. Finally they asked to be fed by us, saying that they would die of hunger. Foch replied that they should put their merchant marine in our pool and thus could be fed. They replied they would prefer to receive *laissez-passer* for their own boats. They complained that we were taking much too many locomotives, considering that theirs were scattered everywhere. Foch replied that we were only asking for what they had taken from us. They are much depressed. From time to time a sob escaped the throat of Winterfeldt. In these circumstances I do not think there is any doubt about their signing, but the present situation in Germany puts us

in the presence of the unknown. It is to the interest of our armies to have a few days for military operations. We must consider the future, for the signing of an armistice by a Government which could not make itself obeyed would merely increase the confusion. It seems that we already face such problems, for it was impossible to find military authorities who could make themselves obeyed in the German lines and this fact held up for a long time the courier who was bearing the clauses of the armistice to the German Headquarters. So long as he does not find before him any one with authority to settle the business definitely, Foch will continue his advance.

CLEMENCEAU

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 9, 1918

German delegation after first preliminary conference passed through French lines and attempted to pass German lines so as to return to Spa. German artillery continued heavy bombardment, destroying roads and bridges, and so made it impossible for German delegation to pass through their own lines. It is expected that German delegation will not be able to reach Spa until to-night. We will probably not receive any definite news until Sunday night or Monday morning.

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 10, 1918

As soon as armistice is signed I will advise you in a message which will have priority over all others. Will inform you whether terms as heretofore cabled you are same as those

finally signed. If there are minor changes will send these in the same cable. Will advise you the time when the terms of the armistice will be made public in Europe, and you can make terms public in United States in advance thereof, provided United States censor does not permit any mention of publication or of terms to leave United States before publication here.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 10, 1918

Have just been advised from Foch's headquarters that Germans have handed Foch a memorandum showing the location and specifications of delayed mines planted by Germans in territory now occupied by Allies with purpose of exploding same during next few months. Some of mines are timed not to explode until January. One of these mines exploded to-day in territory formerly occupied by Germans and now occupied by British. Furnishing of this memorandum strong evidence to indicate armistice will be signed promptly. Officers at Foch's headquarters have been instructed to stand by in anticipation of Armistice being signed this afternoon.

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 10, 1918

The following has just been received by me from Colonel Mott: 'The German Government has announced by wireless that they accept the terms of the Armistice. The signing of the Armistice as far as we know has not taken place. No information has yet come from Marshal Foch that any paper has been signed.'

HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 10, 1918

Would suggest when the Armistice is signed that you read the terms to Congress and use the occasion to give another message to the world. You have a right to assume that the two great features of the Armistice are the defeat of German military imperialism and the acceptance by the Allied Powers of the kind of peace the world has longed for. A steadying note seems to me necessary at this time. A word of warning and a word of hope should be said. The world is in a ferment and Civilization itself is wavering in the balance.

EDWARD HOUSE

'November 11, 1918: Many documents came in late last night,' wrote House in his diary, 'and it was necessary for me to remain up until midnight to keep in touch with Clemenceau and the negotiations going on between the German plenipotentiaries and Marshal Foch. We decided ourselves certain modifications in the armistice that the Germans demanded, such as the revictualling of certain sections. . . .

'We expected every moment to receive word that the Armistice had been signed, but actual word did not reach us until 5.30 this morning, fifteen minutes after the actual signing had taken place. Major Willard Straight telephoned Gordon within a few minutes after the signing and Gordon came and waked me to give the glad tidings. Clemenceau sent one of his generals around to give me exact information. I received him of course in my bedroom and *en déshabille*, and did not tell him that I had already gotten the news.'

Colonel House to President Wilson

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 11, 1918

Autocracy is dead. Long live democracy and its immortal leader. In this great hour my heart goes out to you in pride, admiration and love.

EDWARD HOUSE

APPENDIX

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ALLIED ARMIES

1st Section

3rd Bureau

G.Q.G.A. October 26, 1918

MARSHAL FOCH

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ALLIED ARMIES,

to: THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL,
MINISTER OF WAR

After having consulted the Commanders-in-Chief of the American, British, and French Armies,¹ I have the honor to inform you of the military conditions on which an armistice could be granted capable 'of protecting, in a complete manner, the interests of the peoples concerned, and of assuring to the associated governments the unlimited power of safe guarding and of imposing the details of peace to which the German Government has consented.'

I. Immediate evacuation of the countries invaded contrary to right: Belgium, France, Alsace-Lorraine, Luxemburg.

Immediate repatriation of their inhabitants.

The abandonment of a part of the enemy material in the evacuated region.

This evacuation must be made under conditions of time to make it impossible to the enemy to remove a large part of the material of war and supplies of every nature that are stored there, that is to say, in accordance with the following time-table:

At the end of 4 days the German troops must be withdrawn behind the line marked I. on the map attached:

At the end of 4 more days behind the line marked II.

At the end of 6 more days behind the line marked III.

Belgium, Luxemburg, Alsace-Lorraine will, in this way be liberated in a total period of 14 days.

This period will count from the day of the signing of the Armistice.

In all cases the total material abandoned by the enemy must amount to:

¹ The Chief of the Staff of the Belgian Army, summoned at the same time as the Commander-in-Chief, has not yet been able to arrive at my Headquarters on account of distance. [Note of Marshal Foch.]

5,000 guns ^(a) — $\frac{1}{3}$ heavy, $\frac{2}{3}$ field:
 30,000 machine-guns: ^(b)
 3,000 minenwerfer ^(a)

To be handed over *in situ*, under detailed conditions to be laid down. The Allied troops will follow up through these countries the evacuation which will be effected in accordance with detailed regulations to be issued subsequently.

II. Evacuation, by the hostile army, of the country on the left bank of the Rhine.

The country on the left bank of the Rhine will be administered by the local authorities under the control of the Allied troops of occupation.

The Allied troops will assure the occupation of those countries by garrisons holding the principal crossings of the Rhine (Mainz, Coblenz, Cologne, Strassburg), with bridgeheads at these points of 30 kilometre radius on the right bank — holding also the strategic points of the region.

A neutral zone will be reserved on the right bank of the Rhine between the river and a line traced parallel to the river and 40 kilometres to the east of the Swiss frontier and the Dutch frontier.

The evacuation by the enemy of the Rhine country will be carried out under the following time-limits:

To the Rhine, 8 days after the time-limit indicated above (22 days in all to date from the signing of the Armistice);

To behind the neutral zone: 3 more days (25 days in all to date from the signing of the Armistice).

III. In all the territories evacuated by the enemy no destruction of any kind will be committed, nor will any damage or injury be done to the persons or property of the inhabitants.

IV. The enemy will have to surrender, under conditions to be laid down, 5,000 ¹ locomotives and 150,000 wagons in good condition.

V. The German Command will be required to indicate the position of land mines and slow fuses left in the evacuated territory, and to facilitate their location and their destruction under penalty of reprisals.

VI. The carrying out by the enemy of these conditions will take altogether a period of 25 days. In order to guarantee the carrying out of these conditions the blockade will be completely maintained during the whole of this period. It will only be after this period is completed, and when the conditions are fulfilled, that the supply of the enemy can be authorised in accordance with the special agreements which will regulate it.

^(a) That is to say, about one third of the amount of artillery of the German Army. [Note of Marshal Foch.]

^(b) That is to say, about half the machine-guns of the German Army. [Note of Marshal Foch.]

¹ Of these quantities 2500 locomotives and 135,000 wagons represent the material removed from Belgium and France, the surplus is necessary for the train service in the country on the left bank of the Rhine. [Note of Marshal Foch.]

VII. Allied prisoners will be given up in the shortest possible period under conditions, the detail of which will be laid down later.

From the naval point of view the following conditions appear necessary and sufficient as bases:

The enemy will surrender, under conditions to be laid down, 150 submarines, representing about the number which are at present in a condition to go to sea.

All the German surface fleet will withdraw to the ports of the Baltic — the port of Cuxhaven and the Island of Heligoland will be occupied by the Allied Fleets.

The enemy will indicate the positions of all his mine-fields and obstructions of every kind, with the exception of those moored in his territorial waters. The Allies will have the right of minesweeping wherever they consider necessary.

FOCH

Bliss Memorandum on Armistice Terms

October 28, 1918

'Under ordinary circumstances the end of a war is indicated by two phases, viz.:

'a) An armistice, or a cessation of hostilities between the contending armies; and,

'b) A conference of the Powers concerned to determine and enforce the terms of peace. The extent to which the beaten party has effective participation in this conference depends ordinarily upon the extent to which he is beaten.

'But at the end of a great world-war like the present one, in which it may be assumed that one party is completely beaten and which will be followed by radical changes in world-conditions, the concluding phases are:

'a) A complete surrender of the beaten party, under such conditions as will guarantee against any possible resumption of hostilities by it;

'b) A conference to determine and enforce the conditions of peace with the beaten party; and

'c) A conference (perhaps the same one as above) to determine and enforce such changes in world-conditions — incidental to the war but not necessarily forming part of the terms of peace — as are agreed upon as vital for the orderly progress of civilization and the continued peace of the world.

'Such I conceive to be the three phases that will mark the close of this war and which, if properly developed, will follow the war with an epoch-making peace.

'These phases should be kept separate and distinct. The conditions accompanying one should not and need not be confused with those of another.

'It is for the military men to recommend the military conditions under which hostilities may cease so that the political governments may begin to talk, without fear of interruption by a resumption of hostilities.

'What is the object to be kept in mind, in imposing military conditions to guarantee against resumption of hostilities?

'It is to ensure the ability of the Powers associated in the war against the enemy to secure all of their just war-aims, for which they have prosecuted the war.

'It is conceivable that the enemy will accept one set of conditions that will ensure the attainment of these war-aims, but will reject another set of conditions intended to ensure the same thing. In that case insistence on the latter will mean continued war with the attainment of the same aims at the end of it as might be obtained now, with the probability that the enemy may be less able then to meet some of the just demands.

'If it is considered possible that the enemy will accept certain so-called military conditions that have been proposed for his surrender, it is quite certain that he will accept others. In that case, the real question is "Will these two sets of conditions equally accomplish the essential object, to wit, cessation of hostilities without power on the part of the enemy to resume them?"

'Apparently, all are agreed that there must be a complete military surrender on the part of the enemy as a preliminary to anything else. How shall this surrender be effected and made evident?

'It has been proposed, as one way to accomplish this, that there should be a partial disarmament by the enemy, accompanied by imposition of certain conditions which apparently foreshadow (and will be regarded by the enemy as foreshadowing) certain of the peace terms. This partial disarmament, apparently, leaves the enemy with the organization of his army intact, with his infantry armament intact, with an unknown amount of his artillery and half of his machine-guns, and with apparently reserves of ammunition intact. If, during the subsequent period, this army can receive its missing armament, either from reserve stores of which there is no absolutely certain information, or from any other source, it is ready to receive it and then might again become a formidable object to deal with. If the enemy accepts such conditions, and is acting in perfectly good faith, it is even more certain that it will accept complete disarmament and demobilization without the imposition of conditions which, coming at the very first moment, may be very doubtful in their effect. If, on the other hand, the enemy accepts these conditions and is not acting in good faith, it will be because he thinks that these conditions are more favorable to his possible subsequent resumption of hostilities. If we secure partial disarmament accompanied by the other conditions proposed, and it does not prevent subsequent resumption of hostilities, then we will have failed in our purpose. If we secure complete disarmament and demobilization of the active land and naval forces no other guaranty against resumption of hostilities is needed and the powers concerned will be guaranteed the attainment of all their just war-aims. If the enemy refuses complete disarmament and demobilization, it will be an evidence of his intent not to act in good faith.

'I, therefore, propose the following:

'First, that the associated powers demand complete military disarmament and demobilization of the active land and naval forces of the enemy,

leaving only such interior guards as the associated powers agree upon as necessary for the preservation of order in the home territory of the enemy. This, of course, means the evacuation of all invaded territory, and its evacuation by disarmed and not by armed or partly armed men. The army thus disarmed cannot fight, and demobilized cannot be reassembled for the purposes of this war.

'Second, that the associated powers notify the enemy that there will be no relaxation in their war-aims but that these will be subject to full and reasonable discussion between the nations associated in the war; and that even though the enemy himself may be heard on some of these matters he must submit to whatever the associated powers finally agree upon as being proper to demand for the present and for the future peace of the world.'

Comment of General Bliss on Armistice Terms

June 14, 1928

The basic ideas of my memorandum are these:

1. The Armistice terms with Germany were supposed to make it absolutely impossible for Germany to resume the war while peace was being discussed. Of course, these terms would involve, during their operation, a military supervision of Germany.

2. If that were accomplished, no other armistice terms were necessary. The Peace Conference could meet in peace and prepare terms of peace with an assurance that they would be accepted.

3. If Germany believed that her case *in the field* was hopeless (and on no other supposition would she have asked for an armistice) she would be as likely to accept my terms as those of Marshal Foch. She knew that the purpose of the Allies was to make her helpless for a resumption of the war. If she were willing to be made helpless she could not object to complete surrender. If she rejected this but would accept a much less complete disarmament, it was a fair presumption that she had in the back of her head the idea that some time she might want to resume the war and that the terms that she had accepted did not render her helpless for so doing.

Since the war various people have expressed approval of my recommendation, solely because they thought that it would have been more humiliating to the Germans and they thought they ought to have been more humiliated. No idea was more remote from my mind than that. The recommendation was made only because I believed that it was the only way to meet Mr. Wilson's declaration that the Armistice terms must make Germany unable to resume the status of war.

CHAPTER VI

TRIUMPH OF THE FOURTEEN POINTS

We are quite willing to discuss the Freedom of the Seas and its application.

Mr. Lloyd George to Colonel House, November 3, 1918

I

GERMANY'S acceptance of the Armistice on November 11 deprived her of further capacity for carrying on the war, and she was as helpless to resist future demands of the Allies as if she had yielded without any conditions whatever. But it is important to note that the surrender was not unconditional in either the moral or legal sense. As a result of the correspondence carried on by the Berlin Government, President Wilson, and the Allies, Germany had secured certain rights.

Her initial request for an armistice was based upon the stipulation that the peace to follow would be in accordance with Wilson's Fourteen Points and the principles laid down in his subsequent speeches. The President accepted this basis as a condition precedent to the Armistice, and it was also finally accepted by the Allies, with a reservation touching one of the principles and an explanation regarding another. This understanding as to the conditions of the future peace came to be called the pre-Armistice Agreement, and it was appealed to then and later, as the basis for the peace, by both Germany and the Allies. No matter how helpless Germany might be physically as a result of the military terms of the Armistice, she had acquired, through the pre-Armistice Agreement, the right to a peace settlement based upon the Fourteen Points.

Allied acceptance of President Wilson's peace terms was

not secured without great difficulty.¹ The heads of the European states naturally looked upon him as far removed from, and incapable of appreciating, European problems. His principles were couched in vague terms which might be interpreted so as to provide for neither stability nor justice in the peace settlement. What was 'justice,' and why should it be defined by the president of a trans-Atlantic state rather than by those who had experienced what they regarded as the wanton aggression of the Central Powers, and who after protracted effort and sacrifice had finally defeated those Powers on the field of battle? Long before the entrance of the United States into the war, the Allies had crystallized their war aims in certain treaties among themselves. Whether or not those treaties were wise and just might be a matter of opinion, but it was hard to convince the Allies that they should be scrapped at the behest of a distant idealist. They were ready to listen sympathetically to American arguments, but were not inclined to surrender their own conviction as to what the details of the peace settlement should be.

On the other hand, President Wilson took the attitude that the peace settlement was too vital and touched too many states of the world to be left to the decision of the great Allied Powers by themselves. Great Britain, France, and Italy, by their very proximity to the struggle, were necessarily affected by prejudices and selfish ambitions which would distort their judgment. Furthermore, although they had made no promises to the United States, their declarations on war aims had emphasized the Wilsonian programme: the rights of small peoples, the rule of democracy, equal justice to all. They had implicitly accepted his principles while the issue of the war lay in doubt; to repudiate them, now that Germany lay helpless, would be clearly a manifestation of bad faith.

¹ 'When the Armistice conferences started,' wrote Sir William Wiseman, 'it seemed for a time as if it would be utterly impossible to get the Allies to agree to an armistice based on the Fourteen Points.'

The United States, moreover, had a very direct interest in the peace settlement. She had entered the war at the moment when Allied strength was weakening; she had furnished vital assistance in advancing huge sums of money, quantities of food and of raw materials, and finally, as the result of a desperate appeal by Marshal Foch, nearly two millions of troops. It was at least questionable whether without this assistance the Allies would have been able to win the war. The United States could not afford to leave the peace settlement to Europe, thus risking another war in the future. Who would guarantee that the conditions which had brought the war to Europe and ultimately to the United States would not be allowed to persist?

Such differences of opinion were very clearly in the mind of Colonel House when he came to represent the United States at the Armistice conferences. The prime object of his mission he regarded as winning from the Allies an explicit acceptance of the principles of President Wilson, as expressed in the Fourteen Points and later speeches. He took a very small part in the discussion of the military and naval terms to be imposed on Germany. But he was determined to fight for the endorsement of the Fourteen Points with every weapon that diplomacy put at his disposal. Whatever approval had been given to Wilson's speeches by Allied leaders had been entirely unofficial. Now that Germany seemed to be breaking rapidly, it was vital to win an official agreement. Two days after his arrival in Paris Colonel House wrote in his diary:

'October 28, 1918: It seems to me of the utmost importance to have the Allies accept the Fourteen Points and the subsequent terms of the President. If this is done the basis of a peace will already have been made. Germany began negotiations on the basis of these terms, and the Allies have already tentatively accepted them, but as Germany shows

signs of defeat it is becoming every day more apparent that they desire to get from under the obligations these terms will impose upon them in the making of peace. If we do not use care, we shall place ourselves in some such dishonorable position as Germany when she violated her treaty obligations as to Belgium.'

Colonel House's task was rendered yet more difficult by the fact that in the United States itself an influential element in American opinion frankly opposed the Wilsonian programme. 'Let Germany pay for her misdeeds,' was the burden of the refrain. House, as well as Wilson, was perfectly willing that Germany should pay so far as she was able; but he feared lest the spirit of vengeance should destroy the sense of even-handed justice and regard for the future which was necessary to a permanent settlement. Opposition to Wilson's influence on the European situation was frankly expressed a few weeks later by ex-President Roosevelt: 'Our Allies and our enemies,' he said, 'and Mr. Wilson himself should all understand that Mr. Wilson has no authority whatever to speak for the American people at this time. . . . Mr. Wilson and his Fourteen Points and his four supplementary points and his five complementary points and all his utterances every which way have ceased to have any shadow of right to be accepted as expressive of the will of the American people. . . . Let them [the Allies] impose their common will on the nations responsible for the hideous disaster which has almost wrecked mankind.' This was direct encouragement to the Allies, coming from the American who, after Wilson, was best known in Europe, to divide the spoils and pay no attention to the Wilsonian scheme of a new international order.

The fact that House was able, in spite of difficulties, to win from the Allies an explicit approval of Wilson's programme, gave to the Armistice conferences of November

their peculiar and significant character. Not merely did the agreement then reached provide for the cessation of hostilities, but it also laid down the bases for the future settlement. Technically the negotiations leading to the Armistice did not take the form of peace preliminaries; actually they set forth in general principle the conditions with which the ultimate peace must comply.

II

House's first step in preparation for the debate with the Allied leaders was to provide an interpretative commentary upon the Fourteen Points. They had been drafted in general terms in January, 1918, at a time when it would have been difficult to set down definite conditions of peace. Their very vagueness, which may have attracted the enemy, made of them an admirable tool of propaganda but unfitted them for service as a peace programme. Immediately upon his arrival in France, Colonel House undertook a definition of the several points as he understood them, and because of his close association with President Wilson at the time when they were given to the world, he was well qualified for such an important task. The commentary, completed in three days, was immediately telegraphed in full to the President.¹

¹ Colonel House was fortunate in having the assistance of two of the ablest students of public opinion alive, Walter Lippmann and Frank Cobb. Mr. Lippmann, after his experience as Secretary of the Inquiry, had spent several months in the various belligerent nations and was able to summarize the state of mind in each. Mr. Cobb, probably the most brilliant American editorial writer, a clear-thinking Liberal, devoted to Wilsonian principles, exercised much influence in the Armistice conferences. 'It was Cobb,' wrote Sir William Wiseman, 'who finally drafted the reference to the "Freedom of the Seas" which was accepted by the Armistice negotiators. This was not known at the time, and a few weeks later the *New York World* made a bitter attack on House in connection with the Freedom of the Seas, not knowing that its own editor had drafted the offending passages.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, October 29, 1918

I have had Cobb direct the interpretation of your Fourteen Points.¹ I am cabling this to you for your correction and revision. It is very essential that I should have this at the earliest moment, for I am constantly asked to interpret them myself and the wires may become crossed.

EDWARD HOUSE

The following day Wilson replied by cable that the comment on the 'Fourteen Points is a satisfactory interpretation of the principles involved,' but that the details of application mentioned should be regarded as merely illustrative suggestions. Obviously all detailed points would have to be considered at the Peace Conference. Wilson's approval made of the commentary the closest approximation to an official American programme ever drafted, and in view of the criticism that Wilson's idealism was nebulous and incapable of translation into a definite policy, it is of great historical importance.² Colonel House later wrote (January 31, 1920):

'It has been stated that many of the Fourteen Points were so vague and so general that they were practically meaningless, and the Entente could very well refuse to interpret them in the way they were meant. This is not true, for each point was interpreted before the Armistice was made and the interpretations filled many typewritten pages. They were cabled in advance to the President for his approval; therefore Clemenceau, Orlando, Lloyd George, and the others were barred from pleading they did not understand what each meant. These interpretations were on the table day

¹ Internal evidence indicates that the actual drafting of the commentary was largely the work of Walter Lippmann.

² The commentary is printed in the appendix to this chapter.

after day when we sat in conference in Paris while the Armistice was in the making. Many times they asked the meaning of this or that point and I would read from the accepted interpretation.'

This official commentary took up each of the Fourteen Points in order; the more important sections were those that dealt with the general rather than the special territorial conditions. The first point,¹ which was liable to offend the dislike of publicity characteristic of the old-style European diplomacy, was defined as directed against such secret treaties as the Triple Alliance, rather than against privacy of discussion.

'The phrase "openly arrived at" need not cause difficulty. In fact, the President explained to the Senate last winter that the phrase was not meant to exclude confidential diplomatic negotiations involving delicate matters. The intention is that nothing which occurs in the course of such confidential negotiations shall be binding unless it appears in the final covenant made public to the world. . . . It is proposed that in the future every treaty be part of the public law of the world, and that every nation assume a certain obligation in regard to its enforcement. Obviously, nations cannot assume obligations in matters of which they are ignorant, and therefore any secret treaty tends to undermine the solidity of the whole structure of international covenants which it is proposed to erect.'

The interpretation of the second point, involving the Freedom of the Seas,² pointed out that it must be read in

¹ Point I: 'Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.'

² Point II: 'Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be

connection with the creation of a League of Nations. In time of peace there could be no question of interference with trade; in case of a general war the League would be empowered to close the seas to the trade of the offending nation. In case of a limited war, involving no breach of international covenants, the commentary did not go farther than to insist that the 'rights of neutrals shall be maintained against the belligerents, the rights of both to be clearly and precisely defined in the law of nations.' What House had in mind was not the abolition of the right of blockade, but to do away with the holding-up of neutral trade on the high seas which had caused such tension between the United States and the Allies in 1915 and 1916; his specific purpose was the abolition of contraband and the recognition of the immunity of private property on the high seas.¹

Point III² was interpreted to mean not the establishment of a world-wide system of free-trade, but merely the destruction of special commercial agreements as between members of the League,

'each nation putting the trade of every other nation in the League on the same basis, the most favored nation clause applying automatically to all members of the League of Nations. Thus a nation could legally maintain a tariff or a special railroad rate or a port restriction against the whole world, or against all the signatory powers. It could maintain any kind of restriction which it chose against a nation not in the League. This clause naturally contemplates fair and equitable understanding as to the distribution of raw materials.'

closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.'

¹ See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, II, 57-62, 70-80, 131-34.

² Point III: 'The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.'

As regards the fourth point, touching disarmament, the commentary indicated merely the necessity of accepting the principle and providing for the appointment of an international commission of investigation to prepare detailed projects for its execution.

In its treatment of the fifth point, regarding colonial claims, the commentary waved aside the interpretation that a reopening of all colonial questions was involved. 'It applies clearly to those colonial claims which have been created by the war. . . . The stipulation is that in the case of the German colonies the title is to be determined after the conclusion of the war by "impartial adjustment" based on certain principles. These are of two kinds: 1. "Equitable" claims; 2. The interests of the populations concerned.' The commentary made no attempt to decide how far Germany could claim the return of her colonies on those grounds. It is of importance because it suggested the principle of mandatories which later was developed by General Smuts and incorporated in the Covenant of the League. 'It would seem,' the commentary continued, 'as if the principle involved in this proposition is that a colonial power acts not as owner of its colonies, but as trustee for the natives and for the society of nations, that the terms on which the colonial administration is conducted are a matter of international concern and may legitimately be the subject of international inquiry, and that the peace conference may, therefore, write a code of colonial conduct binding upon all colonial powers.'

When it came to the more special points the commentary is less authoritative as an expression of American policy, partly because Mr. Wilson made plain that his mind was not fixed as to the details of the peace. In certain respects, however, it defined clearly what became the American point of view at the Peace Conference. This was especially true of the points affecting France and Belgium. It enunciated the principle that 'in the case of Belgium there exists no distinc-

tion between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" destruction. The initial act of invasion was illegitimate and therefore all the consequences of that act are of the same character. Among the consequences may be put the war debt of Belgium. The recognition of this principle would constitute the "healing act" of which the President speaks.' It was implied, therefore, that Germany should be forced to pay to Belgium an indemnity for all war costs.

France, however, according to the interpretation of the eighth point, could not fairly claim repayment for anything more than direct damage done by the invasion of Germany, since the invasion of France was not in itself a violation of international law. Alsace-Lorraine, according to the commentary, was to be restored completely to French sovereignty. Further French territorial claims, to the Saar Valley in particular, were not approved.

As regards the ninth point, Italian frontiers, the commentary recognized the need of a strong frontier to the north and suggested the possibility of accepting the Treaty of London line in the Tyrol, with local autonomy granted to the inhabitants who were of German stock. As to the Adriatic, it expressed the hope that an agreement following the lines of the Pact of Rome could be reached between Italy and the Jugo-Slavs, with Trieste and Fiume made into free ports. The dissolution of the Hapsburg Monarchy was accepted, and the rights of the successor states approved, with an argument for a programme aiming at some sort of confederation of southeastern Europe. In the Near East, it interpreted President Wilson's purpose as providing international control for Constantinople, Anatolia for the Turks, an independent Armenia. The commentary recognized, without criticism, the dominance of French control in Syria promised by the secret treaties, and stated specifically that Great Britain was 'clearly the best mandatory for Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Arabia.' It interpreted Wilson's intention as

meaning that there should be 'a general code of guarantee binding on all mandatories in Asia Minor . . . written into the Treaty of Peace. This should contain provisions for minorities and the open door.'

The commentary emphasized the recognition of an independent Poland, but offered no solution of the insoluble problem as to the means by which Poland could reach the sea without cutting off East Prussia. It suggested, however, that Dantzig be made into a free city and the Vistula internationalized. As to Russia, it interpreted the intention of the President as meaning the recognition of the *de facto* governments in the smaller states which had split off from Russia proper, conditional upon the calling of national assemblies for the creation of *de jure* governments; the Brest-Litovsk Treaty must be cancelled and, provided a representative government could be formed, economic aid of every kind should be offered to Russia itself. Nothing was said of what should be done in case a government more representative than that of the Bolsheviks could not be formed.

III

Such was the programme approved by Wilson and upon which House was ready to stand in his discussion of the Fourteen Points with the Allied leaders. It is easy to dramatize the difference between the American and the European point of view regarding the peace settlement. Such a difference was real and inevitable. But the historian must be careful not to exaggerate it in order to gain a picturesque heightening of contrasts. The Europeans were seeking the same end as Wilson — a stable and just peace. If they had the disadvantage of being prejudiced by selfish interests, they had the advantage of understanding the problems better. Between the foregoing interpretation of Wilson's policy and Allied plans, the difference had been reduced to a minimum. The conflict would be most bitter when it came to

the detailed application of general principles which all approved.

It must not be supposed that the Allies had taken counsel to shelve the Fourteen Points. They had hardly studied them enough to have an opinion about them. What they did not like was being bound in any sense, since they had not yet weighed the implications of Wilson's programme sufficiently to be sure how much they would sacrifice if they accepted it. Hence the week following House's arrival in Paris was marked by a steady effort on their part to evade any recognition of the Fourteen Points as the basis for the peace, and an equally steady and ultimately successful effort on the part of House to extract acceptance.

The first objection to a blanket endorsement of the Fourteen Points was raised by the British, who perceived that as Germany had asked for an armistice on the basis of the Wilson programme, the Allies, in granting an armistice, would be committed to that programme unless they made explicit reservations. The British attitude towards Wilson's principles as a whole was friendly, and they already manifested some uneasiness at the possible danger resulting from French and Italian plans of annexation. But they were troubled lest the second of Wilson's points, 'absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas,' implied the abolition of the right of blockade, their chief offensive weapon in time of war. Colonel House was, in general, strongly sympathetic with British policy and he did not object to the right of blockade if it were carefully defined. He was convinced, however, that steps must be taken to prevent such interference with neutral trade as had aroused American feeling in 1915 and 1916, and he warned the British that there was dynamite in the existing condition of maritime law.

'October 28, 1918: Sir William Wiseman came around last night as I was going to bed,' wrote Colonel House. 'He had

just arrived from London with Lord Reading and came to tell of what had happened in England during the past few days. The Cabinet have been having some stormy sessions over the President's peace terms. They rebel against the "Freedom of the Seas" and they wish to include reparations for losses at sea.

'I told Wiseman and later to-day told Reading, that if the British were not careful they would bring upon themselves the dislike of the world. . . . I did not believe the United States and other countries would willingly submit to Great Britain's complete domination of the seas any more than to Germany's domination of the land, and the sooner the English recognized this fact, the better it would be for them; furthermore, that our people, if challenged, would build a navy and maintain an army greater than theirs. We had more money, we had more men, and our natural resources were greater. Such a programme would be popular in America and, should England give the incentive, the people would demand the rest.'

Colonel House spoke with the utmost frankness to the British leaders and at the first informal conference at the Quai d'Orsay, on October 29, made it plain to the French and the Italians as well, that he meant to insist upon the Fourteen Points as a condition of the United States joining in the Armistice negotiations.

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing, for President Wilson

[Cablegram]

PARIS, October 29, 1918

Lloyd George, Balfour, and Reading lunched with me to-day and George stated that it was his opinion that if the Allies submitted to Germany terms of armistice without some [reservation] Germany would assume that the Allies



COLONEL HOUSE'S APARTMENT, 78 RUE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ, PARIS,
WHERE ARMISTICE DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE

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had accepted the President's Fourteen Points and other speeches without qualification.

So far as Great Britain was concerned George stated that Point II of speech of January 8, 1918, concerning the Freedom of the Seas, could not be accepted without qualification. He admitted that if Point II was made a part of Point XIV concerning the League of Nations, and assuming that the League of Nations was such a one as Great Britain could subscribe to, it might be possible for Great Britain to accept Point II. He said he did not wish to discuss the Freedom of the Seas with Germany and if the Freedom of the Seas was made a condition of peace Great Britain could not agree to it. Before our discussion ended it seemed as though we were near an agreement concerning this matter along the lines of the interpretation of Point II heretofore cabled you.

. . . We then went to the conference at the Quai d'Orsay attended by Clemenceau, Pichon, George, Balfour, Sonnino, and myself. . . . Clemenceau and Sonnino are not at all in sympathy with the idea of a league of nations. Sonnino will probably submit many objections to the Fourteen Points. . . . An exceedingly strict censorship directed from the French War Office makes it impossible for American correspondents to send any communications to the United States respecting the progress of the present conferences. I am examining into this matter and it may be advisable to take drastic steps in order that the United States can determine for itself what news of political character shall be communicated to its people.

EDWARD HOUSE

House's hope that it might be possible quickly to reach an understanding with the British concerning Point II, was not fulfilled in the conference with the French and Sonnino. Mr. Lloyd George made plain his opinion that unless reservation were made the Allies would stand committed to the

Wilsonian programme, and neither Clemenceau nor Sonnino was pleased by the prospect. All three seemed entirely disinclined to accept the Wilsonian programme as a whole.

'If we agree upon the terms of an armistice,' said the British Prime Minister, 'do we not assume that we accept the Fourteen Points as stated by President Wilson? Germany has asked for an armistice on condition of President Wilson's Fourteen Points being the terms of peace. If we send conditions across, it would appear that we accept those terms. Therefore we should consider whether we are prepared to accept the Fourteen Points. . . . I ask Colonel House whether the German Government is accepting terms of an armistice on the President's conditions of peace. The question is: Do we or do we not accept the whole of President Wilson's Fourteen Points? I am going to put quite clearly the points which I do not accept. Should we not make it clear to the German Government that we are not going in on the Fourteen Points of peace?'

Clemenceau at once stated that he was not inclined to commit himself and France blindly. 'Have you ever been asked by President Wilson,' he said to Lloyd George, 'whether you accept the Fourteen Points? I have never been asked.'

'I have not been asked either,' replied the British Prime Minister; and, turning to Colonel House: 'What is your view? Do you think that if we agree to an armistice we accept the President's peace terms?'

'That is my view,' replied Colonel House.

Pichon believed the matter could be pushed to one side. 'We can say to Germany that we are only stating terms of an armistice, not terms of peace.'

But the British pointed out that it was impossible to separate the different portions of the correspondence that had been passed with Germany, since the request for the

Armistice was conditioned upon the Fourteen Points. 'What we are afraid of,' added Mr. Balfour, 'is that we cannot say that we are merely interested in the terms of an armistice. For the moment, unquestionably, we are not bound by President Wilson's terms; but if we assent to an armistice without making our position clear, we shall certainly be so bound.'

'Then,' said Clemenceau, 'I want to hear the Fourteen Points.'

'Yes,' said Sonnino, none too well pleased, 'and the five more and the others.'

Thus began the discussion, which at the start seemed most inauspicious for House's hope of winning acceptance of the Wilsonian programme. The first point was read aloud: 'Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at . . .'

Clemenceau's reaction was not for a moment a matter of doubt. 'I cannot agree,' he said, 'never to make a private or secret diplomatic agreement of any kind.' To which Mr. Lloyd George added, with equal brevity and decision: 'I do not think it possible so to limit oneself.'

Colonel House, however, produced the commentary on the point, illustrated by a speech of Wilson to the Senate, showing that the proposal did not mean open conferences but merely publicity of results. He was supported by Mr. Balfour, who argued that the intent was to prohibit secret treaties.

The discussion passed to the second point, regarding the Freedom of the Seas, which Mr. Lloyd George interpreted as the abolition of the right of blockade and against which he inveighed with force.

'This point,' he insisted, 'we cannot accept under any conditions; it means that the power of blockade goes; Germany has been broken almost as much by the blockade as by military methods; if this power is to be handed over to

the League of Nations and Great Britain were fighting for her life, no league of nations would prevent her from defending herself. This power has prevented Germany from getting rubber, cotton, and food through Holland and the Scandinavian countries. Therefore my view is that I should like to see this League of Nations established first before I let this power go. If the League of Nations is a reality, I am willing to discuss the matter.'

Colonel House did not interpret the term 'Freedom of the Seas' to mean the abolition of the principle of blockade; for him it signified merely a codification of maritime usage that would sanctify the doctrine of the immunity of private property at sea in time of war. Unless the British recognized the demand of the United States that their trade with neutrals be allowed to go unhampered on the high seas, it was certain that British control of the seas would be resented; inevitably the United States would feel the need of building a navy capable of protecting its trade. House did not conceal his fear that, apart from the perils of naval competition, in case of another war British interference with American trade would throw the United States into the arms of Great Britain's enemy, whoever that might be.

'Great Britain,' he said, 'might find itself at war with some other Power, possibly France; in the past war the sympathy of the United States had been with the Allies, because of Germany's abominable naval practices; in a future war if France did not resort to any of these practices and was the weaker naval power, the sympathy of the United States might be with France.'

The French and the Italians were not impressed by the dangers to Anglo-American amity that might proceed from British control of the sea unless regulated by a revision of

maritime law. Furthermore, they had their own objections to the Fourteen Points, and they readily joined with Mr. Lloyd George in opposition to a general endorsement of them. The Italian Foreign Secretary demanded that the President be informed categorically that at this time the Allies could give him no assurance that his Points would be acceptable. It was impossible, said Sonnino, to agree upon a peace programme at the moment of making the Armistice. As regards British use of naval power, 'it had to be remembered that nations, like animals, had different weapons; one animal had teeth, another tusks, another claws, and so it was with nations.' All that could be done at the moment, he felt, was to settle the military and naval terms of the Armistice; the bases of peace must be left until later.

Such postponement of an agreement upon principles was, of course, exactly what House desired to avoid. So long as Germany was still in the field and the Allies were uncertain of her acceptance of the Armistice, the influence of the United States remained very strong; once Germany had surrendered, it might prove easier for the Allies to disregard that influence and make any sort of peace they pleased. Colonel House, accordingly, maintained inflexibly the position which he had assumed. If the Allies persisted in their refusal to accept the Fourteen Points, upon which Germany based her request for an armistice, there could be only one result: the negotiations with Germany would have to be wiped off the slate; President Wilson would have no alternative but to tell the enemy that his conditions were not accepted by the Allies. The question would then arise whether America would not have to take these matters up directly with Germany and Austria.

'That would amount,' said Clemenceau, 'to a separate peace between the United States and the Central Powers.'

'It might,' replied Colonel House.

'My statement,' he telegraphed the President, 'had a very exciting effect on those present.'

The suggestion was bound to have such an effect and was doubtless so designed, not merely because the withdrawal of the United States from coöperation with the Allies would necessarily touch very closely their economic welfare (for they counted upon American assistance during the period of reconstruction), but also because of the moral influence exercised by President Wilson at this time in Europe. He was generally regarded as the leader of liberal opinion in the world, and the news of a break between him and the Allied Premiers might have the most direct bearing upon the political fortunes of the latter.

But for the moment they showed no willingness to change their attitude. 'If the United States made a separate peace,' asserted Lloyd George, 'we would be sorry, but we could not give up the blockade, the power which enabled us to live; as far as the British public is concerned, we will fight on.' 'Yes,' interjected Clemenceau, 'I cannot understand the meaning of the doctrine [Freedom of the Seas]. War would not be war if there was freedom of the seas.'¹

House was anxious to give the Premiers an opportunity to consider the consequences of a refusal to accept Wilson's conditions; also he wanted to try his hand at individual discussion. He suggested therefore that:

'It is for France, England, and Italy to get together to limit their acceptance of the fourteen conditions; that would be the first preliminary to working out the Armistice.'

He was seconded by Balfour, who preserved his invariable poise and did not lose sight of the fact that with few exceptions the Allies would probably be willing to agree to the Wilsonian programme. On the points at issue, a compromise might be arranged. He emphasized the evident intent of Germany 'to drive a wedge between the Associated Powers,' and urged the strongest effort to avoid this trap.

¹ 'The "Freedom of the Seas" nearly broke up the Conference,' wrote Sir William Wiseman.

Lloyd George also became conciliatory and intimated that except for Point II the British had no objections to raise.

'Let us all of us,' he added, 'go on with the terms of the Armistice, and in the mean time each of us, France, Great Britain, and Italy, make a draft of our reservations of the Fourteen Points and see to-morrow whether we cannot agree upon a common draft.'

The others were evidently disappointed by the thought of even this attempt to meet Wilson's terms. Sonnino complained that Point IX, touching Italian frontiers, was inadequate from the Italian point of view. The question whether President Wilson's speeches made clear the need of reparations was raised; and Clemenceau asked what he meant by 'equality of trade conditions.' Finally the British suggestion of attempting a draft of reservations was adopted, and the conference adjourned.

IV

Colonel House was depressed by the course of the conversation, although he had not concealed from himself the difficulties which he would encounter. His best hope lay in coming to an understanding with the British, for Mr. Lloyd George had intimated strongly that apart from the 'Freedom of the Seas' and a definition of reparations, he was willing to support Wilson's principles. If Mr. Lloyd George would join with House to persuade the French and Italians to accept the rest of the Fourteen Points, and if the British would agree that the revision of maritime law should be discussed at the Peace Conference, he felt that he would have secured all that was possible in the circumstances. He concentrated his arguments, therefore, on the British, urging the vital importance of accepting the President's programme.

if the cordiality of Anglo-American relations both at the Conference and in the future were to be assured.

At the same time he informed Wilson fully of the situation in Paris and sought from him definite authority which would enable him to stand firm in the face of opposition to the Fourteen Points. President Wilson replied with a clear-cut statement implying that American participation in the Peace Conference depended upon acceptance of the Points to which especial objection had been raised. The whole question of the continuance of the coöperation of the United States with Europe seemed to be involved. The official paraphrase of the President's cipher cable, which was sent on October 30, is as follows:

I feel it my solemn duty to authorize you to say that I cannot consent to take part in the negotiations of a peace which does not include the Freedom of the Seas, because we are pledged to fight not only Prussian militarism but militarism everywhere.

Neither could I participate in a settlement which does not include a League of Nations because such a peace would result within a period of years in there being no guarantee except universal armaments, which would be disastrous. I hope I shall not be obliged to make this decision public.

Wilson's final sentence, indicating his willingness to threaten a public discussion of the differences between Allied and American peace principles, was in line with a course of action which House had already pondered. On the evening following the conference of October 29, he cast about in his mind for means to persuade Clemenceau and Sonnino to withdraw their objections. His diary of October 30 records his decision:

'This morning around three o'clock, I was awakened by

the motor-cycles of our messengers leaving the house with despatches for Washington which had just been put into code. Every night since we have been here the staff has been up until three or four o'clock in the morning. The despatches for Washington cannot be prepared and written until the evening, and the coding takes practically all night. It is necessary to get these despatches into Washington by the early morning and the staff works at top speed during the night.

'I fell to thinking about the dilemma I was in with the three Prime Ministers. It then occurred to me there was a way out of the difficulty. I would tell them that if they did not accept the President's Fourteen Points and other terms enunciated since January 8, I would advise the President to go before Congress and lay the facts before it, giving the terms which England, France, and Italy insisted upon, and ask the advice of Congress whether the United States should make peace with Germany now that she has accepted the American terms, or whether we should go on fighting until Germany had accepted the terms of France, England, and Italy, whatever they might be. . . . I turned over and went to sleep, knowing I had found a solution of a very troublesome problem.'

The last thing desired by the Allied Premiers was a debate on war aims such as would result from laying the matter before Congress. At the moment they could not openly repudiate Wilson's principles, so high was his prestige in England, France, and Italy; nor would they dare to take the responsibility of continuing the war without the moral and economic support of the United States, which, in view of the disorganization of Europe, was likely to become increasingly important.

It was thus with renewed hope that House met Mr. Lloyd George on the morning of the 30th, before the conference

which was to be held with Clemenceau at the War Office later in the morning. He found the British Prime Minister more conciliatory. He had drafted a memorandum of British reservations, which was almost identical with that finally adopted by the Allies, and differed both in temper and substance from the objections raised on the day before.

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing, for the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, October 30, 1918

Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and I met for forty-five minutes this morning at the office of the Minister of War. Just before we entered Clemenceau's office, George handed me a proposed answer to the President which the British authorities had drafted. I quote the draft in full:

'The Allied Governments have given careful consideration to the correspondence which has passed between the President of the United States and the German Government. Subject to the qualifications which follow they declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress of January 8, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses. They must point out, however, that clause two, relating to what is usually described as Freedom of the Seas, is open to various interpretations, some of which they could not accept. They must therefore reserve to themselves complete freedom on this subject when they enter the Peace Conference.

'Further, in the conditions of peace laid down in his address to Congress of January 8, 1918, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and freed. The Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be

made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies, and their property by the forces of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.'

I told George that I was afraid his attitude at yesterday's meeting had opened the floodgates and that Clemenceau and Sonnino would have elaborate memoranda to submit, containing their objections to the President's Fourteen Points, and that I doubted whether Clemenceau would accept the answer as drafted by the British, which was in marked contrast to the position taken by George yesterday.

It at once developed at the conference that Clemenceau was having prepared an elaborate brief setting forth France's objections to the President's Fourteen Points. I promptly pointed out to Clemenceau that undoubtedly Sonnino was preparing a similar memorandum and that if the Allied Governments felt constrained to submit an elaborate answer to the President containing many objections to his programme, it would doubtless be necessary for the President to go to Congress and to place before that body exactly what Italy, France, and Great Britain were fighting for and to place the responsibility upon Congress for the further continuation of the war by the United States in behalf of the aims of the Allies. . . .

Clemenceau at once abandoned his idea of submitting an elaborate memorandum concerning the President's Fourteen Points and apparently accepted the proposed answer drafted by the British. I suggested that the word 'illegal' be placed before the words 'damage done to the civilian population of the Allies,' in last sentence of draft of the proposed answer. George accepted the suggestion, but Clemenceau stated that he preferred that the draft should be left as it was. I believe that the suggestion would be accepted by all, if the President sees fit to insist upon it. I am not entirely clear yet that this is necessary. . . .

In the event that the answer drafted by the British and

quoted above is adopted by the Allies as their answer to your communication, I would strongly advise your accepting it without alteration.¹

EDWARD HOUSE

Clemenceau's acquiescence in the British draft strengthened House's position enormously, for he could now count upon French and British aid in persuading the Italians to withdraw or soften their objections. At the afternoon meeting of the Prime Ministers and the Foreign Secretaries on October 30, Lloyd George produced his draft memorandum and proposed its acceptance as the reply to President Wilson.

The Italians at once objected. 'I have also prepared a draft,' said Sonnino, 'on the subject of the ninth clause of President Wilson's Fourteen Points [Italian frontiers]. If we adopt this interpretation of the Fourteen Points [the British interpretation] as regards Germany, will it not appear that we adopt them also for Austria?'

Lloyd George, however, gave him no support, and pointed out that it was the German armistice that was under consideration: 'It has nothing to do with Austria.'

'Yes,' said Sonnino, very acutely, 'but if we state our concurrence in the Fourteen Points, subject to the observations made by Mr. Lloyd George, it will be assumed that the whole of the remainder are accepted and the case of an armistice with Austria will be prejudiced. It will be assumed that the clauses applying to Austria are also accepted.'

Despite the protests of both the British and the French that the reservation on Italian frontiers had nothing to do with the German armistice, Sonnino insisted upon reading his drafted observation on the President's conditions, as follows:

¹ In his reply to this President Wilson cabled to House on October 31: 'I am proud of the way you are handling the situation.'

'The Italian Government considers that the "readjustment" mentioned in Point IX does not imply a mere rectification of frontiers; but that it means that Italy shall obtain the liberation of the provinces whose nationality is Italian, and at the same time shall establish a frontier between Italy and Austria-Hungary, or the other states which until now have formed part of Austria-Hungary, that offers the essential conditions of military security sufficient to assure independence and the maintenance of peace, in view of geographic and historic factors, and with the application of the same principles as those affirmed in the case of Germany in the matter of territorial delimitation consequent upon the present war.'

The observation was, in truth, so phrased as to render President Wilson's Point IX quite meaningless, for by its vague comprehensiveness it would have enabled Italy to claim far-flung territories. National, geographic, strategic, historic factors were all adduced, as well as the intimation that any argument utilized by France to strengthen herself against Germany might also be utilized by Italy to annex the eastern shore of the Adriatic.

The Italian representatives were clearly anxious that this observation should be formally written into the memorandum sent to Wilson. But they received no encouragement from either the French or British. House reiterated his warning that any radical objection to the Fourteen Points would necessitate Wilson's going to Congress and opening the issue to public discussion. Clemenceau insisted that the reservation of Sonnino could not be inserted in the note applying to Germany. 'It would be just as relevant to put into the note referring to Austria-Hungary some observations about Alsace-Lorraine.' And Lloyd George pointed out that its insertion in a note to Austria could be considered later, 'although he himself hoped it would not be inserted.'

Sonnino again protested that there was danger that events would prevent the opportunity of making their reservation, and that while he was willing to accept Lloyd George's text in so far as it applied to Germany, so far as Austria was concerned the proposal was quite insufficient. But Clemenceau broke in:

'Are we agreed regarding the reply to Germany? I accept. Lloyd George accepts. [Turning to Orlando:] Do you accept?'

'Yes,' said Orlando.

In this way Italy's reservation was excluded from the pre-Armistice agreement.

IV

As a result of this conversation, it seemed likely that, except for the two observations contained in the British draft, House would secure formal acceptance of the President's terms of peace.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, October 31, 1918

Everything is changing for the better since yesterday, and I hope you will not insist upon my using your cable except as I may think best.

If you will give me a free hand in dealing with these immediate negotiations, I can assure you that nothing will be done to embarrass you or to compromise any of your peace principles. You will have as free a hand after the Armistice is signed as you now have. It is exceedingly important that nothing be said or done at this time which may in any way halt the Armistice which will save so many thousands of lives. Negotiations are now proceeding satisfactorily.

EDWARD HOUSE

The Fourteen Points had to run the gauntlet again at the formal meetings of the Supreme War Council on October 31 and November 1. At the latter, Hymans, speaking for Belgium, raised the question of Point III, which called for an equality of trade conditions, and Point V, relating to the colonies. Special dispositions would have to be made, he insisted, to protect Belgium against the invasion of German exports. He would be compelled also to insist upon the integrity of Belgium's colonies. He received some support from Lloyd George and from Vesnitch, who spoke in behalf of Serbia. Orlando again raised the question of reservations on Point IX.

In each case, however, Colonel House urged postponement, evidently not wishing to inaugurate a detailed discussion in the formal sessions and preferring to thresh out differences in the smaller meetings. On November 3 the Prime Ministers met again, with Hymans, at House's headquarters, to discuss the note to the President.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 3, 1918

... The Belgians are protesting Articles III and V of the Fourteen Points. The Italians are protesting Article IX.

The three Prime Ministers meet this afternoon at three o'clock at my headquarters to discuss the Fourteen Points. As a matter of fact Clemenceau and Orlando will accept anything that the English will agree to concerning Article II [Freedom of the Seas]. I have spent almost every minute outside my conferences discussing this article with the British. I am insisting that they must recognize the principle that it is a subject for discussion at the Peace Conference or before, and I am having the greatest difficulty in getting them to admit even that much. I have contended that they might as

well refuse to accept the principle that laws governing war upon land formed a subject for discussion. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

At this meeting, Lloyd George and Hymans again called attention to Point III, 'the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers.' The latter asked that a reservation be made which would permit Belgium freely to secure raw materials and to protect herself against dumping during the period of reconstruction. 'We shall need a barrier,' he said, 'to keep out German products. She could easily swamp our markets.'

'France and Belgium,' replied House, 'are certainly going to be able to get all the raw materials they need. No one wants to interfere with such imports. As to German exports, we have got to remember that Germany must necessarily pay out thousands of millions and that she must be in a condition to pay them. If we prevent her from making a living, she will not be able to pay.'

The argument was difficult to answer, especially for the French and Belgians who counted upon German reparations. Clemenceau suggested that there was really no need of objection to Wilson's demand for the removal of trade barriers, since the clause was modified by the words 'so far as possible.' Lloyd George agreed that this would protect their interests sufficiently, if the words were placed at the head of the entire article. If this were done, no reservation would be necessary. House agreed and further objections of Hymans were brushed aside.

'I think,' said the Belgian Foreign Minister, 'that we should have a more ample phrase than merely, "damages to the civilian population."' "

'It is then for indirect compensation that you ask?' said Lloyd George.

'I do not ask for it now,' replied Hymans, 'but I should like to have a phrase referring to it.'

'I think it will be a mistake to put into the Armistice terms,' insisted Lloyd George, 'anything that will lead Germany to suppose that we want a war indemnity.'¹

House naturally agreed and, upon Clemenceau's accepting Point III without further addition, it was decided to leave it as it stood except for the transposition of the words 'so far as possible.'

Orlando's attempt to insert a reservation on Point IX was equally unsuccessful. The situation was a curious one in that the Armistice terms had already been despatched to Austria directly and not through the interposition of President Wilson, as in the case of the German terms. Thus there had been no chance to inform Wilson of Italy's desire to make reservations on this point. Now, in sending their note regarding German terms, neither Lloyd George nor Clemenceau admitted the relevance of the Italian objection. Lloyd George thought that the attention of the President might be called to the fact that Point IX did not affect Germany.

'I think,' suggested House, 'that it would be better to say nothing at all on this matter to President Wilson. It would be inadvisable to increase the number of exceptions.'

'Yes,' agreed Clemenceau, 'it is desirable to suggest as few changes or reservations as possible to the Fourteen Points.'

Failing encouragement, Orlando desisted from pressing his reservation, and no more was heard of Italian objections until the following spring at the Peace Conference. Whether or not the Fourteen Points applied to the Austrian peace settlement, as it did to the German, is a problem that was never clearly decided. It is true that Sonnino had formulated and read to the two Prime Ministers and House a draft

¹ This brief interchange between Hymans and Lloyd George is of historical importance since it indicates clearly that in the opinion of those who drafted the Armistice the phrase 'damage to the civilian population' did not cover 'indirect compensation' such as payment for war costs and pensions.

of Italian objections.¹ But this was never formally presented to the Supreme War Council, nor was it sent to the Austrians, who like the Germans had asked for an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points; nor was it ever formally communicated to President Wilson. Colonel House evidently regarded the Allies as bound to the President's terms in the case of Austria. On October 31, in cabling Lansing that the Austrian armistice terms were on their way, he added:

'It is my opinion that the submission of terms of armistice to Austria in the circumstances and without any express qualifications, may be construed as an acceptance on the part of the Allies of the President's proposals.'

v

The withdrawal of Belgian and Italian objections to the note to be sent Wilson, left House to face the two reservations already drafted by the British. That regarding the meaning of reparations was satisfactory to him. He understood it to signify that Germany would make reparation for all direct damage done the civilian population. It would seem from Lloyd George's discussion with Hymans that neither he nor the others understood it to include responsibility for indirect damage, nor to be in the nature of a war indemnity.

As regards the reservation on the Freedom of the Seas, House was not satisfied and the President even less. The wording of the reservation would make it possible for the Allies to refuse even to discuss the matter at the Peace Conference. Wilson wanted nothing less than an explicit ac-

¹ It is interesting to note that in the reservation suggested by Sonnino, the basis for Italian objections to Point IX was not the fact that the Treaty of London already had provided a new boundary for Italy and determined its nature, but rather certain indefinite geographic, historic, and strategic factors.

ceptance of the principle of the Freedom of the Seas. He authorized House to say that if they would not accept it they could 'count on the certainty of our using our present equipment to build up the strongest navy that our resources permit and as our people have long desired.'¹

House worked assiduously to explain to the British how strongly the American Government felt that there must be a revision of maritime law, and a guarantee that in future wars neutral trade should not be interfered with, except according to generally accepted and approved rules.

Sir William Wiseman later wrote: 'The difficulty was to phrase so vague and yet so far-reaching and vital a principle. The British leaders were in general agreement with House, but the sailors arrived at the conference breathing fire. The British feared that they might be committing themselves too far, and that the country would reject anything that appeared to be giving up their sea power. This is easy enough to understand if we realize that the British Empire had experienced a war in which they would have been at the mercy of the enemy at any moment if their naval power had not protected them. . . . House believed a policy could be developed so as to afford the protection to the British Empire which they quite naturally demanded, and at the same time meet the principle that Wilson was trying to evolve.'

'November 1, 1918: I sent for Sir William Wiseman immediately upon my return from Versailles,' wrote House in his diary, 'and told him that unless Lloyd George would make some reasonable concessions in his attitude upon the 'Freedom of the Seas,' all hope of Anglo-Saxon unity would be at an end; that the United States went to war with England in 1812 on the question of her rights at sea, and that she had gone to war with Germany in 1917 upon the same question.

¹ Wilson to House, November 4, 1918.

I did not believe that even if the President wished to do so, he could avoid this issue; and if Lloyd George expressed the British viewpoint as he indicates, there would be greater feeling against Great Britain at the end of the war than there had been since our Civil War. I again repeated, with as much emphasis as I could, that our people would not consent to allow the British Government, or any other Government, to determine upon what terms our ships should sail the seas, either in time of peace or in time of war.

'Wiseman is taking the matter up with his people to-night and will let me know to-morrow.

'*November 2, 1918:* Lord Northcliffe lunched with me. He offered the use of his publications in any way desired. At this interview I merely gave him a glimpse of my difficulties. . . .

'Lord Reading and Wiseman were waiting to take up the troublesome question of the "Freedom of the Seas." We worked at it for more than two hours, but "got nowhere." . . .

'I said to Reading that they took the same attitude Germany took in the spring of 1914 regarding her army. The Germans declared that all the bayonets of Europe were pointed at Germany and that it was essential to her existence not to consent to even modified disarmament. They contended that their army was not for aggression, and pointed out that of all the great Powers, Germany was the only one that had not made territorial conquests for nearly a half-century. But Germany came to grief, and in my opinion it was inevitable that Great Britain would likewise have cause to regret such an arbitrary attitude.

'*November 4, 1918:* It is difficult to fully tell of the tense feeling that has prevailed due to the discussion of the Fourteen Points. George and I, and Reading and I have had many conferences, separately and together. . . .

'Lloyd George said that Great Britain would spend her last guinea to keep a navy superior to that of the United

States or any other Power, and that no Cabinet official could continue in the Government in England who took a different position. I countered this by telling him it was not our purpose to go into a naval building rivalry with Great Britain, but it was our purpose to have our rights at sea adequately safeguarded, and that we did not intend to have our commerce regulated by Great Britain whenever she was at war.

'After we had this debate, George sent Reading around to argue the matter with me. . . . I told Reading he was wasting his breath, that in no circumstances would we yield the point about the Freedom of the Seas being a matter for discussion between our two Governments. I insisted that sooner or later we would come to a clash if an understanding was not reached as to laws governing the seas. I let him know that it was not my intention to budge and that I had the backing of the President.'

The importance of reaching some understanding on this point with the British, so House believed, transcended every other political question except that of the League of Nations, with which it was closely connected. For six years he had insisted that the surest guarantee of world tranquillity was to be found in the close political friendship of the English-speaking peoples. This conviction had inspired his attitude on all his trips abroad as representative of President Wilson, and it had been intensified by the war. To meet the social and economic confusion certain to follow the war, to drag order from chaos, a League of Nations was essential; and House believed that the success of the League would depend in large measure upon the enduring coöperation of the United States, Great Britain, and her overseas Dominions.

The sole obstacle to Anglo-American friendship lay in the question of British naval policy. There was always the danger that in time of future war, as in 1915, a crisis might arise which would touch American susceptibilities and interests.

House did not wish to wait until national feelings were strained, before attempting to remove the possible cause of quarrel. The moment when Great Britain and the United States were still bound by the common effort against Germany was, he insisted, the moment most suitable to obviate any possibility of a future clash between British and American naval policy. If the British would agree to discuss the principle of the Freedom of the Seas, he believed that it would not be impossible to reach such an understanding as would settle the rules of maritime transport in war-time to American satisfaction, and also lead to the abolition of competition in naval armaments. But if the British rejected summarily the American demand for a revision of those rules, the cloud of future quarrels would hang upon the horizon.

VI

At the meeting of November 3, House planned to ask the British to accept explicitly the principle of the Freedom of the Seas, as Wilson desired. This, as he knew, would be refused. What was essential, as a minimum, was to receive from them a guarantee that the reservation they had proposed would not exclude full and free discussion of the principle at the Peace Conference. He began by presenting a paraphrase of a cablegram of October 31 from President Wilson, commenting upon the draft note of the Allies:

‘The President says that he freely and sympathetically recognizes the necessities of the British and their strong position with regard to the seas, both at home and throughout the Empire. Freedom of the Seas he realizes is a question upon which there should be the freest discussion and the most liberal exchange of views. The President is not sure, however, that the Allies have definitely accepted the principle of the Freedom of the Seas and that they are reserving only the limitations and free discussions of the subject.

'The President insists that terms I, II, III, and XIV¹ are essentially American terms in the programme and he cannot recede from them. The question of the Freedom of the Seas need not be discussed with the German Government, provided we have agreed amongst ourselves beforehand.

'Blockade is one of the questions which has been altered by the developments in this war and the law governing it will certainly have to be altered. There is no danger, however, that it will be abolished.'²

Mr. Lloyd George at once made plain that he was not inclined to change the reservation he had drafted, and he threw out lines for help from Orlando and Clemenceau. 'This is not merely a question for Great Britain, but also for France and Italy. We have all benefited by the blockade which prevented steel, copper, rubber, and many other classes of goods from entering Germany. This has been a very important element in the defeat of the enemy.'

'Yes,' said House, 'but the President does not object to the principle of the blockade. He merely asks that the principle of the Freedom of the Seas be accepted.'

Clemenceau, to whom House had been talking, inter-

¹ Open Diplomacy, Freedom of the Seas, Levelling of Trade Barriers, League of Nations.

² House omitted from this paraphrase a sentence of the cable in which President Wilson reiterated his threat that if the Freedom of the Seas were not accepted, he might have to lay the matter before 'Congress who will have no sympathy or wishes that American life and property shall be sacrificed for British naval control.'

Wilson and House in stating that the Freedom of the Seas did not imply the abolition of blockade meant that, while private property on the high seas should go unmolested, the rules regarding the blockade of ports might remain unchanged. They doubtless had in mind the American proposal before the Hague Conference in 1907: 'The private property of all citizens of the signatory Powers, with the exception of contraband of war, shall be exempt from capture or seizure at sea by the armed vessels or military forces of the said Powers. However, this provision in no way implies the inviolability of vessels which may attempt to enter a port blockaded by the naval forces of the above-mentioned Powers, nor of the cargoes of the said vessels.'

jected: 'I do not see any reason for not accepting the principle. We accept'; and, turning to Mr. Lloyd George with bluff *bonhomie*: 'you do also, do you not?'

But on this Lloyd George was firm. 'No,' he said, 'I could not accept the principle of the Freedom of the Seas. It has got associated in the public mind with the blockade. It's no good saying I accept the principle. It would only mean that in a week's time a new Prime Minister would be here who would say that he could not accept this principle. The English people will not look at it. On this point the nation is absolutely solid. It's no use for me to say that I can accept when I know that I am not speaking for the British nation.'

Then, asked House, if the principle itself could not be accepted at this time, were the British ready to discuss it freely at the Peace Conference? Or did the reservation contained in the draft imply a peremptory challenge of Wilson's position?

'This formula does not in the least challenge the position of the United States,' said Lloyd George. 'All we say is that we reserve the freedom to discuss the point when we go to the Peace Conference. I don't despair of coming to an agreement.'

'I wish you would write something I could send the President,' said House.

'Will he like something of this kind?' returned Lloyd George: "'We are quite willing to discuss the Freedom of the Seas and its application.'"

House agreed, and with this compromise the matter was left for the consideration of the Peace Conference.

Mr. Lloyd George to Colonel House

PARIS, November 3, 1918

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I write to confirm the statement I made in the course of our talk this afternoon at your house when I told you that

'we were quite willing to discuss the Freedom of the Seas in the light of the new conditions which have arisen in the course of the present war.' In our judgment this most important subject can only be dealt with satisfactorily through the freest debate and the most liberal exchange of views.

I send you this letter after having had an opportunity of talking the matter over with the Foreign Secretary who quite agrees.

Ever sincerely

D. LLOYD GEORGE

Thus, through the insistence of Colonel House and the willingness of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour to meet him halfway, an opportunity was created to settle once and for all the sole enduring factor of difference between Great Britain and the United States. With the growth of American overseas trade, it was inevitable that there should come a demand for a navy capable of protecting it; unless some guarantee of its protection could be found in international law, the rapid development of the American navy and a competition in naval armaments were almost certain. The solution which House offered was not new; it was simply the combination of the British proposal to abolish contraband and the American proposal to recognize the immunity of private property on the high seas, both of which had been advanced at the Hague Conference in 1907.¹

The opportunity to eliminate Anglo-American naval rivalry was not developed at the Peace Conference, presumably because of the faith that President Wilson put in the League of Nations. With the United States remaining outside of the League, the problem of naval rivalry was bound to reappear and, despite the Washington Treaties, to

¹ Five Powers, including the United States, had voted against the British proposal, and eleven Powers, including Great Britain, had voted against the American proposal.

assume a sinister aspect. Thus after the failure of the Geneva Conference of 1927, the proposal of the Freedom of the Seas was once more advanced. In Great Britain voices were raised in defense of a reconsideration of the problem. 'The one nation that can be successfully blockaded,' wrote Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy, 'is Britain, and yet we cling to the weapon which may possibly bring about our destruction.' Viscount Cecil of Chelwood demanded a careful reëxamination of the problem: 'We should aim at such a change in belligerent rights at sea as will enable us to feed our people in war-time without risk of hostile capture.'¹

'We all profess a desire,' wrote Colonel House, 'to reach an agreement regarding naval disarmament and strangely neglect to seek our ends by this simplest of all methods. . . . Great Britain has elected to maintain her defense through a navy rather than a large army, therefore there could be no objection to as large a navy as she desired, provided it was not used to blockade or interfere with enemy or neutral commerce in time of war. . . . With the Freedom of the Seas guaranteed by covenant between nations, there would be no incentive for the United States, France, Germany, or Russia or other Powers to maintain navies larger than sufficient for police purposes. To say that such a treaty would not be regarded in time of stress is to condemn all treaties. . . . The benefits which would accrue to Great Britain through the Freedom of the Seas would be free communication with her Dominions, and the certainty that her food supply and raw materials could never be interrupted. Such a policy would eliminate the terrors of submarine warfare, for sub-

¹ The *Times*, November 27, 1927. Cf. also W. R. Pringle in the *British Weekly*: 'Naval opinion here is by no means unanimous in upholding the old British theory of belligerent rights. Eminent naval authorities believe that under modern conditions, in view of the probabilities of the future, Great Britain has more to gain by abandoning the old rules than by adhering to them. There is certainly, in the interests of both countries and for the sake of peace, the strongest case for discussion and negotiation.'

marines could be used only against battleships and craft of war.'¹

It was this prospect which, at the time of the Armistice, Colonel House believed might be opened up as the result of the letter of Mr. Lloyd George, agreeing to discuss the Freedom of the Seas. His faith in the reasonableness of the plan was such that he was convinced that calm discussion alone was necessary to transform it from a vision to a fact.

VII

On November 4 the Supreme War Council approved formally the Allied memorandum to President Wilson, which reserved free discussion on Point II, the Freedom of the Seas, and defined the meaning of 'reparation.' The memorandum carried definite endorsement of Wilson's Fourteen Points in other respects. It was sent to the President, and on November 5 was forwarded by him to the Germans together with a note informing them that terms could be received from Marshal Foch.

This note, including the memorandum, is of vital importance. 'It constitutes the formal and written offer of the Allied and Associated States to conclude with Germany (a) an armistice convention, and (b) a treaty of peace. This offer, it is conceived, was accepted by Germany by the act of sending representatives, through military channels, to meet Marshal Foch for the purpose of arranging an armistice. By the acceptance of the offer a solemn agreement was reached which served, both morally and legally, as the basis of the armistice convention and the treaty of peace.'²

Both Germany and the Allies accepted this pre-armistice agreement as the basis upon which peace should be settled. The formal protests of the German delegates against the

¹ Colonel House in *Contemporary Review*, April, 1928.

² Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference*, 1, 382.

Versailles Treaty, in May, 1919, were founded on the allegation that the Treaty was not in accord with the principles of the agreement, that is, the Fourteen Points and later addresses of the President. The Allied and Associated Powers, although they denied the truth of the allegation, acknowledged the validity of the agreement.¹

Thus were the Fourteen Points endorsed and the success of Colonel House's main mission assured.

Colonel House to President Wilson

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 5, 1918

I consider that we have won a . . . diplomatic victory in getting the Allies to accept the principles laid down in your January 8 speech and in your subsequent addresses. This has been done in the face of a hostile and influential junta in the United States and the thoroughly unsympathetic personnel constituting the Entente Governments. . . .

E. M. HOUSE

'I am glad the exceptions were made,' House wrote in his diary the previous evening, 'for it emphasizes the acceptance of the Fourteen Points. If they had not dissented in any way, but had let the Armistice be made without protest, they would have been in a better position at the Peace Conference to object to them.'

The Allied Governments had committed themselves to the American peace programme, and the opportunity of actually achieving the essentials of Wilsonian idealism was

¹ 'The Allied and Associated Powers are in complete accord with the German Delegation in their insistence that the basis for the negotiation of the treaty of peace is to be found in the correspondence which immediately preceded the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918.' *Reply of the Allied and Associated Powers to the Observations of the German Delegation on the Conditions of Peace*, 17.

opened. 'Frankly,' wrote Mr. Walter Lippmann to Colonel House, 'I did not believe it was humanly feasible, under conditions as they seemed to be in Europe, to win so glorious a victory. This is a climax of a course that has been as wise as it was brilliant, and as shrewd as it was prophetic. The President and you have more than justified the faith of those who insisted that your leadership was a turning point in modern history.' The significance of the achievement was recognized equally by the newspapers which had not been enthusiastic supporters of Wilson's policy. So much is indicated by the following despatch of November 25 from Paris to the *New York Herald*:

'The United States Government's immense diplomatic success in obtaining from the Allied Governments acceptance of President Wilson's points, with only one reservation and addition, is becoming daily more apparent as the preliminaries for the approaching peace congress are being outlined largely on the basis of the President's points. Colonel E. M. House . . . when he arrived here, found little disposition among American and European friends to accept as a totality the framework of peace as expressed by President Wilson. Some European statesmen considered that the points had worked as a good solvent upon Germany, that they had served their great purpose in their effect upon German unity, but that they should not be observed too closely when it came to formulating the practical details of the settlement.'¹

It was perhaps of equal importance that the acceptance of the Fourteen Points had been achieved without any weakening of the coöperative spirit between the United States and European leaders, a coöperative spirit that was essential to the success of the Peace Conference. The debates on the

¹ *New York Herald*, November 26, 1918.

Armistice had raised many issues of sharp controversy, but it is noteworthy that following them the relations of House with the British, French, Italians, Belgians, Poles, and Serbs were more and not less cordial. His position rested primarily upon the fact that he was the representative of President Wilson, who as chief of the strongest nation in the world and as moral leader was at the summit of his world influence. This position House strengthened by his personal qualities, so that as time passed it was as an individual rather than as a representative that he held the confidence of European statesmen. 'His advice is sought,' wrote Mr. Lippmann to the head of the American Inquiry, 'because it is believed to be a little nearer this world than the President's and a good deal nearer heaven than that of Lloyd George and Sonnino.'

The most significant of these personal relationships was the friendship that developed between House and Clemenceau. Despite a basic difference in political point of view, for House was an ardent advocate of Wilsonian idealism which Clemenceau did not pretend to understand, there was between the two a common love of plain speaking and perhaps a similarity in sense of humor which drew them together. At the moment of concluding the Armistice, Clemenceau in the presence of Pichon guaranteed that he would raise no issue at the Peace Conference without full warning to House, who in return promised an equal frankness. There was thus always between the French and the Americans an open channel of communication which on more than one occasion lessened the dangers of misunderstanding. The events of the Conference, where the two worked together and against each other, set the seal on this friendship. When later Clemenceau planned a tour in the United States, it was to House that he went for advice. 'I said to the Associated Press,' he wrote to House in 1922, 'that I would arrange all matters with my American friends. All those gentlemen find themselves summed up in you. . . . Now I do not move until I hear from

AMERICAN COMMISSION
TO NEGOTIATE PEACE
MEMORANDUM



M. Clemenceau.

Feb 11/19

AMERICAN COMMISSION
TO NEGOTIATE PEACE
MEMORANDUM



M. Pichon

Feb 11/19

SKETCHES OF CLEMENCEAU AND PICHON BY MR. LANSING

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you.’¹ Colonel House’s feelings towards Clemenceau were a mixture of affection and admiration, into which no suggestion of misunderstanding ever intruded. Ten years after, House wrote of him:

‘In all my experience I have never met a man who made upon me a more lasting impression. Squat of figure, with massive head, penetrating eyes, wide apart and clouded by heavy, irregular eyebrows, overhanging mustache, high cheekbones, he presents with his eternal skullcap and suède gloves a gnome-like appearance. As he used to sit, hour after hour, presiding over conferences, with eyes half closed, his face was a masque. But behind it burned unquenchable fires — fires kindled by the Germans in 1870 and to which they added fuel in 1914–18.

‘I saw much of him during the days of the Interallied Conference in ’17, and even more when we met to make the Armistice a year later. Perhaps I came as near fathoming his soul as any one, for he seemed to have no reserve when we were alone. I never caught him seeking self-advantage; it was France — always his beloved France.

‘He came at problems by direct attack, there was no indirection. There he stood almost alone among the old-line diplomats and some of the fledglings, also, who sought to imitate them. His courage was too unyielding to permit of dissimulation. He was afraid of nothing, present or to come, and least of all mere man. He was a maker of epigrams, and his wit was caustic. Friend and foe suffered alike, for he was strangely impartial when a joint in the human armor was exposed. His *bons mots* are current all over France and beyond, and will grow as time rolls on, for they have within them the vital quality of truth.

‘Although we were often on opposite sides of a question, I never found him unfair. When he made a promise, no writ-

¹ Clemenceau to House, September 10, 13, 1922.

ten word was necessary. When one recalls the wide differences in the views of the United States and England, and those of France, it is remarkable that he succeeded in obtaining the Treaty of Versailles.

'France knows what she owes him for his services during the war, but has not yet realized what he did for her in the making of peace. This realization will come with time, and the children of to-day will see a happy, prosperous, glorified France lay her unqualified homage at the feet of Georges Clemenceau.'¹

Each spring that House came to Europe after the war, he did not fail to visit the retired statesman, generally in his solitary retreat in the Vendée. The spirit behind their relations is illustrated by the following note which the French Prime Minister wrote within a few hours of the signing of the Armistice:

Premier Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, November 11, 1918, 9 A.M.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND:

In this solemn moment of great events in which your noble country and its worthy chief have played so fine a rôle, I cannot restrain the desire to open my arms to you and press you against my heart.

Your sincere

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

APPENDIX

OFFICIAL AMERICAN COMMENTARY ON THE FOURTEEN POINTS

October, 1918

I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

¹ E. M. H. to C. S., April 7, 1928.

The purpose is clearly to prohibit treaties, sections of treaties or understandings that are secret, such as the Triple Alliance, etc.

The phrase 'openly arrived at' need not cause difficulty. In fact, the President explained to the Senate last winter that the phrase was not meant to exclude confidential diplomatic negotiations involving delicate matters. The intention is that nothing which occurs in the course of such confidential negotiations shall be binding unless it appears in the final covenant made public to the world.

The matter may perhaps be put this way: It is proposed that in the future every treaty be part of the public law of the world; and that every nation assume a certain obligation in regard to its enforcement. Obviously, nations cannot assume obligations in matters of which they are ignorant; and therefore any secret treaty tends to undermine the solidity of the whole structure of international covenants which it is proposed to erect.

II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

This proposition must be read in connection with No. XIV, which proposes a League of Nations. It refers to navigation under the three following conditions:

1. General peace:
2. A general war, entered into by the League of Nations for the purpose of enforcing international covenants;
3. Limited war; involving no breach of international covenants.

Under "1" (General peace) no serious dispute exists. There is implied freedom to come and go on the high seas.

No serious dispute exists as to the intention under "2" (a general war entered into by the League of Nations to enforce international covenants). Obviously such a war is conducted against an outlaw nation and complete non-intercourse with that nation is intended.

"3" (A limited war, involving no breach of international covenants) is the crux of the whole difficulty. The question is, what are to be the rights of neutral shipping and private property on the high seas during a war between a limited number of nations when that war involves no issue upon which the League of Nations cares to take sides. In other words, a war in which the League of Nations remains neutral. Clearly, it is the intention of the proposal that in such a war the rights of neutrals shall be maintained against the belligerents, the rights of both to be clearly and precisely defined in the law of nations.

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

The proposal applies only to those nations which accept the responsibilities of membership in the League of Nations. It means the destruction of all special commercial agreements, each nation putting the trade

of every other nation in the League on the same basis, the most favored nation clause applying automatically to all members of the League of Nations.

Thus a nation could legally maintain a tariff or a special railroad rate or a port restriction against the whole world, or against all the signatory powers. It could maintain any kind of restriction which it chose against a nation not in the League. But it could not discriminate as between its partners in the League.

This clause naturally contemplates fair and equitable understanding as to the distribution of raw materials.

IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

"Domestic safety" clearly implies not only internal policing, but the protection of territory against invasion. The accumulation of armaments above this level would be a violation of the intention of the proposal.

What guarantees should be given and taken, or what are to be the standards of judgment have never been determined. It will be necessary to adopt the general principle and then institute some kind of international commission of investigation to prepare detailed projects for its execution.

V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty, the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

Some fear is expressed in France and England that this involves the reopening of all colonial questions. Obviously it is not so intended. It applies clearly to those colonial claims which have been created by the war. That means the German colonies and any other colonies which may come under international consideration as a result of the war.

The stipulation is that in the case of the German colonies the title is to be determined after the conclusion of the war by "impartial adjustment" based on certain principles. These are of two kinds: 1. "Equitable" claims: 2. The interests of the populations concerned.

What are the "equitable" claims put forth by Britain and Japan, the two chief heirs of the German colonial empire, that the colonies cannot be returned to Germany? Because she will use them as submarine bases, because she will arm the blacks, because she uses the colonies as bases of intrigue, because she oppresses the natives. What are the "equitable" claims put forth by Germany? That she needs access to tropical raw materials, that she needs a field for the expansion of her population, that under the principles of peace proposed, conquest gives her enemies no title to her colonies.

What are the "interests of the populations"? That they should not be militarized, that exploitation should be conducted on the principle of the open door, and under the strictest regulation as to labor conditions, profits and taxes, that a sanitary régime be maintained, that permanent im-

provements in the way of roads, etc., be made, that native organization and custom be respected, that the protecting authority be stable and experienced enough to thwart intrigue and corruption, that the protecting power have adequate resources in money and competent administrators to act successfully.

It would seem as if the principle involved in this proposition is that a colonial power acts not as owner of its colonies, but as trustee for the natives and for the interests of the society of nations, that the terms on which the colonial administration is conducted are a matter of international concern and may legitimately be the subject of international inquiry and that the peace conference may, therefore, write a code of colonial conduct binding upon all colonial powers.

VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest coöperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

The first question is whether Russian territory is synonymous with territory belonging to the former Russian Empire. This is clearly not so, because Proposition XIII stipulates an independent Poland, a proposal which excludes the territorial reestablishment of the Empire. What is recognized as valid for the Poles will certainly have to be recognized for the Finns, the Lithuanians, the Letts, and perhaps also for the Ukrainians. Since the formulation of this condition, these subject nationalities have emerged, and there can be no doubt that they will have to be given an opportunity of free development.

The problem of these nationalities is complicated by two facts: 1. That they have conflicting claims: 2. That the evacuation called for in the proposal may be followed by Bolshevik revolutions in all of them.

The chief conflicts are (a) Between the Letts and Germans in Courland; (b) Between the Poles and the Lithuanians on the northeast; (c) Between the Poles and the White Ruthenians on the east; (d) Between the Poles and the Ukrainians on the southeast (and in Eastern Galicia). In this whole borderland the relation of the German Poles to the other nationalities is roughly speaking that of landlord to peasant. Therefore the evacuation of the territory, if it resulted in class war, would very probably also take the form of a conflict of nationalities. It is clearly to the interests of a good settlement that the real nation in each territory should be consulted rather than the ruling and possessing class.

This can mean nothing less than the recognition by the Peace Conference of a series of *de facto* Governments representing Finns, Esths, Lithuanians, Ukrainians. This primary act of recognition should be

conditional upon the calling of National Assemblies for the creation of *de jure* Governments, as soon as the Peace Conference has drawn frontiers for these new states. The frontiers should be drawn so far as possible on ethnic lines, but in every case the right of unhampered economic transit should be reserved. No dynastic ties with German or Austrian or Romanoff princes should be permitted, and every inducement should be given to encourage federal relations between these new states. Under Proposition III the economic sections of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk are abolished, but this Proposition should not be construed as forbidding a customs union, a monetary union, a railroad union, etc., of these states. Provision should also be made by which Great Russia can federate with these states on the same terms.

As for Great Russia and Siberia, the Peace Conference might well send a message asking for the creation of a government sufficiently representative to speak for these territories. It should be understood that economic rehabilitation is offered, provided a government carrying sufficient credentials can appear at the Peace Conference.

The Allies should offer this provisional government any form of assistance it may need. The possibility of extending this will exist when the Dardanelles are opened.

The essence of the Russian problem then in the immediate future would seem to be:

1. The recognition of Provisional Governments.
2. Assistance extended to and through these Governments.

The Caucasus should probably be treated as part of the problem of the Turkish Empire. No information exists justifying an opinion on the proper policy in regard to Mohammedan Russia — that is, briefly, Central Asia. It may well be that some power will have to be given a limited mandate to act as protector.

In any case the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest must be cancelled as palpably fraudulent. Provision must be made for the withdrawal of all German troops in Russia and the Peace Conference will have a clean slate on which to write a policy for all the Russian peoples.

VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

The only problem raised here is in the word 'restored.' Whether restoration is to be in kind, or how the amount of the indemnity is to be determined is a matter of detail, not of principle. The principle that should be established is that in the case of Belgium there exists no distinction between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' destruction. The initial act of invasion was illegitimate and therefore all the consequences of that act are of the same character. Among the consequences may be put the war debt of Belgium. The recognition of this principle would constitute 'the healing act' of which the President speaks.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

In regard to the restoration of French territory it might well be argued that the invasion of Northern France, being the result of the illegal act as regards Belgium, was in itself illegal. But the case is not perfect. As the world stood in 1914, war between France and Germany was not in itself a violation of international law, and great insistence should be put upon keeping the Belgian case distinct and symbolic. Thus Belgium might well (as indicated above) claim reimbursement not only for destruction but for the cost of carrying on the war. France could not claim payment, it would seem, for more than the damage done to her northeastern departments.

The status of Alsace-Lorraine was settled by the official statement issued a few days ago. It is to be restored completely to French sovereignty.

Attention is called to the strong current of French opinion which claims 'the boundaries of 1814' rather than of 1871. The territory claimed is the Valley of the Saar with its coal fields. No claim on grounds of nationality can be established, but the argument leans on the possibility of taking this territory in lieu of indemnity. It would seem to be a clear violation of the President's proposal.

Attention is called also to the fact that no reference is made to the status of Luxembourg. The best solution would seem to be a free choice by the people of Luxembourg themselves.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

This proposal is less than the Italian claim, less of course, than the territory allotted by the Treaty of London, less than the arrangement made between the Italian Government and the Jugo-Slav State.

In the region of Trent the Italians claim a strategic rather than an ethnic frontier. It should be noted in this connection that Italy and Germany will become neighbors if German Austria joins the German Empire. And if Italy obtains the best geographical frontier she will assume sovereignty over a large number of Germans. This is a violation of principle. But, it may be argued that by drawing a sharp line along the crest of the Alps, Italy's security will be enormously enhanced and the necessity of heavy armaments reduced. It might, therefore, be provided that Italy should have her claim in the Trentino, but that the northern part, inhabited by Germans, should be completely autonomous, and that the population should not be liable to military service in the Italian army. Italy could thus occupy the uninhabited Alpine peaks for military purposes, but would not govern the cultural life of the alien population to the south of her frontier.

The other problems of the frontier are questions between Italy and Jugo-Slavia, Italy and the Balkans, Italy and Greece.

The agreement reached with Jugo-Slavs may well be allowed to stand, although it should be insisted for the protection of the hinterland that both Trieste and Fiume be free ports. This is essential to Bohemia, German Austria, Hungary as well as to the prosperity of the cities themselves.

Italy appears in Balkan politics through her claim to a protectorate over Albania and the possession of Valona. There is no serious objection raised to this, although the terms of the protectorate need to be vigorously controlled. If Italy is protector of Albania, the local life of Albania should be guaranteed by the League of Nations.

A conflict with Greece appears through the Greek claim to Northern Epirus (or what is now Southern Albania). This would bring Greece closer to Valona than Italy desires. A second conflict with Greece occurs over the Ægean Islands of the Dodekanese, but it is understood that a solution favorable to Greece is being worked out.

(Italy's claims in Turkey belong to the problem of the Turkish Empire).

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

This proposition no longer holds. Instead we have to-day the following elements:

1. **CZECHO-SLOVAKIA.** Its territories include at least a million Germans, for whom some provision must be made.

The independence of Slovakia means the dismemberment of the northwestern counties of Hungary.

2. **GALICIA.** Western Galicia is clearly Polish. Eastern Galicia is in large measure Ukrainian, (or Ruthenian,) and does not of right belong to Poland.

There also are several hundred thousand Ukrainians along the north and northeastern borders of Hungary, and in parts of Bukowina (which belonged to Austria).

3. **GERMAN AUSTRIA.** This territory should of right be permitted to join Germany, but there is strong objection in France because of the increase of population involved.

4. **JUGO-SLAVIA.** It faces the following problems:

a. Frontier questions with Italy in Istria and the Dalmatian Coast; with Rumania in the Banat.

b. An internal problem arises out of the refusal of the Croats to accept the domination of the Serbs of the Serbian Kingdom.

c. A problem of the Mohammedan Serbs of Bosnia who are said to be loyal to the Hapsburgs. They constitute a little less than one third of the population.

5. **TRANSYLVANIA.** Will undoubtedly join Roumania, but provision must be made for the protection of the Magyars, Szeklers and Germans who constitute a large minority.

6. **HUNGARY.** Now independent, and very democratic in form, but governed by Magyars whose aim is to prevent the detachment of the territory of the nationalities on the fringe.

The United States is clearly committed to the programme of national unity and independence. It must stipulate, however, for the protection of national minorities, for freedom of access to the Adriatic and the Black Sea, and it supports a programme aiming at a Confederation of Southeastern Europe.

XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

This proposal is also altered by events. Serbia will appear as Jugo-Slavia with access to the Adriatic. Rumania will have acquired the Dobrudja, Bessarabia, and probably Transylvania. These two states will have 11 or 12 million inhabitants and will be far greater and stronger than Bulgaria.

Bulgaria should clearly have her frontier in the Southern Dobrudja as it stood before the Second Balkan War. She should also have Thrace up to the Enos-Midia line, and perhaps even to the Midia-Rodosto line.

Macedonia should be allotted after an impartial investigation. The line which might be taken as a basis of investigation is the southern line of the 'contested zone' agreed upon by Serbia and Bulgaria before the First Balkan War.

Albania could be under a protectorate, no doubt of Italy, and its frontiers in the north might be essentially those of the London Conference.

XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

The same difficulty arises here, as in the case of Austria-Hungary, concerning the word 'autonomous.'

It is clear that the Straits and Constantinople, while they may remain nominally Turkish, should be under international control. This control may be collective or be in the hands of one Power as mandatory of the League.

Anatolia should be reserved for the Turks. The coast lands, where Greeks predominate, should be under special international control, perhaps with Greece as mandatory.

Armenia must be given a port on the Mediterranean, and a protecting power established. France may claim it, but the Armenians would prefer Great Britain.

Syria has already been allotted to France by agreement with Great Britain.

Britain is clearly the best mandatory for Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia.

A general code of guarantees binding on all mandatories in Asia Minor should be written into the Treaty of Peace.

This should contain provisions for minorities and the open door. The trunk railroad lines should be internationalized.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

The chief problem is whether Poland is to obtain territory west of the Vistula which would cut off the Germans of East Prussia from the Empire, or whether Danzig can be made a free port and the Vistula internationalized.

On the east, Poland should receive no territory in which Lithuanians or Ukrainians predominate.

If Posen and Silesia go to Poland rigid protection must be afforded the minorities of Germans and Jews living there, as well as in other parts of the Polish state.

The principle on which frontiers will be delimited is contained in the President's words 'indisputably.' This may imply the taking of an impartial census before frontiers are marked.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

The question of a League of Nations as the primary essential of a permanent peace has been so clearly presented by President Wilson in his speech of September 27, 1918, that no further elucidation is required. It is the foundation of the whole diplomatic structure of a permanent peace.

CHAPTER VII

WAITING FOR THE PEACE CONFERENCE

I am trying to frighten those who are endeavoring to postpone the Congress. I am telling them the people will begin to murmur.

Colonel House's Diary, November 18, 1918

I

THE end of the fighting on the Western Front came with an abruptness that caught both Governments and peoples unprepared. All the brains, energies, and emotions of the Entente Allies had been connected up with a war-making machine, the wheels of which continued to revolve actively even after the Armistice had officially turned off the switch. As much genius was necessary to overcome the momentum of war as had been applied to maintaining it at high speed. So great had been the destruction and industrial dislocation occasioned by four years and more of fighting, that even to keep Europe alive would tax the capacity of the political leaders. It was in the midst of this crisis that the problems of permanent peace, as distinguished from the mere cessation of warfare, must be studied and solved.

For the drafting of the principal terms of peace the Governments were not entirely unready, since in France, Great Britain, and the United States expert committees had long been at work evaluating and reducing to concrete form the war aims of the victorious belligerents. Colonel House's Inquiry, even before the Armistice had been signed, provided the basis for a detailed scheme, in which definite solutions were propounded for the various territorial and economic problems involved in the peace settlement. But to induce an atmosphere of tranquillity necessary to agreement upon the final treaties, and to repress the threatening tide of anarchy which might make of them a dead letter, was a more difficult task; it was of vital importance, since the success of the

Peace Conference was dependent quite as much upon the existence of a pacific state of mind as upon the character of the treaties. Treaties do not create peace; they reflect it.

Such a thought was in the mind of Colonel House when immediately upon the signing of the Armistice he advocated striking off a preliminary treaty, without loss of time. An immediate treaty, he argued, would do more than anything else to end the period of uncertainty inaugurated by the Armistice, which if it continued would necessarily foster anarchy in the defeated countries and swell the wave of nationalist aspirations that became apparent among the victors. The main lines of such a peace were already outlined. Its military and naval terms were contained in the Armistice Convention, the principle of reparation to be included in the treaty was already determined upon and expressed in the pre-Armistice agreement.¹ It would be equally possible to draft immediately the territorial terms, so far as they might be necessary to a preliminary treaty; the Fourteen Points had been accepted as the basis for the peace and the Allies had received an interpretation of these points that was approved by President Wilson.² 'Therefore,' as House wrote later, 'the skeleton of the treaty was made before the President came to Paris.'

Nearly ten years later Colonel House's mind reverted to the opportunity which he believed had been lost in not attempting a preliminary treaty without delay. His considered reflections are contained in a memorandum he wrote on April 9, 1928:

House Memorandum upon a Preliminary Treaty

'The years that have passed since June, 1919, when the Treaty of Versailles was laid upon the table for signature,

¹ 'Compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.'

² *Supra*, p. 153.

leave me with an unchanged mind regarding the desirability of making a quick preliminary peace as soon after the Armistice as was possible. That would have been the customary method, and there never were more compelling reasons for following this procedure. The intensity of the war, and the dislocation of regular human activities resulting from the war, made it vital to bring about something approaching normal conditions at once.

'As to the armies and navies of the Central Powers, the terms of the Armistice left little to add for a preliminary peace. A fixed sum should have been named for reparations, a just sum and one possible to pay. The boundaries might have been drawn with a broad sweep, with provision for later adjustments. A general but specific commitment regarding an association of nations for the maintenance of peace should have been made; and then adjournment.

'The permanent peace could have been made at leisure. This would have followed the procedure of the Germans in the War of 1870.

'In retrospect, it seems that this course might have saved the *débâcle* of the Continental European currencies. It might have avoided the long years of delay in the adjustment of reparations, a delay that had tragic consequences. Countless lives among the young and aged in the Central Empires were needlessly sacrificed; the wretched poverty brought by the debased currency upon those with fixed incomes might have been averted.

'In all probability, the United States would have ratified both treaties, surely the first, and such a commitment would have all but ensured ratification of the second. President Wilson probably would not have continued in Paris after the preliminary peace was made, and he would thus have been spared the heart-breaking task laid upon him from January to June. He also would have been spared the cruel attacks made upon him and the Treaty by the United States Senate,

attacks which broke his health and left him but the shadow of his former self, a tragedy which has but few parallels in history.

'It has been said that a preliminary treaty would have meant the sacrifice of the League of Nations; that with peace established, some of the Allies would have been reluctant to accept such a covenant as was made. I do not share this opinion. The conditions under which a covenant for the League would have been made, as a part of the permanent treaty, would have been largely the same as those under which it was made in the Treaty of Versailles. But in addition, both the Allies and the Central Powers would have been already pledged to it in the preliminary treaty. President Wilson would have been able to exercise at least as much pressure and influence as he did in the making of the Treaty of Versailles. With a preliminary treaty ratified, he would in fact have been in even a stronger position than he was during the formation of that Treaty.

'It must not be forgotten, that during the entire year of 1919 and in the early months of 1920, the sentiment in America and in the Senate itself was overwhelmingly in favor of an association of nations. Witness the resolution passed in the Massachusetts Republican Convention, Senator Lodge's own State; and also the resolutions passed by many associations of national scope throughout the United States. Witness also the vote in the Senate upon the ratification of the Treaty. If President Wilson had agreed to the reservations, and if a full vote had been registered, the result would have been eighty-two in favor of ratification and fourteen against, an overwhelming majority for ratification.

'The opportunity to make a preliminary treaty was lost when the British and French sought the impossible, in their demand that Germany should pay the entire cost of the war. Such a demand seemed futile then and seems more so in retrospect. But it delayed the making of the Treaty, and in the

end a compromise was reached, in effect that Germany should sign a blank check and that the Reparations Commission should fill it in later. This might have been workable had the United States promptly ratified the Treaty, but, alas, that was not to be. Instead there was the long-drawn-out struggle between President Wilson and the Senate, with failure to ratify the Treaty of Versailles as the outcome.

'Meanwhile conditions in Europe became steadily worse, and are only now beginning to show marked improvement. Not only should there have been an early preliminary treaty of peace, but the permanent treaty should have been one of conciliation, rather than one of revenge. The war itself was like no other in its intensity, and in its fierce destruction of human life and property. The peace, in turn, should have taken a new path leading to better international understandings. Every one should have yielded a little in order to leave in the hearts of the defeated no sense of injustice. It was an opportunity for sacrifice — sacrifice which might not have been appreciated at the time by those in whose behalf it was made, but which surely later would have garnered rich returns for all. The peace Great Britain granted the Boers might have served as a model. This peace will ever stand as a noble monument to those responsible for its making.

'For these and for other reasons, which might be multiplied, I was in favor of a preliminary peace in the autumn of 1918; and I feel that recent history has justified those of us who tried to bring it about.'

April 9, 1928.

Whether or not a preliminary treaty was to be drafted, and this possibility continued to be discussed and even assumed as a probability until the late spring of 1919, it was of importance that there should be no delay in the assembling of the Peace Conference after the Armistice. The responsibility for the delay that took place has very generally been laid

upon the shoulders of President Wilson, and it is true that because of his determination to head the American Commission himself and his desire to address Congress on December 2, the representatives of the United States could not be in Paris before the middle of December. On the other hand, it is obvious that the European Premiers were not sorry for the delay, and even after Wilson arrived in Europe they allowed the weeks to pass before proceeding to call the Peace Conference. They were interested in settling domestic affairs, and both in France and England the Governments were compelled to face a general election. Perhaps they were anxious also to let the political situation in Germany become crystallized before they proceeded to frame the German treaty.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 15, 1918

I send for your information the following telegram from Clemenceau to Lloyd George. 'The coming of President Wilson naturally changes some of our plans in preparing for the Conference. It seems to me that we cannot begin the work before the President arrives. We ought to be unanimous in this respect. Besides, I think it is not a bad idea to let the German Revolution settle down for a while in order that we may know, before proceeding, what we have before us. I would suggest to you that we draw up some preparatory memoranda either in London or in Paris. I am ready to accept all your suggestions in this respect. If we should proceed thus, the President on arriving could make his observations without any delay and the task would find itself advanced. I expect to see Signor Sonnino this afternoon. I do not doubt that he will assent. . . .'

EDWARD HOUSE

Wilson himself did not feel the need of haste in drafting preliminary treaties. On Armistice Day he sent to House a cable of which the following is a paraphrase:

With reference to the Peace Conference, will it not be wise and necessary to postpone it until there are governments in Germany and Austria-Hungary which can enter into binding agreements? I feel obliged not to leave before delivering my annual message to the Congress on the second of December. I could leave immediately after that and hope that it will be possible to fix the date of the meeting accordingly.¹

House accepted the necessity of delay until the President's arrival, but obviously became impatient as he observed the attention of the Conference leaders being drawn to domestic affairs. 'There is a tendency to delay not only the preliminary conferences,' he cabled Wilson on November 16, 'but the final one. This I think is unfortunate. The sooner you announce your purpose of sailing December 3 the better. Until then no plans can be made.'

'I am trying,' wrote House in his diary on November 18, 'to frighten those who are endeavoring to postpone the Congress. I am telling them the people will soon begin to murmur. Sonnino agreed with me, and I asked him to write me a letter and express his fears as to what will result in Italy unless we come to a quick conclusion.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 20, 1918

Various circumstances are delaying an agreement respecting important points connected with the constitution of the Peace Conference and the procedure to be followed therein.

¹ Wilson to House, November 11, 1918.

George and the other members of the English Government are completely engrossed in the pending elections and will in all probability be unwilling, until the elections are over on December 14, to decide definitely how many delegates they will wish to nominate and who those delegates will be. If George is defeated, of course considerable confusion respecting this matter will result. If George wins, he will probably make some radical changes in his Cabinet which may affect the make-up of the English delegation at the Peace Conference. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, December 4, 1918

I have just heard from Mr. Balfour that December 16th would be perfectly convenient as far as the British Government are concerned for the holding of the first meeting of the Interallied Conference. Balfour adds that Clemenceau expressed the view that December 16th might prove too early. Balfour suggested that it may be wise to allow a few days for informal discussions before the actual meeting of the Conference.

EDWARD HOUSE

'December 5, 1918: [Conference of Clemenceau and House.] We spoke of the President's arrival, of the conferences, and when we were to commence. He thought it would be impossible to begin the actual conferences of the Allies before the first of January and wanted to know if we would consent to so late a date, and explained why it was impossible to have them sooner. I consented provided it was the first week in January and there would be no further postponement or delay after they once began. He thought it not improbable that it would be a year before the peace treaty was signed.'

II

Of equal importance with the date of opening the Conference, and of far more interest to the public then or since, was the question of President Wilson's coming to Paris as an American delegate. The President himself took it for granted that he would head the American Peace Commission and sit in the Conference. In fact, on November 14 he cabled to House: 'I assume also that I shall be selected to preside.' There were certainly strong arguments in favor of his coming. No one had expounded the principle of the new international order with such eloquence and cogency. He was recognized as the prophet of liberal ideals throughout the world, and many believed that he ought to head the fight for those ideals in person at the Conference.

The political chiefs of the Entente, however, did not accept with enthusiasm the idea of President Wilson sitting in with them as a peace delegate. Not without some embarrassment they let Colonel House see their feeling, and with equal embarrassment he transmitted his impression to the President. The Premiers may have feared his influence with the European liberals; possibly they believed that he would prove in negotiation too doctrinaire and austere in his idealism. The basic objection which they presented to House was that he ranked rather with a sovereign than with the Prime Ministers; they would gladly receive him with the honors due a sovereign, but it was not fitting that he should himself sit in the Conference. In the telegram from Clemenceau to Lloyd George which the former had sent to Colonel House and which he forwarded to the President on November 15, the French Prime Minister declared: 'A particularly serious question is to know whether the President intends to take part in the Conference. I ought not to hide from you that in my opinion this seems to be neither desirable nor possible. Since he is chief of state he is consequently not on the same line as ourselves. To admit one

chief of state without admitting all seems to me an impossibility.'

Many of President Wilson's warmest supporters in Europe questioned the advisability of his coming, for various reasons. The strongest objection raised was that by injecting himself into the mêlée he would lose the moral authority which he had exerted. To preserve his prestige Wilson must remain above the diplomatic struggle, safe upon the pedestal which the admiring peoples of Europe, Allies as well as enemies, had erected. This argument was strongly presented to House by Frank Cobb, an astute reader of public opinion and a sincere Wilsonian supporter. The wisdom of his judgment was reinforced by the opportunity he had been given to watch at close range the European statesmen in the process of negotiating the Armistice.

*Confidential Memorandum from Mr. Cobb
for Colonel House*

PARIS, November 4, 1918

The moment President Wilson sits at the council table with these Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries he has lost all the power that comes from distance and detachment. Instead of remaining the great arbiter of human freedom he becomes merely a negotiator dealing with other negotiators. He is simply one vote in a Peace Conference bound either to abide by the will of the majority or disrupt its proceedings under circumstances which, having come to a climax in secret, can never be clearly explained to the public. Any public protest to which the President gave utterance would thus be only the complaint of a thwarted and disappointed negotiator.

The President's extraordinary facility of statement would be lost in a conference. Anything he said to his associates would be made mediocre and commonplace by the transla-

tors, and could carry none of the weight of his formal utterances.

Furthermore, personal contact between the President and these Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries, who are already jealous of his power and resentful of his leadership in Europe, must inevitably develop new friction and endless controversy. They would miss no opportunity to harass him and wear him down. They would seek to play him off one against the other, a game in which they are marvelously adroit, since it has been the game of European diplomacy since the days of Metternich and Talleyrand. The President cannot afford to play it.

In Washington, President Wilson has the ear of the whole world. It is a commanding position, the position of a court of last resort, of world democracy. He cannot afford to be maneuvered into the position of an advocate engaged in personal dispute and altercation with other advocates around a council table. In Washington, he is a dispassionate judge whose mind is unclouded by all these petty personal circumstances of a conference. If his representatives are balked by the representatives of the other Powers in matters which he regards as vital to the lasting peace of the world, he can go before Congress and appeal to the conscience and hope of mankind. He can do this over the head of any Peace Conference. This is a mighty weapon, but if the President were to participate personally in the proceedings, it would be a broken stick.

The President, if he is to win this great battle for human freedom, must fight on his own ground and his own ground is Washington. Diplomatic Europe is all enemy soil for him. He cannot make a successful appeal to the people of the world here. The official surroundings are all unfavorable. The means of minimizing its effect are all under the control of those who are opposed to him. One of his strongest weapons in his conflict is the very mystery and uncertainty that attach to him while he remains in Washington.

When we left New York, I believed that it was not only desirable but necessary for President Wilson to come to Europe. Since our arrival here, my opinion is changed completely, and I am wholly convinced now that the success of the Peace Conference from the American point of view depends on the President's directing the proceedings from Washington where he can be free from immediate personal contact with European negotiators and European diplomacy.

FRANK I. COBB

Colonel House explained to the President that precedent and courtesy would prevent his being chosen President of the Conference, if it were held in France. He also let him know of the prevailing feeling in Europe that he ought not to come as a delegate, softening what he knew would be unwelcome news by the intimation that he could settle the main issues in preliminary informal conferences. It was difficult if not impossible for House to urge the President to stay away from the Conference, since such advice would be tantamount to suggesting that he himself conduct the negotiations.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 14, 1918

If the Peace Congress assembles in France, Clemenceau will be presiding officer. If a neutral country had been chosen, you would have been asked to preside.

Americans here whose opinions are of value are practically unanimous in the belief that it would be unwise for you to sit in the Peace Conference. They fear that it would involve a loss of dignity and your commanding position.

Clemenceau has just told me that he hopes you will not sit in the Congress because no head of a State should sit there. The same feeling prevails in England. Cobb cables

that Reading and Wiseman voice the same view. Every one wants you to come over to take part in the preliminary conference. It is at these meetings that peace terms will be worked out and determined just as the informal conferences determined the German and Austrian Armistices. It is of vital importance, I think, for you to come as soon as possible, for everything is being held in abeyance.

John Davis, who is here, gives as his offhand opinion that you need not be present at the opening of Congress. However, I am planning for your sailing December 3, but hoping you will consider it possible to come at an earlier date. Clemenceau believes that the preliminary discussions need not take more than three weeks. The Peace Conference he believes may take as long as four months. . . .

In announcing your departure I think it important that you should not state that you will sit at the Peace Conference. That can be determined after you get there. . . . The French, English, and Italian Prime Ministers will head their delegations.

EDWARD HOUSE

President Wilson was by no means pleased with this telegram: It upsets every plan we had made, he cabled in reply. I am thrown into complete confusion by the change of programme. He added that the suggestion that he be received with the honors due the chief of State, but not sit as a delegate, 'seems to me a way of pocketing me.' The paraphrase of the essential portions of the President's cable is as follows:

I infer that the French and British leaders desire to exclude me from the Conference for fear I might there lead the weaker nations against them. . . . I play the same part in our Government as the Prime Ministers play in theirs. The fact that I am head of the State is of no practical importance. I

object very strongly to the fact that dignity must prevent our obtaining the results we have set our hearts on. It is universally expected and generally desired here that I should attend the Conference, but I believe that no one would wish me to sit by and try to steer from the outside. . . . I hope you will be very shy of their advice and give me your own independent judgment after reconsideration.¹

The cable to House was characteristic of the President's reaction to unpleasant counsel. Wilson was not in the least impelled by motives of vanity in his desire to attend the Conference in person. He looked forward to it, however, as an intellectual treat which he did not want to miss; his main interest all through his life had been centered on problems of political theory and practice, and this gathering would bring together the outstanding minds of the world in the field of politics. Furthermore, he was sincerely convinced that his presence at the Conference was necessary to the victory of liberal forces. House recognized that the President's decision was final, and set about to overcome the objections of Clemenceau, at the same time repeating in a cable to Wilson his own opinion: 'My judgment is that you should . . . determine upon your arrival what share it is wise for you to take in the proceedings.' He reassured the President as to the reactionary conspiracy which Wilson evidently attributed to the European leaders: 'As far as I can see,' he cabled, 'all the Powers are trying to work with us rather than with one another. Their disagreements are sharp and constant.'

The President followed House's advice to the extent of issuing the following noncommittal announcement, which he cabled to House and in which he avoided stating that he would himself sit as a delegate:

¹ Wilson to House, November 16, 1918.

'The President will sail for France immediately after the opening of the regular session of Congress for the purpose of taking part in the discussions and the settlement of the main features of the Treaty of Peace.

'It is not likely that it will be possible for him to remain throughout the sessions of the formal Peace Conference, but his presence at the outset is necessary in order to obviate the manifest disadvantages of discussion by cable in determining the greater outlines of the final Treaty about which he must necessarily be consulted. He will, of course, be accompanied by delegates who will sit as the representatives of the United States throughout the Conference. The names of the delegates and the date of the meeting will be presently announced.'¹

The President concluded his cable of November 19 to House with the assurance that 'if the French Prime Minister is uneasy about the presidency of the Conference, I will be glad to propose that he preside.' House spent some effort in explaining to Clemenceau the incorrectness of the prevailing belief that the President was stiff and obstinate in personal relations.

'November 30, 1918: Clemenceau came in the afternoon,' wrote House. 'I hoped he would not pay any attention to what he heard about the President being dictatorial, arbitrary, or hard to get along with. I assured him that . . . I had always found him more amenable to advice than any public man with whom I had been thrown in close contact.

'December 5, 1918: Clemenceau wondered again whether the President would sit with the other delegates. That, I told him, was a matter the President would determine after he reached France; the President was a man of sense and could be relied upon to do the sensible thing. Clemenceau

¹ Wilson to House, November 19, 1918.

said he would be willing to go to the President's house in the mornings, just as they came here to me during the Armistice proceedings, and then have more formal meetings of the delegates at the Quai d'Orsay to endorse what was done at the morning meetings. The President might be willing to accept this compromise. He said it would not do for the President to offer resolutions suggesting that he (Clemenceau) should preside at the meetings, for it went without saying that the head of the Government where the Conference was held should preside. He said this apropos of the President's suggestion, which I transmitted to him through Frazier some time ago.

'December 17, 1918: I had a talk with the Japanese Ambassador and rather disturbed his usual equilibrium by asking whether he thought the President should sit in the Peace Conference. I was amused at his efforts to give a non-compromising reply.'

Whatever the factors that may have weighed with him, Clemenceau finally changed his mind regarding the desirability of Wilson's sitting in the Peace Conference as a delegate. He may have felt that it would be easier to deal directly with the President than through an agent and that Wilson's opinions would have less influence if he were in Paris than if he were in Washington. It is more likely that he was beginning to realize the antagonism between French and British policy, which became apparent the moment the Armistice was signed, and that he hoped to secure Wilson's sympathy for French aspirations in any conflict with the British.

By the time of Wilson's arrival in Paris, Clemenceau was ready to tell House that he entirely approved the President's sitting in the Conference as a delegate. 'It might be,' wrote House in his diary, 'that he believes it will pull Wilson down from his high pedestal.'

III

Discussions regarding the place of the Peace Conference were brief and the force of circumstances, supported, curiously enough, by Wilson's fear of enemy and Bolshevik influence in Switzerland, led to the choice of France. It was ultimately agreed that each of the Principal Powers should be represented by five delegates, although at one time House advocated seven as a means of giving added representation to the Republican Party at the Conference.

'October 29, 1918: [Conference of Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and House.] I asked Clemenceau what place he had in mind for the Peace Conference. He said, "Versailles." Lloyd George replied that he and I had agreed upon Geneva. Clemenceau did not argue the matter and I suggested that it might be postponed for further discussion. In leaving, Lloyd George agreed that it was best not to have the Peace Conference upon French soil but in a neutral country. Before I left Washington, the President agreed that Lausanne would be the best place for the Conference because of its ample hotel and other accommodations and the fact that the people are pro-Ally in their sympathies. When I reached Paris I came to the conclusion that Geneva would be the better place. Orlando promised to favor any place I thought best.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 6, 1918

When Lloyd George was here I spoke to him and Clemenceau about the number of delegates each country should have at the Peace Conference. Clemenceau remarked that half of France wanted to be present, and Lloyd George replied that he was lucky, for all England wished to attend. Lloyd George said he would be compelled to appoint among others a man from the Colonies and a Labor representative.

We agreed to postpone final discussion until they had time to think about it further.

I suggested that England, France, Italy, and the United States should each have five places at the table, the other belligerent Powers to have representatives varying from one to three places according to their relative importance. This seemed to meet with their approval. I had in mind that Germany should also have five places.¹

It is essential that the sittings should contain only a limited number, for we have found it difficult to transact business satisfactorily at Versailles, and it was necessary for the Prime Ministers to meet in advance in order that business might be facilitated.

The smaller countries like Belgium, Serbia, and Greece have been quite contented to have one place each at the Versailles sittings. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

On November 8, Wilson cabled House urging Versailles as the best place for the Peace Conference. 'Friendly influences and authorities' were in control there, he wrote, while Switzerland was 'saturated with every poisonous element and open to every hostile influence.'²

House was disappointed, but at once set to work to carry out Wilson's wishes. At least the French would be pleased. He wrote as follows in his diary:

'November 8, 1918: The President seems to have turned from his desire to have the Peace Conference held in Switzerland. . . . The Conference should be held in a neutral country. It will be difficult enough at best to make a just peace, and it will be almost impossible to do so while sitting in the atmosphere of a belligerent capital. It might turn out well

¹ Wilson cabled back on November 7, approving House's suggestion.

² Wilson to House, November 8, 1918.

and yet again it might be a tragedy. I shall take the matter up with Clemenceau to-morrow morning at 10.30.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November 9, 1918*

At a conference with Clemenceau this morning I stated that the United States was inclined to favor Versailles as the meeting-place for the Peace Conference. He assured me that if it was finally determined to have the Conference at Versailles all possible facilities would be extended to the United States representatives, such as living accommodations and communication service. He begged me not to ask him for any particular thing, but to rest assured that anything we wanted would be made available to us. He said that he would prefer to have the Conference almost any place than in Geneva, even going so far as to say that he would prefer London or Washington if it was not possible to agree on Versailles. No final decision can be reached until I have had an opportunity to communicate with both George and Orlando, inasmuch as before these gentlemen left Paris we had tentatively agreed on Geneva. Orlando stated, however, that any place the United States was in favor of would be satisfactory to Italy. As soon as the matter is agreed upon I shall take the necessary steps to secure appropriate accommodations.

EDWARD HOUSE

'*November 10, 1918*: I induced Northcliffe . . . to have a leading editorial in the *Times* to-morrow, the tone of which will be that it goes without saying that it [the Peace Conference] must be held in Paris.'¹

¹ The article in question was published as a news despatch from Paris, in the London *Times* of November 11, as follows:

'The imminence of the Peace Conference has led to a general consideration of the question as to where the meeting can best be held.

'Geneva has been discussed as being the only neutral town which is

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 20, 1918

Lord Derby has just sent word to me that he has heard from Mr. Balfour that the British Government does not feel that it is bound to consider Versailles as the place finally decided upon for the Peace Conference. They feel that this is a question which must be finally decided by the Interallied Conference. Mr. Balfour points out, however, that after the various experts have arrived in Paris and the organization set up there, it will be most difficult to change the meeting-place of the final conference. Lord Derby believes that the British Government has, however, definitely accepted the proposal that the Interallied Conference should be held in Paris. Lord Derby states that he is doing his best to hurry the French Government into the taking over of the necessary accommodations for the staff of the British Government. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

possible for such a conference, but it is felt that the drawbacks to a meeting in any neutral country are too great to be ignored. The three great Allied capitals, Washington, London, and Paris, naturally come next in order of priority. London and, in still greater degree, Washington are inconvenient owing to the sea journey and consequent delay, while Paris, and particularly Versailles, seem to offer the best accommodation for a great peace conference which, in addition to a naturally very large Mission, would attract a great many people connected with it in varying degree.

'There exist, not only in Paris but also in the immediate neighbourhood at Versailles, vast public buildings, conveniently large private houses and hotels in which those concerned in the Peace deliberations could find housing. Quite apart from material questions, there are moral and symbolical factors which must be considered in the selection of a meeting-place. That it should be held in France would be a fine tribute by the Allied world to the special sufferings and heroism of the French.

'With the French army arriving, accompanied by the American army, at Sedan, France has already begun to remove the stain of 1870. The signature to the Peace conditions in the great *Galerie des Glaces*, where the now fallen German Empire once so insolently proclaimed Peace in 1871, would complete the most symbolical cleansing in European history. American sentiment is favourable towards this idea. It was at Paris that the Treaty of 1873, establishing American independence, was signed.'

It was generally agreed that the preliminary conference should be held in Paris, and without further discussion Versailles was naturally chosen as the place for the formal conference to which the Germans would be admitted.

The final decision that the Principal Powers should each be represented by five delegates still left it open to President Wilson to appoint two outstanding members of the Republican Party. He had discussed the matter on various occasions with House before the latter left to take part in the Armistice conferences. House had urged the appointment of Root or Taft, or both; but the President had expressed no enthusiasm. As late as November 14, his cables to House indicated that he had not yet decided upon the personnel of the Commission. As finally selected, the choices made by Wilson showed an obvious disregard for the exigencies of party politics, which might prove to be of dangerous importance when it came to the ratification of the Treaty. The November elections had gone so far in favor of the Republicans that they would control the Senate and its Foreign Relations Committee in the approaching session. But the President did not include in the Peace Commission either a representative of the Senate or any one of the Republican leaders. Besides himself, Wilson appointed Secretary Lansing, Colonel House, General Bliss, and Mr. Henry White, whose diplomatic experience in Europe had been extensive but who had no active political affiliations.

Such a disregard of political factors was a courting of difficulty. Attorney-General Gregory, on whose personal judgment Wilson placed great reliance and to whom he had, two years before, offered a position on the Supreme Bench,¹ discussed the problem frankly with the President. He

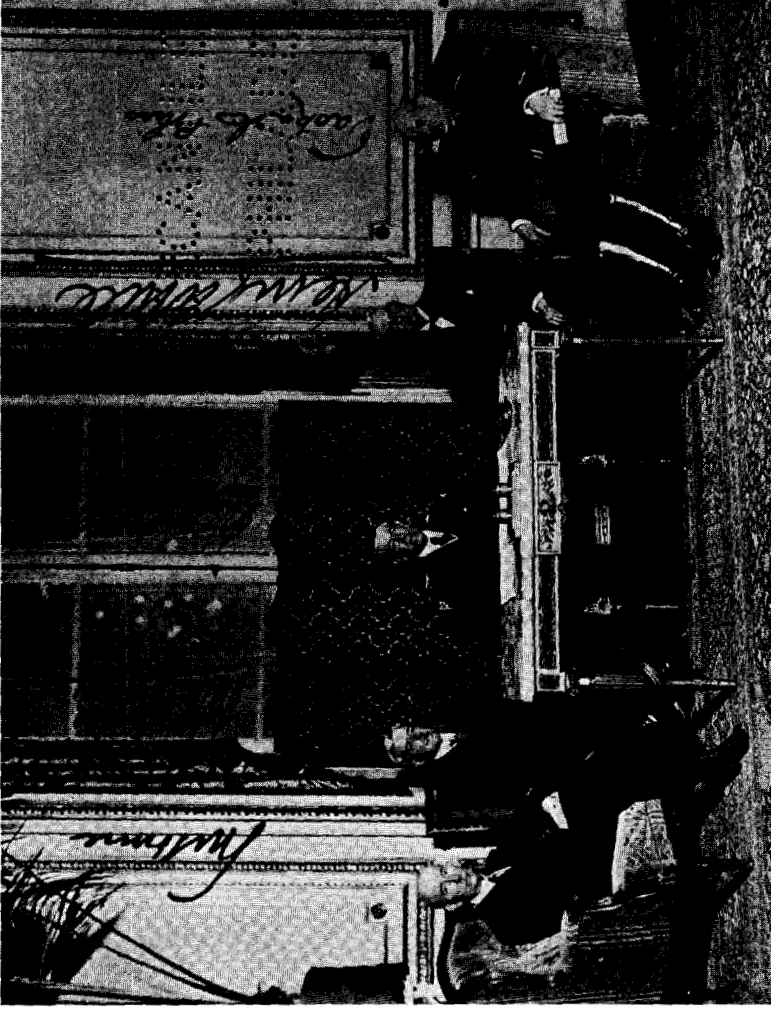
¹ President Wilson invited Mr. Gregory to become a Justice of the Supreme Court in the early summer of 1916, after the resignation of Mr. Hughes. Mr. Gregory felt compelled to decline, because of his deafness, in spite of the President's insistence.

believed that Wilson's letter previous to the election, in which he asked for the return of a Democratic Congress, had been a tactical error largely responsible for Republican victory. It was all the more important that the Republican Party and, if possible, the Senate should be adequately represented on the Peace Commission. Writing six years later, Mr. Gregory recalls the political circumstances of the moment:

Gregory Memorandum

'... The first mistake was the issuance of the letter in the autumn of 1918, a few days before the Armistice, urging the electors to vote for Democratic candidates *only*, on the ground that he [Wilson] should have a Democratic Congress to assist in carrying out his policies. The letter was not only a political mistake, but it was utterly un-Wilsonian. It should be remembered that in 1912 the combined vote for Taft and Roosevelt was largely more than that for Wilson; that by 1916 Wilson had converted a minority party into a majority party, and that this had been accomplished by rallying to his standard a host of voters who were ordinarily Independents and Progressive Republicans. The war was drawing to a successful close and during its continuance thousands of Republicans and Independents had been working under Mr. Wilson's leadership and sacrificing their private interests and forgetting their political affiliations; many had served without the slightest compensation. There were scores of Republicans in the Senate and House who had voted consistently for the President's policies and held up his hands during the struggle, at a time when many of his own party were doing their best to thwart him. Loyal Republicans and disloyal Democrats were candidates for reelection.

'It was claimed by the political opponents of Mr. Wilson that the letter stigmatized every one who was not a member



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OF
MICHIGAN

of the Democratic Party, and it immediately raised an electoral issue and gave an opportunity to the Republicans which up to then had been lacking. Previously they had no fight in them, and indeed could not afford to attack Administration measures which the best of them had supported. Now they had some reason to complain of a document which injected a partisan issue at a moment when hosts of them could well claim that they had forgotten everything in order to win the war. Without this issue the Democrats would have carried the election easily, on the basis of Wilson's prestige and the fact that the war had been won. I am sure that no member of the Cabinet saw this letter before its publication. The Republicans rallied to a man, many Independents deserted the Democratic ranks and the election gave the Republicans a majority in both Senate and House. But for this result and the feeling engendered by the letter Mr. Wilson would have been able to control the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate, and the Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations could have been put through. I have no personal knowledge as to how this letter came to be written. Some supposed that Burleson advised it, for the President consulted more with him regarding matters of a political nature than he did with any of us. But Burleson has told me that, while he knew the President was considering publishing a letter, he was not consulted in regard to the text of the one given to the press. . . . I believe that Mr. Wilson signed this letter in a moment of extreme weariness, for these were harrowing times, at the end of a long day when his nerves were taut and his intellectual sentinels were not on the lookout for danger. I repeat that the letter is thoroughly un-Wilsonian.¹

'The second mistake was made in the selection of the Peace Commissioners. I have always thought that it was best for the President to go to Paris. It is footless to specu-

¹ For House's opinion of Wilson's letter. see above, p. 68.

late now as to what might have happened if he had not gone. . . . Just before the names of the Commissioners were announced, but after it was known that there would be five, I asked for a special appointment.

'I began by asking the President whether he had decided to appoint any members of the Senate to the Peace Commission. He said he had decided not to do so — that the Senate was an independent body and that it did not seem fair to him to influence its free judgment of diplomatic negotiations by appointing Senators who would take part in the negotiations and then act upon them as judges. I said, "In that case, Mr. President, our interview will be considerably shortened." I had in mind to suggest two Republican members of the Senate — Knute Nelson, that grand old man from Minnesota, and Knox of Pennsylvania. The appointment of those two men would have guaranteed the ratification of the Treaty; but I recognized the justice of his argument that it would not be fair to put Senators on the Commission.

'I then said to him, "Mr. President, I have four names to suggest for the Peace Commission: three Republicans and an Independent. The choice of any two of these men will absolutely assure the approval of the Senate to whatever Treaty you bring back and will make impossible any organized opposition. These men agree in sum with your policies, they would be of valuable assistance and would not obstruct. The effect upon the country and the Republican Party would be of the utmost value. They are, Root, Taft, Governor McCall of Massachusetts, and Mr. Eliot." I could see that he drew back a little bit from the suggestion. Governor McCall he thought ought not to be named because he had been publishing letters approving Wilson's policies, and the President felt that his appointment might be considered as a direct reward; he thought that in all other respects the selection would be a happy one; I strongly urged that Governor McCall's well-known views constituted the best of

reasons why he should be selected and insisted that the appointment would arouse no proper criticism.

'Why he did not name any of these men I cannot tell; there was in him no personal feeling against any one of them. Taft and Root had both approved the League of Nations; he was later to utilize their advice, and he had a high opinion of both. For Governor McCall he had a feeling akin to affection, and he had the highest respect for President Eliot. The men that he appointed to the Commission, with the exception of Colonel House, were of little value in dealing with the League of Nations problem. Mr. Henry White, delightful gentleman that he is, . . . was named as a Republican, but his appointment merely angered the Republican Party, for they said — if he was going to name a Republican why didn't he choose an active, full-blooded one? The selection of General Bliss was ideal in so far as military problems were involved. Secretary Lansing and the President disagreed on vital points and coöperation between them became impossible. It was Colonel House who shared Mr. Wilson's labors, and his complete confidence, and filled his place at the Conference table when sickness prevented the President from doing so. . . .'¹

Colonel House himself did not share in the general criticism of the personnel of the Peace Commission. He admitted that the President would have been on firmer ground politically if he had appointed Taft, Root, and McAdoo.

'That would have been an efficient body,' House wrote later, 'and politically unassailable. Taft might have been given direction of preparing the Covenant for the League of Nations — a task for which he is eminently fit, and to which his heart would have responded in joyous enthusiasm. Root might have taken over the legal questions, which were many

¹ Memorandum communicated to C. S., August, 1924.

and involved. McAdoo would have been a tower of strength in questions of finance — questions more intricate, delicate, and contentious than almost any brought before the Conference. But the President thought best to take to Paris three other advisers, Lansing, White, and Bliss, and except from a political viewpoint he made no mistake.

‘It has pleased some to say that there was but one American Commissioner at the Conference and that was President Wilson. This, of necessity, must have been true no matter whom he had taken, for he was the head of the State, and whether in Washington or Paris every question must have gone to him for final decision.

‘There were never three abler men, holding important commissions, than Lansing, White, and Bliss, so modest and self-effacing. Lansing’s experience in international law and procedure was a constant guidepost. White’s lifelong diplomatic career and wide European acquaintance smoothed over many a difficult situation. If there was ever the need of a peacemaker it was at Paris, and White proved himself time and again master of that craft. Bliss, though army trained, has the mind of a statesman and he helped to solve many intricate problems other than those connected with military affairs. There was no abler man at the Peace Conference than Tasker H. Bliss.’

Colonel House was equally warm in his admiration for the Americans at Paris who were not Commissioners. He frequently referred to the qualities of Ambassador Sharp, who had accomplished the difficult task of representing the United States during both the period of American neutrality and belligerency. ‘His judgment is keen and his appreciation of the various currents in French opinion acute,’ House wrote during the Armistice conferences. To him House turned for advice during the difficult period before the arrival of President Wilson. There are also many references in

House's papers to Admiral Benson, indicating his high opinion of his services: 'He was Secretary Daniels' chief executive officer during the war,' wrote House, 'and there never was a time when the direction of our sea forces was so weighted with peril. Both at the Armistice proceedings and at the Peace Conference, Benson was our Government's adviser. Probably no other American Admiral ever had so many momentous questions come before him or met them more wisely.'¹ Another to whom House constantly turned for advice in matters affecting Europe, was Ambassador Brand Whitlock. Questions affecting Belgium came up again and again at the Peace Conference, and Whitlock's opinion was invaluable. 'It is difficult,' wrote House, 'for the Belgians to speak of Brand Whitlock without emotion. While he represented American interests in a manner to which even the Germans could not take exception, the Belgians felt he was their steadfast friend and defender. The Great War has so intertwined his name with that of the heroic little Kingdom, that in the minds of men he is known as "Whitlock of Belgium."'

House was especially appreciative of the work of those attached to his personal staff. In a memorandum concerning the Peace Conference he wrote:

'No one can ever properly appraise the help rendered the American Commissioners by their individual staffs and by the experts connected with the Inquiry. I was particularly fortunate in this, for among others I had Arthur Hugh Frazier and Stephen Bonsal, both of whom were linguists and long trained and skilled in diplomatic work. No American in Europe had a more intimate knowledge of the war and its genesis than Frazier. He had served in our Embas-

¹ The feeling was mutual. Admiral Benson writes, June 16, 1928: 'One of the happiest memories of a long and lucky life is the association with Colonel House, for whom I have unbounded admiration and warm affection.'

sies in both Germany and Austria and had been for a long time Counselor of our Embassy at Paris. He was assigned to me by the State Department upon nearly every visit I made to Europe after 1914, and he had the distinction of being the only American to sit with the Supreme War Council in 1917-18 in order to send reports to our Government for their information. He had enjoyed long personal contact with the Prime Ministers and Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Allied Governments, and they held him in such esteem as to be willing to share with him their conferences.

'Colonel Bonsal's experience was of wider range, even if not so closely connected with the belligerent states. He knew the world from North to South and from East to West, and spoke many alien tongues. When delegates came from unfamiliar lands they were placed under his intelligent and sympathetic care. His interpretations and observations were invaluable and there was no man upon whom I leaned more heavily.'

IV

During the month that elapsed between the signing of the Armistice and the arrival of President Wilson, Colonel House exercised no definite functions apart from those implied in his commission as personal representative of the President. It was, however, one of the busiest periods of his entire career. To him came naturally the representatives of all the peoples who desired American assistance in the approaching Peace Conference. He began the development of a service of information through American observers placed in the areas of unrest, which, in view of American intervention in European politics, had become a matter of necessity. Once the place and the personnel of the Conference were determined, he took up the vital question of the recognition of English as an official language on a par with French. He strove also to facilitate a return to normal conditions,

especially through the abolition of the censorship and the organization of economic assistance to Central Europe.

House's interest in organizing relief on a large scale was intense. To the steps taken in this direction soon after the Armistice may be traced the building up of a great system which was ultimately put under the control of Mr. Hoover. During the two following years it became one of the most important international agencies in the world. Before the German Armistice was fully drafted, House had proposed to the Supreme War Council a resolution which was not merely justified on grounds of humanity, but calculated to induce the Germans to accept the Armistice in the hope of securing food: 'If the peoples of Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary, and of Turkey appeal to the Allies and Associated Powers to furnish food, the latter will do all they can to help them in the name of humanity.'¹ The resolution was passed. As soon as it became clear that Germany would sign the Armistice, House took up the question of raising the blockade on the enemy states and providing relief for them as well as for the regions devastated by fighting.

So varied were his activities that it is impossible to present in brief compass a connected narrative. Selections from his papers to illustrate the nature of his labors may well prove confusing, but they indicate, as nothing else can, the sort of problems which had to be faced before the Peace Conference could proceed to a general settlement. They reflect also the essential fact that the period was one of confusion, not merely because of the nature of the problems themselves, but because the European Premiers were compelled to meet matters of domestic politics which prevented them from making an early effort to organize the machinery for the solution of international problems.

¹ The final text of the resolution was as follows: 'If the peoples of Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey appeal to the Allies and Associated Powers for the supply of provisions, the Allies and Associated Powers will do all they can to assist in a spirit of humanity.'

'November 6, 1918: I have asked Colonel Barkley Parsons,' wrote House in his diary, 'to make a preliminary study of the damage done by the Germans in Northeastern France and Belgium. I shall probably get him to take this work up with a sufficient corps of assistants in order that when the French and Belgian Governments make demands at the Peace Conference for reparations and damage, we will have some idea as to the justice of their claims. For instance, it might be said that Germany had done ten millions of damage in a certain town. There would be no way whatever for us to know whether this was even approximately correct. . . . The more I think of it, the more important it seems to be.'¹

'November 8, 1918: I called upon the King of Montenegro, at his request. Attachés in gorgeous uniforms conducted me to his apartment at the Hôtel Meurice. I found the King a pleasant old gentleman who told his story with much dignity. Frazier is writing of our conversation, if, indeed, it might be termed a conversation, for it was more of a monologue by him.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 8, 1918

Probably the greatest problem which will be presented to us upon the cessation of hostilities is the furnishing of food and other essential supplies to the civilian population of Serbia, Austria, Bohemia, Germany, Belgium, and Northern France. This relief work, together with the reconstruction of devastated regions, will have to be done almost entirely through American effort, and with the use of American food, raw materials, and finished products. Difficult questions of priority and the allocation of tonnage will be presented.

¹ On November 17, in reply to House's request for authorization, President Wilson cabled: 'I approve your plan to employ experts on the assessment of damage done.'

At one of the meetings of the Supreme War Council, Mr. Balfour proposed that as a condition of the Armistice to be offered Germany the large amount of German tonnage now in German and neutral ports be handed over during the Armistice for operation by the Allies and the United States under the general supervision and control of the Allied Maritime Transport Council now sitting in London. I advised that this be not made a condition of the Armistice, but be taken up as soon as the Armistice was signed, and Mr. Balfour acquiesced in this suggestion.

I now advise that, instead of adopting Mr. Balfour's suggestion which presents obvious objections, you, as soon as the Armistice with Germany is signed, propose to the Allies and Germany the immediate formation of the 'International Relief Organization.'¹ I suggest that Hoover be placed at the head of this organization and two representatives each be named by England, France, Italy, and Germany. Germany should at once be asked to place at the disposal of this organization until the final Peace Treaty is signed the entire German Merchant Marine now in German or neutral ports. The organization should then be charged with securing food and other supplies immediately required for the civilian populations of the countries set forth and in determining the priority of the needs presented. These supplies would necessarily have to be furnished by the United States and the Allies. It should be pointed out to Germany that only in this way will it be possible for her merchant marine to be placed in service from the inception of the Armistice until the final Peace Treaty is signed, and that her willingness to enter whole-heartedly into such a scheme of relief, which would include her own civilian population, would be the

¹ After a number of discussions the 'Supreme Council for Supply and Relief' was established by the Supreme War Council. It met for the first time on January 11, 1919. Mr. Hoover was appointed Director-General of Relief.

best possible evidence of her desire to alleviate the suffering caused the civilian population of all countries by the exigencies of the war. In this way also the whole question of relief, pending the signing of the final Treaty of Peace, can be kept separate from the very keen struggle which will arise immediately following the signing of the Armistice between the various belligerent nations for selfish trade advantage. It is true that the terms of the Armistice provide that the blockade shall be continued. The impracticability of this, so far as food and other essential supplies are concerned, has already become apparent. Conditions in Austria and in Bohemia are of such a character as to make relief on a large scale imperative if serious disturbances are to be averted. I should appreciate very much an expression of your views on this most urgent matter.¹

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November 8, 1918*

We are getting a mass of misinformation respecting present conditions in Austria, Bohemia, and the Ukraine, practically all of which is being furnished us by the English, French, and Italians. We have no American sources of information. The reports received are often colored by the self-interest of the persons furnishing them. I regard it as exceedingly important that we send at once to these countries agents who will be in a position to furnish us with accurate and unbiased information respecting conditions. This work should be under the general direction of a man who is entirely familiar with German and Austrian affairs. I suggest that you constitute Grew² a special representative

¹ To this Wilson replied on November 11: 'Our judgment corresponds with yours. Hoover is coming over immediately to discuss the matter and propose one method of handling it.'

² Mr. Joseph Grew was appointed Secretary of the American Commission.

of the Department of State to do this work. Of course he should have a number of assistants whom I can secure for him over here. If you approve of this suggestion I will take the necessary steps to set up the organization.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November 11, 1918*

Concerning Jugo-Slav Italian affairs: If you decide to recognize the National Council of Zagreb as representative of the Serbo-Slovene Nation in territories formerly belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it would be well to assure the Jugo-Slavs in a very guarded way that the question of their territorial aspirations is a matter to be decided by the Peace Conference. This act is advisable in order to reassure them in the face of the Italian occupation of the Dalmatian coast along the line of the Treaty of London, against which I protested and consented only upon the explicit promise that this territory should have the same status as the territory to be occupied under the terms of the German Armistice. It is to the interest of Italy, also, that the conditions of the Armistice should not be made the pretext for prejudging this most difficult territorial question. United States alone is in a position to speak a word of caution, since France and Britain are committed by the Pact of London. A statement that its frontiers should be determined in the interests of all concerned and in accordance with principles accepted by all the Allies, would be reassuring to all small nationalities who are now in a state of high tension.¹

EDWARD HOUSE

¹ Such a statement, although not referring to this particular problem, was later issued by the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference on January 24, 1919:

'The Governments now associated in conference to effect a lasting peace among the nations are deeply disturbed by the news which comes

'November 12, 1918: The Italian Ambassador was an afternoon caller. He came to assure me that the Italian Government was not acting contrary to the terms of the Armistice in dealing with the Austrian fleet. I told him I was not worried as to their intentions. However, I thought some of my colleagues were very much disturbed and it would be well to satisfy them. . . . I suggested that I write him a letter, asking him about the incident at Pola, so that he could send me a reply and I, in turn, might express confidence in their intention to comply with their promises. This correspondence I promised to take or send to Clemenceau.

'November 13, 1918: Henry P. Davison of the Red Cross came to discuss that organization. I urged him to use the Red Cross from now as an agent of mercy in the starving and distressed countries of Europe.

'November 15, 1918: Busy to-day outlining the organization for the Peace Congress. The French Government have offered us a plan to form a basis for discussion.¹

'Baron Sonnino was an afternoon caller. He contended that Italy desired nothing except to have her boundaries rearranged in a way to give protection in the event of invasion. . . . I did not undertake to tell Sonnino that, if they would listen to our plan for a League of Nations, Italy would be amply protected, for I did not wish to start an argument at this time. He is to lunch with me to-morrow.'

to them of the many instances in which armed force is being made use of in many parts of Europe and the East to gain possession of territory, the rightful claim to which the Peace Conference is to be asked to determine.

'They deem it their duty to utter a solemn warning that possession, gained by force, will seriously prejudice the claims of those who use this means. It will create the presumption that those who employ force doubt the justice and validity of their claims and purpose to substitute possession for proof of right, and set up sovereignty by coercion rather than by racial or national preference and national historical association. They thus put a cloud upon any evidence of title they may afterward allege, and indicate their distrust of the Conference itself. . . .'

According to a manuscript note of Colonel House, this statement was drafted by the President himself.

¹ Published in Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 56-63.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November 16, 1918*

I suggest that you send me a cable which I can show to the heads of the British and French Governments for the purpose of obtaining from them the entire suspension of the present political censorship upon American press despatches. Military necessity can no longer be invoked as a defense of the drastic censorship now being exercised. There seems to me to be no adequate reason why the character of the political information supplied to the American people should be dictated by the French and British Governments.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Diary.] *November 18, 1918*: X came to discuss the question of censorship. We seemed to be in total disagreement. I desired the lifting of the censorship everywhere and at once; he claimed to desire the same result, but thought it impossible. Curiously enough, he gave as his reason that the members of the Peace Congress would not wish reports of the proceedings to be without censorship. He thought they were entirely justified in this feeling. I did not tell him that my thoughts ran in the other direction, and that one of the reasons I wanted an immediate lifting of the censorship was that a free public discussion might be had about what was going on at the Congress.

'I have come to the conclusion that the consensus of public opinion comes nearer being right than the opinions of the leaders of a country. Only now and then you find a leader who sees more clearly than the people in the aggregate.

November 19, 1918: I asked Derby¹ to ascertain the views of his Government on the lifting of the French censorship. At the same time I made the request that the English censorship be lifted as far as the United States was concerned. I

¹ British Ambassador to France.

shall not press the French Government until I hear from the British.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 20, 1918

... The French are urging that the French language be used as the official language at the Conference. Since the French are to be given both the place of meeting and the presidency of the Conference, it would seem as if they should meet the convenience of England and ourselves with respect to the language to be used. At the conferences before the Armistice was signed, Orlando and Pichon were the only ones that could not understand English. In addition to ourselves and the English, Clemenceau, Sonnino, the Belgian representative, the Serbian representative, the Greek representative, and the Japanese representative, are all able to understand English. I shall take this question up with the English in order to see how they feel about it.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 21, 1918

I have just received the following communication from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 'You were good enough to communicate to me under date of yesterday telegram of President Wilson expressing desire that the political censorship applied up to the present to press telegrams from France to America be completely suppressed. I have the honor to inform you that the French Government is happy to respond to the desire of President Wilson. Dispositions will, therefore, be taken immediately to suppress all censorship of press telegrams sent from France to the United States. Please accept, *et cetera*. (Signed) S. Pichon.'

This is of course very satisfactory. I have taken this mat-

ter up with the British authorities through Lord Derby and I expect to have an answer from them before long. I shall advise the press correspondents informally of the action of the French Government and request them to advise me of any further interference with their press despatches.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November 23, 1918*

Pursuant to your authorization I requested General Pershing to detail such officer in his command as he considered most competent to undertake the work of estimating the damage done by the Germans in Belgium and Northern France on account of which reparation should be required from Germany. General Pershing has detailed for this work Brigadier-General C. H. McKinstry. I have conferred with General McKinstry and have asked him to advise me, after he has considered the problem how he believes this work can be done.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November 27, 1918*

... Wiseman says that Mr. Balfour believes we will have considerable difficulty in inducing the French to meet our views on the language question. Mr. Balfour suggests that Lord Derby and I take up with Clemenceau the question of arranging for the use of both English and French as the official languages of the Conference. Do you wish me to proceed along these lines? ¹

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November 27, 1918*

Hoover arrived in Paris Tuesday morning. I am fully advised of and in agreement with his plans [for relief]. They

¹ Approved by the President and finally determined in this sense by the Peace Conference.

are in general in accordance with my telegram . . . which you approved in principle, such alterations having been incorporated therein to meet the Allied desire for coördination of action and our policy of maintaining independence of American action. The chief problem presented is the difficulty of devising a plan which will not antagonize the Allies and particularly Great Britain and at the same time permit single American leadership in relief to the civilian populations of Europe. I am sure you will agree that American leadership is essential, taking into account the fact that we are the most disinterested nation and the other Allies are affected by local political interests. Further, the supplies to be utilized for this purpose must in the main be obtained in the United States and will dominate American markets.

As I have previously informed you, George has asked Clemenceau, Orlando, and myself to come to London on December first for a meeting of the Supreme War Council. I replied that while I hoped to be able to be present it would depend on my doctor's decision. . . . The matters that Hoover and I have discussed will not permit of delay in reaching a decision and accordingly I suggest that the views of the United States Government be presented in writing to the three Prime Ministers at their meeting in London. . . .¹

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *November 28, 1918*

I am now advised through Wiseman that the British Government have abolished the political censorship of press despatches for the United States from Great Britain.

EDWARD HOUSE

¹ House suggested in the latter part of his cable a programme which Wilson presented to the Prime Ministers and which ultimately resulted in the organization of relief under Hoover. See appendix to this chapter.

[Diary.] 'December 4, 1918: Dmowski¹ discussed Polish affairs and the formation of a Polish State. He looks with much concern upon Bolshevik Russia on the one side and Germany on the other — which, as he expressed it, was passing through its Elizabethan Period. He thinks Germany is three hundred years behind the balance of civilized Europe in her thought and it is for that reason she came to grief. I urged upon Dmowski moderation and a coalition government, so they might at least start with a fair prospect of harmony.

'Sharp wished to discuss the protocol of the President's arrival and subsequent entertainment in France. The Foreign Office asked him to take it up with me and decide. For instance, it was a question whether the reception to be given at the Hôtel de Ville was to be for the President alone or for the President and Mrs. Wilson. . . . I advised the latter. Another question was how Mrs. Wilson should drive in the procession. It was arranged that she should go with Madame Poincaré and follow the President, who would be with President Poincaré. Still another question was when the President should arrive at Brest. It had been arranged that he should be here on Friday the 13th, but since that does not seem feasible we arranged for him to reach Paris on Saturday the 14th. The day of his arrival will be proclaimed a holiday.

'December 5, 1918: I saw a delegation of Socialists, among them Albert Thomas and four or five others. They desire to give the President a rousing reception in Paris and plan to send representatives to meet him at Brest.

'Léon Bourgeois followed Clemenceau. He is President of the Society for the League of Nations. We discussed it at much length and found ourselves nearly in agreement. The greatest difference was that he does not wish Germany to have the right to join the League at present. I differed from him and thought unless we took her in at once there would

¹ Chairman of the Polish Committee in Paris.

be an incentive for her to form another league, thereby creating a balance of power. Not only that: If she were not in the League we would have no control over her and she might go on arming and doing things contrary to the purpose of the League. . . .

'Lord Derby discussed the question of feeding Europe and the proposal I had put to the Allied Governments regarding Hoover. Derby thought it would be impossible to leave it to the Supreme War Council because there were no food experts upon it. I suggested as an alternative the formation of an economic section of the Supreme War Council.¹

'December 12, 1918: Hoover and Davis² came in first. We took up all the questions relating to the international food control and the necessary financing of it.

'December 13, 1918: To-day has been another heart-breaking one. It was Hoover, Davis, and Dr. Taylor again upon the question of supplying relief at Vienna and that immediate vicinity. It is a matter of hours almost, and cannot be postponed. I took the decision and told them to go ahead regardless of what the French and English Governments might think, and sent Frazier to notify these Governments of what we intended to do. I had Frazier take Hoover and Davis to see President Masaryk,³ and authorized them to say that the United States would condemn any policy of obstruction looking to the prevention of coal going into Austria for the relief of the suffering population. Masaryk claimed that the coal mines were in possession of the Germans and that it was impossible for him to take action.

¹ On February 8, 1919, on President Wilson's motion the Supreme Council provided for the appointment of a Supreme Economic Council, which met for the first time on February 17. Mr. Hoover was appointed chairman of the Food and Relief Section.

² Norman Davis, United States Treasury representative in London and Paris, 1918; finance commissioner of United States to Europe, 1919.

³ Chairman of the Czecho-Slovak Committee and first President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic.

However, we are insisting upon something being done, and at once.'

V

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 25, 1918

I am in receipt of the following message from Lloyd George: 'Monsieur Clemenceau is coming to London on 1st December and I earnestly hope you will be able to come also, as a number of urgent questions require discussion. As I shall not be able to attend any conferences in Paris before the election of the 14th of December, this is especially important. I am inviting Signor Orlando also.'

I have advised Lloyd George that I am still in bed, but that I hope that my doctor will permit me to go to London on or about December 1 for the conference in question. I am feeling better, but am still weak, and I will not be able to tell before Thursday or Friday of this week whether I can make the journey.

EDWARD HOUSE

Because of his illness House was finally unable to attend the London conversations between the British, French, and Italians, at which the first definite steps were taken towards preparing questions for the Peace Conference. The chief topics discussed at London concerned the appointment of a commission to study the enemy's capacity to pay reparation, the trial of the Kaiser, and international relief. One important decision was that at the preliminary Peace Conference the smaller Allied Powers should be represented only when questions of particular interest to them were under discussion, and that new States be allowed to present their claims to the Conference. In this way the composition and to some extent the procedure of the Peace Conference were settled.

Colonel House sent to the President a full report of the proceedings at London.¹

'December 5, 1918: Clemenceau called in the afternoon to tell of the London meeting. We talked of that part of the resolution related to the trial of the Kaiser. He is in favor of it in a mild way. Sonnino last night expressed himself against it. He thought it would merely create sympathy and would do no good. He thought Holland would refuse to give him up and we would be imprudent to make her.'

On December 7 House moved over from his headquarters, 78 rue de l'Université, where so many of the historic Armistice conferences had taken place, to the Hôtel de Crillon, which was to become the official home of the American Peace Commission. Two days later he wrote in his diary that he regarded his special mission as at an end. 'The President is in European waters now and can be easily reached by wireless. Therefore I shall make no further decisions myself.' His attention was largely taken up with the details of the President's arrival. For a time Wilson planned to land first in England, but later followed House's advice that he come directly to France.² Upon the suggestion of the navy officials, who were acquainted with the area of floating mines, Brest was chosen as the landing port.³ On the invitation of the French Government the President, while in Paris, was to occupy the house of Prince Murat in the Parc Monceau.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, December 9, 1918

According to present plans I understand that you will arrive in Paris at 10 A.M. on Saturday, December 14. Upon

¹ See appendix to this chapter.

² Wilson to House, November 25, 1918.

³ Lansing to House, November 27, 1918.

your arrival you will be taken at once to your residence. At 12.30 a large formal lunch will be given in your honor at the Élysée Palace by President Poincaré. A committee of laboring men and Socialists, headed by Albert Thomas, Renaudel, and Cachin, wish to present you with an address at 3.30 P.M. on Saturday, the 14th, and hold a monster parade in your honor at that time. This is not definite, but will probably take place. On Monday, December 16, a formal reception will be tendered you and Mrs. Wilson by the City of Paris at the Hôtel de Ville at 2.30 P.M. and I have accepted for you. I have told Wiseman to tell Balfour and George that you will keep Tuesday, December 17, Wednesday, December 18, and possibly the 19th free for conferences with them, and I expect both Balfour and George will be in Paris on the 17th. December 19 and 20 the King of Italy, the Italian Prime Minister, and Baron Sonnino will be in Paris. The French and Belgian Governments are most insistent that you should make a trip to the devastated regions of France and Belgium. Accordingly the French Government are making arrangements for you to take a trip beginning December 26 which will occupy approximately three days, through Northern France and Belgium.¹ At the same time it is planned that you should visit our army. Your trip to Italy, which I believe is necessary, might be begun on December 29th or 30th in order that you may return to Paris by January 3d or 4th for the first formal conferences between the Allies. Clemenceau has told me that the English elections, the French celebrations, and the official visits to Paris have made it abso-

¹ President Wilson spent Christmas with the American army, but postponed his inspection of the French and Belgian battlefields until the following spring, thereby incurring much criticism. Mr. A. H. Frazier writes as follows regarding President Wilson's objections to visiting the devastated regions: "I remember that when I first broached the idea he remarked: "The French want me to see red. I could not despise the Germans more than I do already." He may or may not have been right in his determination, but at any rate the explanation sheds light on his character."

lutely impossible to begin these formal conferences before January 3d or 4th. Will you please let me know if you wish me to take any particular action with reference to the foregoing.

EDWARD HOUSE

PARIS, *December 12, 1918*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The doctor thinks it will not be prudent for me to go to Brest, therefore I am awaiting your arrival here.

There will be an official *déjeuner* of some two hundred and fifty people at the Élysée Palace at 12.30 on Saturday. President Poincaré will make a short speech to which you will be expected to reply. These speeches are usually limited to from ten to forty lines. If I were you I would confine my remarks to a statement indicating that the United States understands and sympathizes with the heavy trials and suffering which the Allies have undergone for the past four years, and that we are deeply sensible and sympathetic of the problems with which they are now confronted.

There has been an effort here to make it appear that we are not only ignorant of the situation, but are not in sympathy with it. Such a statement from you would clear the atmosphere and make easier the work which awaits you.

You will probably not reach Prince Murat's residence before 11.15, but you will be expected to immediately return the President's call in the state carriage which will be held at your residence for this purpose. It seems absurd to make a call at 11.30 when you are to lunch at the Élysée Palace at 12.30, but such are the ways of official Europe.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

On the following day the *George Washington*, with the

President on the bridge, rode up to the harbor of Brest through a majestic line of battleships and destroyers, French and American, their guns thundering the Presidential salute. Although the day was a Friday and sailors shook their heads at the ill omen, it was also the 13th of the month, in Wilson's mind his lucky number. The next morning he was greeted in Paris by tumultuous and enthusiastic crowds, the representative of the new era, the dispenser of justice, the protector of the oppressed.

APPENDIX

HOUSE'S PLAN FOR RELIEF

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, November 27, 1918

... I suggest that you send me a cable instructing me to present to the Supreme War Council the following plan:

'Sirs: 1. I have given much thought to the formulation of the most practicable means of carrying into effect the resolution presented by Colonel House at the last meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles to the effect that the Supreme War Council in a spirit of humanity desired to cooperate in making available, as far as possible, supplies necessary for the relief of the civilian populations of the European countries affected by the war.

'2. In considering this matter I have had constantly in mind the urgent necessity of the case and the fact that it is essential in the working out of relief of this character on a large scale, that there be a unity of direction similar in character to that which has proved so successful under French and British Chief Command in the operations of the Allies on the land and on sea respectively. I suggest that the Supreme War Council proceed along the following lines:

'3. In order to secure effective administration there should be created a Director General of Relief whose field of activities will cover not only enemy populations, but also the whole of the populations liberated from enemy yoke and the neutrals contiguous to these territories.

'4. It is obvious that present Interallied administrative arrangements cover the Allied countries themselves and if the whole of the world's food supplies could be made available through sufficient shipping, there appears to be sufficiency over and above Allied necessities to take effective care of these other populations, provided that these supplies are administered with care, with economy, and with single direction.

'5. The one essential to this plan in order that all world supplies may be brought into play is that enemy tonnage shall be brought into service at the earliest possible moment. It would appear to me entirely just that the enemy shipping in consideration of relief of enemy territory should be placed in the General Food Service of all of the populations released from the enemy yoke as well as enemy territory.

'6. I have carefully considered the suggestion made by Mr. Balfour to the Supreme War Council at the time the terms of armistice to be offered the enemy were under discussion to the effect that the enemy should be required to place under the operation and control of the Allied Maritime Transport Council the enemy mercantile fleet in enemy and neutral ports. It appears to me that in practice there would be many embarrassments presented by this plan, and that the principle should be maintained that this fleet be used as to its carrying capacity for purposes of relief and be under the direction of the Director-General of Relief. . . .

'7. In the operations of the Director-General of Relief, he would, of course, purchase and sell foodstuffs to enemy populations and therefore not require financial assistance in this particular further than working capital. In the relief of newly liberated peoples such as Belgium, Poland, Servia (including Jugo-Slavia), and Bohemia, it will no doubt be necessary to provide temporary advances from the Associated Governments to these recuperating nationalities with which they can purchase supplies from the Director-General, such arrangements to be worked out by the Associated Treasuries. In some cases public charity may have to be mobilized.

'8. In the Director-General's dealings with neutrals they of course would provide their own shipping and financial resources and probably some tonnage and food, either directly or indirectly for the purposes of the Director-General, they acting under his direction and authorization as to supplies and sources thereof. The Director-General, of course, acting in these matters in coöperation with the blockade authorities of the Allies and United States.

'9. It is obvious that it is only the surplus food supply of the world beyond the necessities of the Allies that is available to the Director-General.

'10. In order to prevent profiteering the Director-General must make his purchases directly from the respective food administrations of the Associated Governments where his supplies arise from their territories, and where purchasing in neutral markets he should act in coöperation with the established Interallied agencies.

'11. It is evident that after the Allies have supplied themselves from their own territories at home and abroad and the balance from other sources, the only effective source of surplus supplies available for relief lie to a minor extent in the Argentine but to a vast preponderance in the United States. The Director-General will have a large command of American resources and markets and will require the undivided support of the American people in saving and productive activities.

'Owing to the political necessity of American control over American resources and the greater coördination and efficiency to be obtained

thereby, I am sure that you will agree with me that the office of Director-General of Relief must be held initially by the U.S. Food Administrator and in case of necessity, by such a successor as may be nominated by me. I would suggest, however, that the policies of the Director-General should be determined by the Supreme War Council, to whom he should report, it being our united policies in these matters not only to save life, but also to stabilize governments.

'All these arrangements to be for the period of emergency and it is highly desirable for them to be liquidated as fast as practicable.

'It is exceedingly important that I have your advice concerning the matter at the earliest possible moment. Wilson.'¹

EDWARD HOUSE

HOUSE'S REPORT OF LONDON CONFERENCE

Colonel House to Secretary Lansing, for the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, December 5, 1918

Sonnino, Lord Derby, and Clemenceau have each given me a separate account of the proceedings on December 2d and 3d at the conferences held in London between Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Orlando. The following is a summary of these proceedings.

I. Meeting held December 2d at 11 A.M.

Resolution (a). Regret expressed my absence on account of illness and Mr. Balfour directed to transmit conclusions of Conference to me.

Resolution (b). Establishment of Interallied Commission, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States each to have three delegates thereon and Japan one delegate, to examine and report on amount enemy countries are able to pay for reparation and indemnity. Form of payment also to be considered. The Commission to meet in Paris provided the United States Government agrees. Each Government to compile its claims for reparation, which will be referred for examination by Interallied Commission to be nominated when claims are prepared.

Resolution (c). British, French, and Italian Governments agree that Kaiser and principal accomplices should be brought to trial before international court. Telegram respecting this was sent to Washington on December 2d. (I assume that you have already seen it and therefore do not quote it.) Immediate action to be taken in this matter provided President Wilson agrees; otherwise matter to be left for discussion after President Wilson arrives.

Resolution (d). British, French, and Italian Governments agree that before preliminaries of peace shall be signed an Interallied Conference be held in Paris or Versailles, the date thereof to be set after the arrival of

¹ For the creation and work of the Supreme Council for Supply and Relief, see Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, 1, 295.

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the President. France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States should each be represented by five delegates. British Colonial representatives to attend as additional members when questions directly affecting them are considered. Smaller Allied Powers not to be represented except when questions concerning them are discussed. Nations attaining their independence since war to be heard by Interallied Conference.¹

II. Meeting December 2d, 4 P.M.

Resolution (a). British, French, and Italian Governments authorize Foch to renew Armistice on December 10th for one month.

Resolution (b). British, French, and Italian Governments empowered Admiral Wemyss, on condition that forts at entrance to Baltic are demolished to satisfaction of Allied Naval Commission, to waive military occupation of said forts.

Resolution (c). British, French, and Italian Governments approve requirement of Admiral Beatty that while interned in British ports German flag shall be hauled down on board German men-of-war.

Resolution (d). British, French, and Italian Governments agree to formation of Interallied Commission of four admirals (American, British, French, Italian) to enquire and report on existing situation and advise as to future action to eliminate trouble in Adriatic territories occupied or to be occupied by Allied forces, not including those mentioned in Article III of Austrian Armistice terms, such as Corfu, Spalato, Fiume, etc.

III. Meeting December 3d at 11.15 A.M.

Resolution (a). Proposed conference between Foch and Chief of British Staff respecting arrangements of British portion of Army of Occupation agreed to by British Government.

Resolution (b). Expenses of occupation of Austria to be arranged for by Italian Commander-in-Chief and General Franchet d'Esperey. When military proposals are formulated, they are to be submitted to Governments concerned through Foch.

Resolution (c). British, French, and Italian Governments agreed theoretically not to object to international relief, labor, or any other conference in relation to Peace Conference being held, provided that until peace is signed it is held in a neutral country.

IV. Meeting December 3d at 4 P.M.

Resolution (a). Examination of question of victualling and supplying enemy, Allies and neutral countries in all its aspects, including the use of enemy merchant vessels, is referred to the following for examination and report. Clementel and Bouisson (representing the French); Reading and Maclay (representing the British); Crespi and Villa (representing the Italians); Hoover and Hurley, if available (representing United States).

Resolution (b). British troops in any part of European Turkey to remain under command of General Franchet d'Esperey. Rest of British army under General Milne may be transferred to Caucasus or elsewhere

¹ It was this conference which became the Peace Conference itself. The plan for negotiating preliminary treaties of peace was not carried into effect.

upon agreement being reached between countries concerned. If so, transferred British army will cease to be under command of d'Esperey.

Resolution (c). British, French, and Italian Governments agree that conclusions of Conference should be regarded as provisional only and subject to the United States [approved] excepting those which require immediate action or do not concern United States.

With respect to resolutions taken at meeting December 2d at 11 A.M., I am advising the Governments concerned: 1. That eliminating the word 'indemnity' from Resolution (b) the United States agrees to resolution; 2. That Resolution (c) should be discussed after your arrival. With these exceptions I suggest that the United States agree to these resolutions. With respect to resolutions taken at meeting December 2d at 4 P.M., I have discussed the naval and military features with General Bliss and Admiral Benson and am stating to the Governments concerned that the United States agrees to these resolutions.

With respect to resolutions taken at meeting December 3d at 11.15 A.M. I suggest that you authorize me to state that the United States agrees to these resolutions.

With respect to resolutions taken at meeting December 3d at 4 P.M., I have suggested to Lord Derby that instead of following the procedure outlined in Resolution (a) a Food Section of the Supreme War Council be set up with representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy thereon and that substantially the plan suggested in my number 188, as subsequently amended, be adopted. With this exception I suggest that you authorize me to state that the United States agrees to these resolutions. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

CHAPTER VIII

THE PEACE CONFERENCE CONVENES

They are not getting anywhere, largely because of the lack of organization.

Colonel House's Diary, January 22, 1919

I

THE coming of President Wilson to Europe stimulated lively interest in political circles. The statesmen recognized the influence which he exercised over the popular mind and were somewhat disturbed by their ignorance of his intentions. How was he minded to apply the principles with which his name had become synonymous, and what sort of revolution in international affairs would his application imply? Of all the European leaders, only Mr. Balfour and M. Tardieu had met and talked with the President. They set themselves to learn everything possible about him, his background, his tastes, his prejudices. Mr. Lloyd George, inviting Sir William Wiseman to luncheon, cross-examined the latter for upwards of an hour regarding the President. Possibly they were less sorry for the inevitable delay in calling the Peace Conference, since it gave them a chance to study the attitude they would take towards the President. Their interest was increased by the warmth of the reception given Wilson in Paris, in London, and in the English provinces. Everywhere he was hailed as the leader of the new crusade for the rights of humanity.

In order to clarify the President's position and especially to alleviate the fears of the British, Colonel House agreed with Wilson on the publication of an interview in which he should express himself upon the major issues of the coming settlement. Although the interview was ostensibly written by the Paris correspondent of the *Times*, it was carefully

drafted beforehand under the supervision of Colonel House and Sir William Wiseman, and represents a studied expression of Wilsonian policy couched in terms least likely to offend conservative European opinion. The most important aspect of the interview was to be found in the reference to British sea power. Great Britain, Wilson insisted, by the fact of her geographical position as well as because of her historical tradition, must be recognized as having an especial interest in all naval problems.¹

Colonel House had hoped that the arrival of Wilson in Paris would make possible the convocation of the preliminary conference, which had originally been planned for December 17. But political problems in Great Britain and France compelled further delay. The final results of the British elections had to be evaluated before Lloyd George was ready to name his delegation; and Clemenceau felt it necessary to test the temper of the French Parliament before he could determine the exact character of his policy in the coming Peace Conference. The month of December passed, while Wilson marked time. He had various talks with Clemenceau and Orlando, and he delivered some public speeches, which increased his personal prestige; he made brief visits to Great Britain and Italy. But despite the enthusiasm of the popular ovations given him, the delay was not in his favor, since political opinion, especially in France and Italy, was setting towards a demand for the fulfillment of extreme nationalist aspirations.

The early conversations between Clemenceau and Wilson, which took place soon after the President reached Paris, indicated how far apart were their ideas on the peace. Clemenceau insisted above everything upon the security of France; the League of Nations he regarded as a luxury, perhaps a danger. Wilson made plain in his first conference with House, on December 14, that he intended 'making the League of

¹ The interview is published in the *Times*, December 21, 1918.

Nations the center of the whole programme and letting everything revolve around that. Once that is a *fait accompli*, nearly all the very serious difficulties will disappear.' In the case of Italian claims, it soon appeared that Wilson would find himself quite as much at variance with Orlando and Sonnino. His conversations broke down the belief of the Europeans that he was a cold doctrinaire, with no appreciation of the peculiar difficulties of Europe; but they made little progress towards agreement. Because of House's close personal relations with Clemenceau, the President asked him to assist at their conferences. The following excerpts are taken from House's diary.

'December 15, 1918: Clemenceau, the President, and I were together for an hour. I have never seen an initial meeting a greater success. The President was perfect in the matter and manner of his conversation, and Clemenceau was not far behind. Neither said anything that was particularly misleading. They simply did not touch upon topics which would breed discussion. . . . I took Clemenceau downstairs afterward and he expressed keen delight over the interview and the President personally. The President was equally happy when I returned upstairs and discussed the matter with him. It was a pleasant augury for success.

'December 18, 1918: This morning the President telephoned asking if I did not think we ought to have a serious conversation with Clemenceau. He desired to know if we had not better take up the most important subject — the League of Nations. He asked me to make an appointment for to-night at eight or to-morrow morning at ten. Frazier arranged the engagement with Clemenceau at ten at the President's house.

'December 19, 1918: I went to the President's house fifteen minutes before Clemenceau arrived, to suggest a method by which the conversation could be easily brought around to the

League of Nations. The Freedom of the Seas was the topic I thought best suited to this subject.

'During the hour and a half we were together, the President did nearly all the talking. . . . Clemenceau expressed himself, in a mild way, in agreement with the President. He thought a League of Nations should be attempted, but he was not confident of success, either of forming it or of its being workable after it was formed. . . .

'*December 21, 1918:* The President, Orlando, Sonnino, and I were together from ten until twelve o'clock. The President talked well, but he did not convince the Italians that they should lessen their hold on the Pact of London. On the contrary, Sonnino convinced the President that from a military point of view Italy was pretty much at the mercy of the nations holding the Dalmatian coast.

'The President afterward said in talking with me that the next time they had a conversation he thought he could suggest some way by which their argument could be met. This might be done by insisting that the forts along the Dalmatian coast should be demolished, and that the Jugo-Slavs should agree to have no navy and but a small standing army. . . .

'*December 24, 1918:* The President asked me this morning to make an engagement for him to see Clemenceau. He showed me a part of the speech he is to make at the Guildhall in London, the part he was afraid might cause some criticism. It had reference to the anxiety of the people that the Peace Conference should begin work, a matter that we decided it would be well for him to touch upon at the earliest opportunity. He was afraid that what he said was too pointed. I did not share this feeling.

'*December 26, 1918:* Clemenceau sent word this morning that he would like to come to see me before lunch. I asked if I might not call on him instead. I called at the War Office to find him rather excited over a statement which Marshal Foch had just made concerning the movement of American troops.

Foch told him Pershing had said that, within four months after the signing of the Armistice, all American troops would be out of France. I knew that Pershing had not made such a statement. What he may have said was that four months after the signing of peace, all our troops would be out of France.

'Clemenceau was quite content with the assurance, which I shall make more certain by communicating directly with Pershing. . . .

'Hoover and I had a long talk upon relief matters. We agreed that the Entente countries are taking a perfectly impossible stand. They are making it more difficult for Germany under peace conditions than it was under war. They have restricted the German fishing fleet; they insist that no German gold shall be paid out for food we are willing to send her; they are establishing certain zones from which no articles of commerce may be sent or brought in. We cannot get them to consent to the relief of Vienna under terms which will enable us to help. We now have an enormous amount of food at Trieste, but it cannot be moved to Vienna because of the difficulties that are raised.'

Immediately after Christmas, President Wilson left for England, where he was the guest of the King, made some speeches in the provinces, and conferred with members of the British Government. House's health was precarious and his attention was taken up by the economic and territorial problems now under intensive study by the Inquiry. He remained therefore in Paris. The American programme at the Conference was not facilitated by the overwhelming success of the electoral campaign of Lloyd George, which was based upon such slogans as 'Hang the Kaiser,' and 'Make the Germans pay to the last pfennig.' On December 29, Clemenceau explained his policy to the Chamber of Deputies, declaring frankly for the old international system of the balance

of power, based upon alliances; in this, he insisted, France would find her security, rather than in what he termed, with more than a trace of satire, the 'noble simplicity'¹ of President Wilson. His majority approving this policy was practically four to one, and, as House wrote in his diary, was 'about as bad an augury for the success of progressive principles at the Peace Conference as we could have.' The Colonel added: 'Coming on the heels of the English elections, and taking into consideration the result of recent elections in the United States,² the situation strategically could not be worse.' House believed that Wilson's best if not his only effective policy lay in stressing the fact that the American terms had already been accepted by the Allies at the time of the Armistice. 'Without that,' he wrote in his diary, 'I am afraid we would have but little chance of accomplishing the things we have so much at heart.'

Two days later House had a long conversation with Mr. Balfour. In this he attempted to secure some agreement upon the principle of the Freedom of the Seas, which, according to Mr. Lloyd George's understanding, would be raised at the Peace Conference.

'December 31, 1918: Mr. Balfour has arrived from London, called this afternoon and spent nearly two hours with me. We went over every phase of the current situation and of all matters which might properly be brought before the Peace Conference. . . .

'He had only one argument to controvert what I said [on the Freedom of the Seas], to the effect that it would deprive England of the power to help right wrongs, as she had been able to do during the present war against Germany. I met this by saying there would be no objection to her having as

¹ *Noble candeur.*

² In which the Republican success gave that party control of the Senate and its Foreign Relations Committee.

large a navy as now, and that she could use it in the event the League of Nations undertook to discipline an outlaw nation.

'He seemed to see, as I do, that Great Britain would fare better under my definition than she would under the definition of her extreme "Blue Water School."

'He told me of the conversation which he and Lloyd George had with the President and of their fairly general agreement. I outlined to him my plan for the League of Nations, which he seemed to accept as practical and satisfactory. He hoped Lord Robert Cecil and I would get together next week and work out something. He goes to the South of France to-night, intending to remain only four or five days.

'*January 1, 1919*: The President ¹ told in much detail of his conversation with Lloyd George, Balfour, Bonar Law, and others, and we discussed Clemenceau's speech in the Chamber of Deputies. . . .

'I am advising him [Wilson] to say to the American people that at the November elections they gave the Republican Party a mandate to legislate, and, yielding to their wishes as expressed at the polls, he would not make any recommendations regarding measures, but would leave them free to carry out the will of the people. I hope he will offer to help with advice and information when called upon, but will drive it home again and again that the Opposition have the legislative reins in their hands and must be responsible for results. By rights, the Republicans should now have both the executive and legislative departments of Government in their hands, but since this is not quite possible under our Constitution the next best thing is for the Executive to yield, as far as legislation is concerned. . . .'

¹ Just back from his visit to Great Britain.

II

In the midst of numerous conferences designed to prepare the way for the Peace Conference, House was brought into connection with two interesting developments which later proved of importance. The first was the plan to extend the activities of the International Red Cross at Geneva in connection with the League of Nations.

'*January 2, 1919*: Perhaps the most interesting caller,' wrote House in his diary, 'was Harry Davison of the Red Cross. He came to tell of his conception of a new field of endeavor for that institution. I endorsed the plan with enthusiasm and promised to help in getting the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy back of it. Davison's idea is to turn the management [of the Red Cross] over to some one else and to go back home to his banking interests. Against this I made a strong plea. I told him he had become a world figure and that it would be a mistake to go back into the counting-house, since he would lose his opportunity to make an imperishable name for himself. I hoped he would go ahead with the new work with the same vigor he had used to promote the old.'

*Colonel House to M. Clemenceau*¹

PARIS, *January 14, 1919*

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER:

President Wilson has asked me on his behalf to bring to your attention a matter which the President regards as of very great importance. It concerns a suggestion by Mr. Henry P. Davison, Chairman of the War Council of the American Red Cross, for enlarging the scope of the International Red Cross to include peace-time activities.

As you know, the Geneva Convention, under which the

¹ House addressed a similar letter to the other Prime Ministers.

Red Cross organizations operate, was based upon service in time of war. It so happens that the charter granted by the Congress of the United States to the American Red Cross was broader than the Geneva Convention, making provision for it 'to carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace, and to apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same.'

Under this charter the American Red Cross has demonstrated the possibility of doing a very large voluntary relief work for suffering humanity and, as I am informed, other national Red Cross societies have already enlarged their normal scope of operation.

Mr. Davison submits that in view of present conditions throughout the world, and in view of the hope that future wars can be averted, there should be a revision of the Geneva Convention to include Red Cross activities in time of peace. He therefore suggests that, in coöperation, the respective representatives of the Red Cross organizations of England, Japan, Italy, France, and America should jointly request the International Red Cross at Geneva to call a conference of the Red Cross organizations of the world, excepting those of the Central Powers, which would be invited to participate after peace, for the purpose of adopting a revised convention.

He expresses the belief that under the International Red Cross, with enlarged scope, the Red Cross organizations of the various countries — and there should be one in every country — would stimulate and develop activities in their respective countries for the betterment of mankind.

Such endeavors should include not alone provision for help in case of great disasters, but for medical research and also for such activities as the promotion of public health and sanitation, the welfare of children and mothers, the education and training of nurses, the care and prevention of per-

sonal injuries in civil life, the care and prevention of tuberculosis and other chronic diseases, as well as other activities which would tend to the continuous relief and prevention of very real and daily tragedies in the homes of peoples throughout the world.

It is not contemplated that the Red Cross will itself, within [each] respective country, engage in all of these activities, but rather that they should encourage and develop proper agencies to do so.

Both President Wilson and I feel that there are great possibilities in this movement; that it is in harmony with the spirit of the day and that it will be welcomed by the peoples of the world as obviously its only motive and purpose can be in their common interest.

Not the least of the advantages to be derived from such a movement should be the realization, on the part of the peoples of many countries, of their obligations to their fellow men.

Although the Red Cross is not strictly a governmental agency, but rather a voluntary organization, it is clear that a moral endorsement on the part of the more important Governments is essential to ensure the fullest possibilities of the plan. It is the President's hope that you may find yourself in accord with the suggestion and that you will therefore delegate some one to communicate with the representatives of your Red Cross organization, expressing to them your desire that they cordially cooperate in the movement. The success of the conference would seem assured if it can be made clear that the movement has at the outset the unqualified approval and support of the Governments named.

I trust that it will be possible for you to advise me in the near future respecting this matter.

I am, my dear Prime Minister

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, January 24, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have duly received your most interesting letter in which you were good enough to inform me of the suggestion of Mr. Henry P. Davison, President of the War Council of the American Red Cross; in this suggestion he proposes to enlarge the scope of the International Red Cross and to develop its beneficent action in times of peace.

I believe with President Wilson that Mr. Davison's initiative deserves to be encouraged on account of the eminently humanitarian purpose which inspires it.

The ideas of the President of the War Council of the American Red Cross have moreover several times been discussed by periodic Congresses of the International Red Cross of Geneva, notably in Washington in 1912, where Messrs. Ador and White presided.

The practical realization of this project necessarily requires preliminary studies on the part of the various Red Cross Societies of the Allied and Associated Powers.

I have reason to think that the Central Committee of the French Red Cross proposes to investigate this matter after the meeting which Mr. Davison has called to be held at Cannes on February 1st, where the French Red Cross will be represented, in order to ascertain the precise ideas of the President of the American Red Cross War Council.

As far as any ulterior invitation is concerned, by the International Committee of the Red Cross, for a Conference destined either to revise the Convention of Geneva, or for a general extension of the activities of all the Red Cross Societies in times of peace, I believe the question should be the object of conversations between the Allied and Associated Governments and their respective Red Cross Societies.¹

Very cordially yours

G. CLEMENCEAU

¹ In May, 1919, a League of Red Cross Societies was formed in Paris,

To House were sent many appeals for assistance from the struggling nationalities, who counted upon the Peace Conference, not merely for decision as to ultimate boundaries, but for practical aid in the efforts they were making to establish an independent position. The most stirring was from Paderewski, who as Prime Minister of Poland found himself compelled to face attacks from without, at the moment when the newly reborn state was torn by domestic faction. Colonel House had for Paderewski an enduring affection which led to a friendship that after the Peace Conference brought the two together at every opportunity. He had equal admiration for his ability. Paderewski, he wrote later, 'had gathered together the fragments of a broken kingdom and moulded it into a virile and liberty-loving republic. He came as the spokesman of an ancient people whose wrongs and sorrows had stirred the sympathies of an entire world. This artist, patriot, and statesman awakened the Congress to do justice to his native land, and sought its help to make a great dream come true. His fervid eloquence brought about the renaissance of Poland and added new lustre to a famous name.'

Upon President Wilson House urged the formal recognition of the Polish State and speedy rendering of whatever immediate assistance the Allies at Paris could furnish in a practical sense.

with which some thirty-two national societies became affiliated. In order to prevent conflicts between the League and the Interallied Committee, a mixed commission was formed. Article XXV of the Covenant reads: 'The Members of the League agree to encourage and promote the establishment and coöperation of duly authorized voluntary national Red Cross organizations having as purposes the improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world.'

Premier Paderewski to Colonel House

WARSAW, January 12, 1919

DEAR MR. HOUSE:

I have telegraphed you several times, but evidently not one of my messages has reached you.

The American Food Commission is going to leave Warsaw to-night. My time is very limited and, to my deepest regret, I shall not be able to fully describe you the situation which is simply tragic. Mr. J. M. Horodyski will give you the details. I wish, however, to add a few remarks to his verbal report, which will be, I am sure, very exact.

Contrary to the rumors originated by the retiring pro-German propaganda the Poles have been nowhere the aggressive party. Though claiming, most legitimately, . . . Dantzig as an indispensable condition for their political, commercial, and economic life, they all rely with unshaken confidence on the results of the Peace Conference and do not intend to surprise the delegates by any 'fait accompli.' But could anybody ask them to remain quiet when brutally attacked and not to defend themselves? Surprised by the murderous Ukrainian Bolshevik army the women and children of Lemberg took up arms and defended the city. At the present moment a force of about 80,000 Ukrainians, armed and equipped by the Germans, led by German and Austrian officers under the command of an Austrian Archduke Wilhelm of Hapsburg, is at the gate of Lemberg and the number of Polish soldiers, lacking food and munitions, does not exceed 18,000 men. In Posen, the day after my arrival, during the procession of 10,000 school children marching through the streets, some Prussian companies, mostly officers, opened fire upon the peaceful and unarmed crowd. Quite a number of shots were fired at my windows, some of them at the window of Colonel Wade. Explosive and dum-dum bullets were used. American and British flags were insulted. Several eye-witnesses, including the officers of the British Mission and myself, can testify to these facts.

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PADEREWSKI AND COLONEL HOUSE

YASRI LITACREB

APR 30 1974

There is no doubt that the whole affair was organized by the Germans in order to create some new difficulties for the Peace Conference. There is also not the slightest doubt that the present Spartacus movement in Germany and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia are most closely connected. They simply intend to meet on our soil.

The Bolshevik army has already taken Vilna. The cities of Grodno and Biolytostok are in immediate danger. In a few days the invasion of this part of Poland will be an accomplished fact.

Poland cannot defend itself. We have no food, no uniforms, no arms, no munitions. We have but men, at best 500,000 of them, willing to fight, to defend the country under a strong Government. The present Government is weak and dangerous, it is almost exclusively radical-socialist.

I have been asked to form a new cabinet, but what could I do with the moral support of the country alone, without the material assistance of the Allies and the United States?

If there were any possibility of obtaining immediate help for my country I would suggest:

(1) To send a collective note to the Ukrainian Directorate at Kief, addressed to Messrs. Petlura, Winnitchenko, and Schwetz, ordering cessation of hostilities in Eastern Galicia and evacuation of the district of Boryslaw, where considerable American, English, and French interests are endangered.

(2) To send an interallied military Commission to Warsaw in order to examine the situation and prescribe the means of assistance.

(3) To send as soon as possible some artillery and plenty of German rifle-munitions.

If this action is delayed our entire civilization may cease to exist. The war may only result in the establishment of barbarism all over Europe.

Kindly forgive this chaotic writing.

With very kindest regards I beg to remain most gratefully and sincerely yours,

I. J. PADEREWSKI

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, January 21, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I enclose a copy of a letter that has just been brought me by hand from Paderewski in Warsaw. I think that his requests are moderate and I believe that you should urge the Allied Governments to accede to his wishes.

Now that Paderewski has formed a Government in Poland which is apparently being supported by Pilsudski and the other more prominent leaders, I suggest that you, on behalf of the United States, immediately recognize this Government as a *de facto* Government. I believe that we should take the lead in this matter. The British are certain to follow us, inasmuch as they sent Paderewski to Dantzic on a British warship.

If the Allied Governments and the United States agree to the sending of arms and ammunition and military supplies to Poland, I suggest that you request General Pershing to put this matter, so far as the United States is concerned, in the hands of one of his competent officers.¹

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

III

During President Wilson's visits to England and Italy,

¹ On January 29 the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference listened to a presentation of Poland's case by M. Dmowski, who with M. Paderewski was accepted as Polish delegate to the Peace Conference. The Council appointed an interallied mission to Poland to investigate and report on the situation. It also arranged for the transport across Germany of General Haller's Polish army in France. Thus reënforced the Poles defeated the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia, which Poland was later authorized to occupy.

House at the President's request continued preparations for the procedure of the Peace Conference. He discussed the question with M. Tardieu, who was recognized as Clemenceau's chief agent, and with Mr. Balfour. He had frequent interviews with Mr. Wickham Steed, whose articles in the *Daily Mail* were of the first importance, not merely because of Steed's knowledge of Continental politics, but because they had behind them the power of the Northcliffe press. Both Steed and Northcliffe believed that the League of Nations must be the central point of the peace settlement. House approved Steed's plan of getting the League to work at once, on the basis of interallied institutions already in operation; he believed that under the supervision of the secretariat they would render in time of peace a service to humanity which would solidify the League and make it capable of preventing war. He agreed that the Covenant of the League should be simple, for its life and success would depend largely upon the spirit that lay behind it, rather than upon its machinery or the wording of its constitution. He further approved of the principle of studying the problems of the peace through expert committees, which was characteristic of Steed's plan.

'The only merit of this plan,' wrote Steed, 'was its simplicity. Its defect was that it took no account of the personal ambitions and vanities of statesmen. It was, broadly, that oratory should be barred from the outset by a self-denying ordinance; that assent to the establishment of a league of nations should be the first point on the agenda of the Conference; that this assent having been secured, a nucleus for a league of nations should at once be formed out of the various inter-allied bodies that had grown up during the war — such as the Maritime Transport Council, the Wheat Executive, and the other organizations composed of men who had already acquired the habit of working internationally for a

common purpose; that some political advisers and international jurists of repute should be associated with them; and that to the body thus formed all questions not susceptible of immediate solution should be referred for impartial study and treatment. It was essential, I thought, that a league of nations should grow rather than be 'made'; that the Peace Conference should plant an acorn instead of trying to create a full-grown oak; and that, within a certain frame-work to be established from the beginning, the Covenant or Constitution of the League should be developed in the light of experience, not drafted in advance by theorists. The plan provided also for the immediate appointment of expert committees upon the principal questions of the Peace Settlement, these committees being instructed to report by definite dates to the heads of the Allied and Associated Governments, and to cast the gist of their reports into the form of articles of a Peace Treaty. The heads of Governments would take no part in the work of the expert committees, but would sit as a supreme tribunal for the decision of controverted points, settling them in accordance with the terms of the Armistice and with the declared war aims of the Allies. When this had been done, the Treaty should be communicated to the enemy Governments and signed, the settlement of the outstanding questions, under examination by the embryonic League of Nations, being reserved for annexes to the main Treaty.

'Colonel House asked me further to adumbrate ideal solutions of the most urgent peace problems; and I found his views very like my own.'¹

Mr. Steed's plan, indeed, was not far from House's idea of a quick preliminary treaty. But the Colonel recognized the necessity of reaching early agreement upon certain principles of the settlement which could not be postponed for later

¹ H. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 264-65.

decision by the League, especially reparations, French security, and Italian aspirations in the Adriatic.

House insisted that Germany could be asked to pay as much, and only as much as was stated in the pre-Armistice Agreement: compensation 'for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.' As a practical matter he believed it useless to attempt to evaluate that damage. It was certain to be more than Germany could pay without destroying the economic organization of Europe and fostering German trade at the expense of the Allies themselves. The world would gain by an immediate payment by Germany of her quick assets, and he advocated a recognition of this fact by the Conference. If the Allies would agree to the sum which their bankers believed Germany could pay, it would then be to American advantage to agree to a scaling down of war debts; not because there was any moral obligation upon the United States, but on the principle that it is a wise business maxim to write off losses which cannot be made good. It would further be necessary to persuade the French that national security could be as well provided by the League of Nations, which would permit them to demobilize and avoid the expense of a large army, as by annexations which would drain their treasury at the moment they needed all their resources for the rehabilitation of the devastated districts. As for the Italian claims, everything would depend upon the success with which Wilson could urge the contention that the validity of the secret treaties had been superseded by the pre-Armistice Agreement, which accepted the principles of the Fourteen Points.

Upon the economic and financial aspects of the settlement, House had long conferences with the experts of the United States delegation and with many Europeans.

'January 4, 1919: Hoover and I,' he wrote in his diary, 'had a long talk upon the food situation and upon the situation in general. He takes, as usual, a gloomy outlook and I must confess that things do not seem cheerful. There is every evidence that the Allies have a growing intention not to repay us the money we have loaned them. One hears the argument, both in France and England, that we ought to pay our full share of the Allies' war debt; that we ought to have come in sooner, and that their fight was our fight. I for one have never admitted this. I have always felt that the United States was amply able to take care of herself; that we were never afraid of the Germans, and would not have been afraid of them even if France and England had gone under. We would have had a serious time, I admit, and there would have been a war in all human probability; but that we ever feared that they could defeat us or dominate us, has never seemed to me probable.'

'January 6, 1919: I suggested to my colleagues this morning that the finance and economic questions would meet us at every turn and that we might as well face them and have a show-down with our associates of the Allied Governments. In looking over General McKinstry's report of the investigation which he is making, . . . it seemed to me that we were going at the matter backward. If we go along the lines which the French, Belgian, and other Allied Governments are pursuing, Germany, I thought, could not sign a peace which left the amount of her obligations in doubt, to be determined as the future developed the amount of reparations to be paid. It would not be satisfactory to Germany and it would not be satisfactory to us. Germany could not put herself in a financial condition to pay an indefinite obligation. It therefore seemed the course of wisdom to ascertain how much Germany could pay within a reasonable time and then let the Allies settle between themselves what proportion of this sum each should receive. My colleagues agreed.'

'I then suggested that we give a lunch early next week to which we might invite the French, English, and Italians, including their Ministers of Finance, for the purpose of having a frank discussion of this question of reparation and finance. We have to meet the growing demand of the Allies that the United States not only cancel the sums which they owe us, but help them pay their own debts. . . .

'During the war the people were quite willing to pay excessive taxation. It was a matter of self-preservation. Then, too, the scale of remuneration was high. There is quite a different story to tell to-day, and if England, France, and Italy undertake to tax their people sufficiently to meet their national budgets, it will of course include the interest charges on their national debts. I am sure the devil will be to pay. I want to treat the matter sympathetically and generously, but I do not want to see the United States forced into an impossible and unsatisfactory position.

'*January 7, 1919*: Clemenceau and the President¹ both sent word they would call on me at five. The President came first to my reception room and met the other Commissioners. We had hardly begun our conversation before the Prime Minister arrived. I asked President Wilson and the Commissioners to excuse me and took Clemenceau into another room, where we had one of our heart-to-heart talks. I convinced him, I think, for the first time that a League of Nations was for the best interests of France. I called his attention to the fact that before the war Germany was a great military power, but that to the east of her there was Russia, also a great military power. To-day there was only one great military power on the Continent of Europe, and that was France. There was no balance of power as far as the Continent was concerned, because Russia had disappeared and both Germany and Austria had gone under. The thing that was apparent to me and to him must necessarily

¹ Just back from Italy.

be apparent to England. The English had always thrown their weight first in the one direction and then in the other, to establish an equilibrium. The English would not look with favor upon the present situation. . . .

'In the present war England voluntarily came to France's aid. She was not compelled to do so. The United States did likewise without compulsion. I asked whether or not in the circumstances France would not feel safer if England and America were in a position where they would be compelled to come to the aid of France in the event another nation like Germany should try to crush her. Under the old plan, the shadow and the specter of another war would haunt her. If she lost this chance which the United States offered through the League of Nations, it would never come again because there would never be another opportunity. Wilson was an idealist, but our people were not all of his mind. Wilson could force it through because, with all the brag and bluster of the Senate, they would not dare defeat a treaty made in agreement with the Allies and thereby continue alone the war with Germany or make a separate peace.

'The old Tiger seemed to see it all and became enthusiastic. He placed both hands on my shoulders and said, "You are right. I am for the League of Nations as you have it in mind and you may count upon me to work with you."

'We then took up the French economic problems and the real difficulties that confronted him. A great debt hung over the nation — a debt, the interest of which could only be paid by excessive taxation. Wages must necessarily go down after the war and taxation must necessarily go up. This would almost bring on a state of rebellion. Some plan ought to be formulated by which the delicate and dangerous situation might be met. Foolish suggestions were being made by Ribot and others, and I urged him to use his influence to

check such schemes.¹ They were doing harm to France and would eventually prejudice the Americans against her.

'I hoped Clemenceau would pardon me for bringing up the internal affairs of France with which we were only indirectly concerned. The old man replied, "I think of you as a brother and I want you to tell me everything that is in your mind, and we will work together just as if we were parts of the same Government." In this spirit there could be no differences between France and the United States.

'A very long talk with the President to-day, over the private telephone before he came to call, and I gave him pretty much of a résumé of what had happened since he left Paris. He told me of his Italian trip, with which he was well pleased. John Carty has arranged a private wire between the President's study and mine; there is also a telephone at my bedside that connects with this wire. There is no intermediary. He rings and I answer, and *vice versa*. The wire is constantly "covered" to see that it is not tapped.'

IV

The great fault of the political leaders who began to gather at Paris at the beginning of the second week of January, 1919, was their failure to draft a plan of procedure. Such a fault was, perhaps, to be expected, for they were not men primarily gifted with a talent for organization. The Allied victory was due to Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Wilson in quite as real a sense as it was the result of the genius of military leaders; but their contribution had been that of popular leadership and not of administrative capacity.

It was true that very careful plans had been drafted for the systematic procedure of the Peace Conference, any one of which would have enormously facilitated its progress.

¹ Referring to the demand that the United States cancel war debts at the same time that France exact excessive reparations and annex the left bank of the Rhine.

The best-known of these plans was that drafted under the supervision of Tardieu, which Ambassador Jusserand sent to President Wilson for study on the *George Washington*.¹ This programme was logically arranged and, if it had been carried out, would probably have expedited the work of the Conference. Furthermore, it contained the all-important implication that the peace must be based upon the pre-Armistice Agreement, the importance of which Wilson himself did not seem to appreciate. It directly and specifically referred back to the various Fourteen Points the topics to be considered, and it embodied the American doctrine that Germany could be called upon for reparations only to the extent of the direct damage resulting from German attack. 'Outside of the torpedoing from which the British fleet mainly suffered,' the text of the French plan stated, 'Belgium and France alone are entitled to indemnities on account of the systematic devastation suffered by them.' If this had been accepted at the outset, all the later controversy over the introduction of indirect war costs and pensions into the reparation clauses of the Treaty would have been avoided.

Colonel House kept in close touch with Tardieu's plans and in general sympathized with them. The one point of anxiety in his mind concerned the emphasis to be given the League of Nations, since the French were generally supposed to be indifferent or opposed to the inclusion of the Covenant in the Treaty. On this point Tardieu assured House that no difficulties need arise. On January 8, House wrote in his diary: 'Tardieu came to talk about the method of procedure which is to be taken up in the meeting on Sunday. We came to an agreement regarding the place which the League of Nations is to take in the order of procedure.'

But the heads of Government did not approve, or at least

¹ Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 56-63. The plan was revised and put into synoptic form in January. See Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 88.

did not set in motion, any systematic approach to the problems of the Conference. Tardieu attributes this indifference to the Anglo-Saxon temperament. 'The variety of subjects,' he writes, 'calling for the attention of the heads of the delegations and the instinctive repugnance of the Anglo-Saxons to the systematized constructions of the Latin mind prevented the adoption of our proposal which only partially served to direct the order of work. The Conference created its various organizations one after the other instead of building them all up beforehand.'¹ Wickham Steed was of the opinion that if House had kept his health, he would have been able to assist materially in working out an organization. 'One serious misfortune — which proved to be a disaster,' he wrote, 'befell the Conference through the illness of Colonel House. A severe attack of influenza incapacitated him for any work during this critical formative period. Consequently, his guiding influence was absent when it was most sorely needed, and, before he could resume his activities, things had gone too far for him to mend.'²

House's illness lasted nearly a fortnight and was sufficiently grave as to give rise to rumors of his death; he had the interesting experience of reading his own obituary notices and eulogies. During this fortnight, the first plenary session of the Peace Conference was called on January 18. The Premiers and Foreign Ministers of the five Principal Powers, meeting as the Supreme Council, constituted what came to be called the Council of Ten. They acted as a board of review for various issues relating both to executive action in various parts of Europe and also to the settlement itself. They listened to the claims of the smaller nations, often not

¹ Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 91.

Mr. Baker attributes the opposition of Wilson to the French plan to his fear that it would sidetrack the League. The theory is unconvincing, since Tardieu agreed with House that the League should be the first item to be considered.

² Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 266.

very well understood by them. Something of time and prestige was squandered in these sessions. 'It soon became known,' wrote Steed, 'that they had blundered and, still worse, the various deputations whom they examined collectively became witnesses to the Council's ignorance. . . . Since the "big men" were engaged, from the start, in the rough and tumble of the discussions, there remained nothing in reserve for the decision of controverted points, and those who ought to have been the ultimate judges wore out their strength and their influence in wrangling over details.'¹

To House, still in bed, the President and others who watched the Council of Ten at work brought word of the situation. On January 21 he wrote in his diary, 'Unless something is done to pull the delegates together and to get them down to work, as last year,² I am afraid the sessions will be interminable.' And on the following day: 'The President came to see me to-day to tell of what was going on in the meeting at the Quai d'Orsay. As far as I can see they are not getting anywhere, largely because of the lack of organization.' On the same day Wiseman wrote in a diary memorandum: 'Saw House. We discussed the slow pace at which the Conference is going and agreed that it was absolutely necessary to appoint Committees to deal with various subjects. House asked me to draft a note for him on this subject. I suggested consulting Tyrrell, and he agreed.'

Wilson himself chafed even more under the delays that resulted from the hearings of the Council of Ten. Coming out of Pichon's study in the Quai d'Orsay one afternoon, where he left the Council at its deliberations, he expressed to two American technical advisers his impatience with the futility of listening day after day to complicated claims. 'Why don't you get together with the other experts,' he said,

¹ Steed, *op. cit.*, II, 270.

² Presumably referring to the Interallied Conference of November-December, 1917.

'and put in a joint recommendation as to boundaries? The Council will approve anything you agree upon.' The suggestion was exactly in line with the discussion of Wiseman and House. The President repeated to House his desire to organize committees for special study, and in a few days the process was inaugurated.

'*January 30, 1919:* I sent for Sir William Tyrrell,' wrote House in his diary, 'in accordance with the understanding I had with the President last night regarding the united report which we desire the British and American technical advisers to make concerning boundary questions. I put Tyrrell in touch with Mezes and urged them to facilitate the matter as much as possible.'

Obviously it was unwise to restrict the special work to an informal and self-constituted committee. On February 1, the Supreme Council referred the question of Rumanian boundaries to a committee of specialists representing the United States, the British Empire, France, and Italy. Within a few days they created similar committees for the study of Polish and Czecho-Slovak boundaries.

Colonel House noted in his diary accordingly, on February 6, that 'the general Peace Conference is going better and things are being done.' Steps were also taken to hasten the organization of a council to handle the administrative problems of an economic character. On January 30, House met with the American economic specialists, who drafted a programme designed to relieve the Supreme Council from the time-consuming discussion of executive action demanded by the economic state of Europe; for the Peace Conference had been compelled to undertake not merely peace making but executive functions.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, February 7, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I enclose a copy of proposals, which, if they meet with your approval, your economic advisers, Admiral Benson, Baruch, McCormick, Davis, and Hoover, suggest should be submitted by you on behalf of the United States at the meeting of the Supreme War Council this afternoon.

There will probably be opposition to those suggestions at the meeting. I have asked our economic experts to be in attendance so that you can call upon them when these matters come up for discussion.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

These proposals were passed the next day by the Supreme Council in the following form, upon President Wilson's motion:

'i. Under present conditions many questions not primarily of military character which are arising daily and which are bound to become of increasing importance as time passes should be dealt with on behalf of the United States and the Allies by civilian representatives of these countries experienced in such questions as finance, food, blockade control, shipping, and raw materials.

'ii. To accomplish this there shall be constituted at Paris a Supreme Economic Council to deal with such matters for the period of the Armistice. The Council shall absorb or replace such other existing interallied bodies and their powers as it may determine from time to time. The Economic Council shall consist of not more than five representatives of each interested Government.

'iii. There shall be added to the present International

Permanent Armistice Commission two civilian representatives of each Government, who shall consult with the Allied High Command, but who may report direct to the Supreme Economic Council.'

Colonel House to the President

[Memorandum]

PARIS, February 13, 1919

Last Saturday the Supreme War Council set up the 'Supreme Economic Council' to deal with questions of Finance, Food, Blockade Control, Shipping, and Raw Materials.

Our representatives here in Europe dealing with these matters are the following:

1. Finance — Norman H. Davis;
2. Food — Herbert Hoover;
3. Blockade Control — Vance C. McCormick;
4. Shipping — Edward N. Hurley; in his absence, Mr. [Henry M.] Robinson;
5. Raw Materials — Bernard M. Baruch.

I suggest that you designate these gentlemen to represent the United States on the Supreme Economic Council, each to be chairman of that particular branch of the work of the Council which he represents.¹

E. M. H.

Thus the organization of the Peace Conference developed. The Supreme Council was relieved of much of its executive

¹ President Wilson accepted these recommendations and House notified the experts involved. As it developed, the chairmanships of the Shipping and Raw Materials Sections were assigned to Mr. Kemball Cooke, of Great Britain, and M. Loucheur, of France, instead of to Mr. Hurley and Mr. Baruch. A Communications Section was added under the chairmanship of General Mance of Great Britain, and a Section on Urgent Business under the chairmanship of Mr. Baruch. Three of the chairmanships went to the United States in accordance with the above memorandum of House.

labor. Territorial problems were placed in the hands of the special committees. Other committees were at work upon reparations, international labor legislation, international control of ports, waterways, and railways, upon military, naval, and aerial questions. Of all the committees, that upon which the President naturally laid chief stress was the Committee on the League of Nations. The circumstances that led to its creation and the character of its work deserve especial study.

CHAPTER IX

DRAFTING THE COVENANT¹

It was impossible to listen to the document which President Wilson read . . . without feeling that the affairs of the world were being lifted into new dimensions.

Mr. H. Wickham Steed in the Paris 'Daily Mail,' February 15, 1919

I

FROM the moment of his arrival in Europe, President Wilson made plain his conviction that the League of Nations must be the central issue of the Peace Conference. The creation of a League, in his opinion, would be the distinctive achievement differentiating this peace settlement from those of the past, which had invariably resulted in nationalistic rivalry and war. No matter how satisfactory the peace treaties might be in their territorial and economic aspects, Wilson insisted that they would be futile for the preservation of future peace unless they provided for a League.

While still on the *George Washington*, then approaching the shores of France, President Wilson one morning discussed the coming Conference and the League of Nations with a group of American economic and territorial experts. The gist of his views and some of his actual expressions were set down by Dr. Isaiah Bowman, executive officer of the Inquiry. In view of the fact that Wilson made no public statement on these questions before the Peace Conference, Dr. Bowman's notes are obviously of the first historical importance.

¹ This chapter does not attempt to cover the topic chosen as the chapter heading, except from the point of view of House's papers. I am greatly indebted for essential information and clarification of the subject to Mr. David Hunter Miller, whose comprehensive knowledge of this particular matter probably exceeds that of any living student or participant. His *The Drafting of the Covenant* (2 vols., Putnam, 1928) is a mine of authoritative information on the subject.

*Bowman Memorandum on Conference with President
Wilson*¹

December 10, 1918

After a few introductory remarks to the effect that he was glad to meet us, and that he welcomed the suggestion of a conference to give his views on the impending Peace Conference, the President remarked that *we would be the only disinterested people* at the Peace Conference, and that *the men whom we were about to deal with did not represent their own people. . . .*

The President pointed out that this was *the first conference in which decisions depended upon the opinion of mankind*, not upon the previous determinations and diplomatic schemes of the assembled representatives. With great earnestness he re-emphasized the point that unless the Conference was prepared to follow the opinions of mankind and to express the will of the people rather than that of their leaders at the Conference, we should soon be involved in *another breakup of the world, and when such a breakup came it would not be a war but a cataclysm.*

He spoke of the League to Enforce Peace, of the possibility of an international court with international police, etc., but added that such a plan could hardly be worked out in view of the fact that there was *to be only one conference* and it would be difficult to reach agreements respecting such matters; and he placed in opposition to this view of the work of the Conference and of the project of a *League of Nations, the idea of covenants*, that is, agreements, pledges, etc., such as could be worked out in *general form* and agreed to and set in motion, and he particularly emphasized the importance of relying on *experience to guide subsequent action.*

As for the League of Nations, it implied political independence and *territorial integrity plus later alteration of terms and*

¹ I am greatly indebted to Dr. Bowman for his kind permission to print these excerpts from his notes. The italics are in the original notes.

alteration of boundaries if it could be shown that injustice had been done or that conditions had changed. And such alteration would be the easier to make in time as passion subsided and matters could be viewed in the light of justice rather than in the light of a peace conference at the close of a protracted war. He illustrated his point by the workings of the Monroe Doctrine, saying that what it had done for the western world the League of Nations would do for the rest of the world; and just as the Monroe Doctrine had developed in time to meet changing conditions, so would the League of Nations develop. In fact, he could not see how a treaty of peace could be drawn up or how both elasticity and security could be obtained save under a League of Nations; the opposite of such a course was to maintain the idea of the Great Powers and of balance of power, and such an idea had always produced only 'aggression and selfishness and war'; the people are heartily sick of such a course and want the Peace Conference and the Powers to take an entirely new course of action.

He then turned to some specific questions and mentioned the fact that *England herself was against further extension of the British Empire.*

He thought that *some capital, as The Hague or Berne, would be selected for the League of Nations, and that there would be organized in the place chosen a Council of the League whose members should be the best men that could be found. Whenever trouble arose it could be called to the attention of the Council and would be given thereby the widest publicity. In cases involving discipline there was the alternative to war, namely, the boycott; trade, including postal and cable facilities, could be denied a state that had been guilty of wrong-doing. Under this plan no nation would be permitted to be an outlaw, free to work out its evil designs against a neighbor or the world.*

He thought that the *German colonies should be declared the common property of the League of Nations and adminis-*

tered by small nations. The resources of each colony should be available to all members of the League, and in this and other matters involving international relations or German colonies or resources or territorial arrangements, the world would be intolerable if only arrangement ensues; that this is a peace conference in which arrangements cannot be made in the old style. Anticipating the difficulties of the Conference in view of the suggestion he had made respecting the desire of the people of the world for a new order, he remarked, 'If it won't work, it must be made to work,' because the world was faced by a task of terrible proportions and only the adoption of a cleansing process would recreate or regenerate the world. The poison of Bolshevism was accepted readily by the world because 'it is a protest against the way in which the world has worked.' It was to be our business at the Peace Conference to fight for a new order, 'agreeably if we can, disagreeably if necessary.'

We must tell the United States the truth about diplomacy, the Peace Conference, the world. He here referred to the censorship, saying that he had arranged in the face of opposition from Europe for the free flow of news to the United States, though he doubted if there would be a similarly free flow to the peoples of other European countries; after a considerable effort he had secured the removal of French and English restrictions on political news.¹ Thereupon he finished his reference to the frank conditions under which the Conference had to work and the necessity for getting the truth to the people by saying that if the Conference did not settle things on such a basis the Peace Treaty would not work, and 'if it doesn't work right the world will raise Hell.'

He stated that we should only go so far in backing the claims of a given Power as justice required, 'and not an inch farther,' and referred to a remodeled quotation from Burke: 'Only that government is free whose peoples regard themselves as free.'

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 235.

The European *leaders* reminded one of the *episode in Philippopolis* — for the *space of two hours they cried, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians'* — to which the President appended in an aside, *'in the interest of the silversmiths.'*

The President concluded the conference by saying that he hoped to see us frequently, and while he expected us to work through the Commissioners according to the organization plans of the Conference, he wanted us in case of emergency not to hesitate to bring directly to his attention any matter whose decision was in any way critical; and concluded with a sentence that deserves immortality: *'Tell me what's right and I'll fight for it; give me a guaranteed position.'*

From these notes it is clear that the President came to Europe determined to fight if necessary for a new international order, and that he regarded the League as the necessary cornerstone of the coming international régime. Immediately upon reaching Paris he called Colonel House into conference for the purpose of discussing a revision of the draft Covenant which he had written in Washington the previous summer, and which was based primarily upon House's Magnolia draft.¹ Wilson still had in mind the mechanism for the League which he had planned five months before, operating through a Council made up of the Ambassadors or Ministers at the capital of one of the smaller Powers, Switzerland or Holland. The President had added one new and important idea to his plan; namely, the principle of mandates, according to which the League should become 'residuary trustee' for the inheritance of the Turkish and the German colonial empires, and should administer, primarily for the welfare of their inhabitants, the backward territories once belonging to those empires. The idea of a trusteeship for backward peoples was not new. It had been advocated by various writers on colonial problems, and a

¹ *Supra*, Volume IV, Chapter II.

year previous it was incorporated in a memorandum on Mesopotamia written for Colonel House's Inquiry by George Louis Beer and turned in on January 1, 1918, presumably in connection with the notes that House carried to President Wilson at the time of the formulation of the Fourteen Points.¹ This memorandum, according to J. T. Shotwell, 'happens to contain the first project for a "mandate" in the sense in which that term ultimately was used in the Treaty. At least no earlier formulation of the term in this technical sense in which it was finally adopted was known to Beer, then or later.'² The idea, if not the term, appears in the fifth of the Fourteen Points, although it was not incorporated by either Colonel House or the President in their first drafts of the Covenant.

In the interpretation of the Fourteen Points which House had prepared at the time of the pre-Armistice conversations, the principle of the mandate was developed in connection with Point V and the future of the Turkish Empire.³ 'It would seem as if the principle involved in this proposition is that a colonial power acts not as owner of its colonies, but as trustee for the natives and for the security of nations, that the terms on which the colonial administration is conducted are a matter of international concern and may legitimately be the subject of international inquiry. . . .'

This had been cabled by House to Wilson in October, and had evidently sunk into his mind as applicable to the Covenant of the League. Various writers have assumed⁴ that the President took over the idea of mandates from General Smuts' famous pamphlet, after he reached Europe.

¹ Volume III, Chapter XI.

² *George Louis Beer* (Macmillan, 1924), 86.

³ Doubtless Lippmann, who had been secretary of the Inquiry, and who with Cobb worked out the interpretation of the Fourteen Points, had taken it over from Beer.

⁴ Among others, Mr. R. S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, 1, 224-25.

But this pamphlet was not published until December 16, and on December 10, while still on the *George Washington*, Wilson explained his hope that territories taken from the German colonial and the Turkish empires would become the property of the League. 'Nothing stabilizes an institution so well,' he said, 'as the possession of property.' He argued that those territories should be administered not by the Great Powers but by smaller States.¹ General Smuts, furthermore, had excluded the German colonies from the application of the system, proposing it for the 'territories formerly belonging to Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey.' It is noteworthy, however, that although the idea of mandates came to Wilson independently of the Smuts pamphlet, the language of the new articles covering mandates which the President planned to incorporate in his revised Covenant was taken almost verbatim from Smuts.

President Wilson planned several other additions and changes in his draft Covenant. On December 16 he took up with House the idea of an international labor organization, and asked him whether 'something could be done or said at the Peace Conference which would bring the hours of labor, throughout the world, to a maximum of eight out of the twenty-four. He said it was entirely irrelevant to a Peace Conference, but wondered if it could not be brought in.' This idea he later developed so as to provide for the creation of an international labor organization under League auspices. He also discussed with House the addition of an Executive Council, as a solution of the main difficulty of his earlier plans which left in a perpetual minority the Great Powers, upon whom the responsibility for maintaining the League would fall. The creation of a Council would give control to the Great Powers, although that control would be limited by the Body of Delegates. In a tentative draft of a Covenant,

¹ Notes taken by C. S., December 10, 1918. See also Dr. Bowman's Memorandum, 282.

presented to House on November 30, 1918, David Hunter Miller advanced the idea of a Council to be elected by the delegates for the settlement of each unadjusted dispute. General Smuts' plan, published on December 16, provided for a permanent council to act as the 'executive committee of the league' as well as to report upon the adjustment of disputes. This Wilson took over practically unchanged.

Two other additions were made by Wilson, for which he was indebted neither to House's Inquiry nor to General Smuts. One was an article requiring new states to accord equality of treatment to all racial and religious minorities within their several jurisdictions. The other provided a clause declaring it the 'friendly right' of each of the signatory nations to draw the 'attention of the Body of Delegates to any circumstances anywhere which threaten to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.' This was eminently characteristic of Wilson's understanding of the spirit of the League, and he later described Article XI of the final Covenant, which expressed the sense of this clause, as his 'favorite article.' On the *George Washington* he emphasized his hope that the future international community would permit any nation to 'butt in' (the expression was his) when trouble threatened. There should be no more 'private fights,' he contended.¹

With such changes and additions in his mind, President Wilson, after his return from Italy, hastily rewrote his Washington draft of the Covenant. On January 8, he invited House to dinner in order to discuss his revision. The new document, which for convenience may be termed the first Paris draft, although it incorporated much of his Washington draft as well as of the House Magnolia draft, included the changes which the President had gone over with House. It also included a change which House did not approve;

¹ Notes taken by C. S. December 10, 1918.

namely, the omission of any provision for compulsory arbitration. In this respect as in others, the influence of General Smuts was evident, as well as that of the Phillimore plan which by this time Wilson had studied carefully. At their dinner on January 8, the President agreed with House that the latter should discuss the new draft with the British. 'It is much improved over the Magnolia draft,' wrote House in his diary.

The President authorized him to take the new draft to Lord Robert Cecil, who had charge of League of Nations questions for the British, in the hope of harmonizing all differences between it and the British plan, so as to produce a joint Anglo-American draft. On January 9, however, House fell ill, and for nearly a fortnight he was unable to carry on negotiations. This work was taken up, at House's suggestion, by David Hunter Miller, who thereafter kept in close touch with the British and whose influence upon the language of the Covenant became of increasing importance. With comments and criticism by Lansing, Bliss, and Miller before him, President Wilson set to work upon a new revision, which was completed by January 20. This was his second Paris draft.¹

In the mean time the British draft was completed and sent to Colonel House, who on January 19 forwarded a copy to the President. He found that the British plan did not include representatives of the smaller Powers on the Council of the League, nor did it provide for a system of mandates; it did include a permanent international court of justice, which Wilson still excluded, and it provided for separate representation for the British Dominions and India. Neither Wilson's second Paris draft nor the British draft provided for any plan of compulsory arbitration which might lead to a definition of acts of aggression. 'House thinks,' wrote Wise-

¹ This is the draft which was presented to the Senate as Wilson's original draft of the Covenant.

man on January 19, 'that both the President and Cecil have failed in their draft schemes by not insisting upon compulsory arbitration.'

II

With the exception of the problem of mandates, the second Paris draft of President Wilson and the British draft were so far similar as to make possible the close coöperation of the British and American experts in the drafting of the Covenant by the Peace Conference itself. Before the end of January, Colonel House himself had recovered and thereafter kept in close personal touch with Lord Robert Cecil.

The question as to whether or not the Covenant should be included in the general Treaty of Peace was not decided until January 25. Sir William Wiseman, who had been selected as liaison officer between the British and Americans and who acted as adviser to Colonel House on British relations, recorded in his diary many informal conferences at House's rooms in the Crillon, whither Cecil and Smuts came to discuss the League. There they considered the arguments, which finally prevailed, that were likely to persuade the European leaders that the Covenant should be an integral part of the Treaty. Neither Lloyd George nor Clemenceau apparently cared greatly; the latter was especially indifferent, for he had no confidence in the ultimate value of the League and his mind was concentrated upon the problems of security and reparations, which he regarded as of more immediate importance for France. But President Wilson was unalterably determined that the Covenant should be an integral part of the Treaty and he had the support of Lord Robert Cecil. Wilson agreed with House that at the second plenary session of the Peace Conference the endorsement of the League should be secured by the passage of resolutions and thereafter the work of drafting the Covenant entrusted to a committee which should begin its task at once. Lord Robert had already prepared resolutions to this effect.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, January 19, 1919

MY DEAR GOVERNOR:

I suggest that at your conference with Lord Robert Cecil this evening, you take the opportunity of ascertaining from him his views as to the form and substance of the resolution to be adopted by the Conference for referring to a committee the preparation of the Covenant dealing with the League of Nations.

I regard this resolution as of great importance. It should be drawn so as to secure the acceptance with the least possible discussion of what we deem vital. Points which may give rise to controversy should be left to the Committee to discuss.

The resolution when adopted should be made public as the solemn declaration of the Conference. The world is waiting for an announcement on this subject and we should not wish the matter to be referred except under a resolution containing substantially the following declarations. Commitments should not be difficult and I will undertake to secure these if you so desire.

(1) It is essential to the maintenance of the world peace, which the Associated Nations are now met to establish, that a League of Nations be created at the Conference with a permanent organization and regular meetings of the members.

(2) The League of Nations should promote the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments and the maintenance of justice and the scrupulous respect for all international obligations in dealings of organized peoples with one another.

(3) The League of Nations should provide for open diplomacy by the prompt and complete publication of all International Agreements.¹

¹ According to a memorandum of Wiseman, the above letter was drafted by himself, Miller, and Auchincloss. He added: 'House suggested

I am sending you herewith confidentially a copy of draft of Treaty [Covenant of League] prepared by Lord Robert Cecil, which was handed me by Sir William Wiseman. I have marked clauses which I think are of special interest.

Faithfully yours

E. M. HOUSE

As a result of his conference with Cecil, President Wilson approved the resolutions already drafted by the British, which were more definite than those contained in House's letter, although they carried the same implication of the necessity for an immediate creation of a League as part of the general peace. After discussion in the Supreme Council on January 21, these resolutions were endorsed by the Council on the following day, with slight verbal changes and additions suggested by the President. It was assumed that in presenting them to the plenary session Wilson would discuss the whole problem of the League.

On January 25, the Peace Conference convened to listen to the President's presentation of the case for the League. Without any opposition, the resolutions suggested by the British, as amended by Wilson, and endorsed by the Council, were approved as follows:

Peace Conference Resolutions on League of Nations

PARIS, January 25, 1919

'1. It is essential to the maintenance of the world settlement, which the Associated Nations are now met to establish, that a League of Nations be created to promote international coöperation, to ensure the fulfillment of accepted international obligations, and to provide safeguards against war.

that some one ought to spring on the Conference a proposal that they should bind themselves not to engage again in a world war. It would be interesting to see the man who would first dare to oppose that.'

Do you think that covers the Case?

W. W.

AMERICAN COMMISSION
TO NEGOTIATE PEACE

MEMORANDUM

Dear Swanson -

I believe that
what you have said
today will soothe
the world as nothing
you have said before.
It was complete & satis-
fying. W. W.

We have got them all very clearly
and satisfactorily committed

W. W.

Part also remembered
to forget -
In order to forget that and on W. W.

Swanson
4/28/19

NOTES EXCHANGED BY WILSON AND HOUSE AT PLENARY SESSIONS OF
JANUARY 25, 1919, AND APRIL 28, 1919

YRABRL IITMAGOM

AIR BOA JRP

'2. This League should be created¹ as an integral part of the general Treaty of Peace, and should be open to every civilized nation which can be relied on to promote its objects.

'3. The members of the League should periodically meet in international conference, and should have a permanent organization and secretariat to carry on the business of the League in the intervals between the conferences.

'The Conference therefore appoints a Committee representative of the Associated Governments to work out the details of the constitution and functions of the League.'²

¹ In the Protocol of the Plenary Session and in the minutes of the Commission this word is printed 'treated' and has been reprinted generally as such. Mr. David Hunter Miller has called attention to what must have been a typographical error, as 'created' was, in his opinion, obviously intended. See Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant*, I, 76.

² Mr. R. S. Baker reviews the circumstances precedent to the appointment of this committee and presents a dramatic picture of the alleged struggle between Wilson and the European opponents of the League who desired to prevent its creation. He assumes, as his chief evidence of 'sharp' strategical manoeuvres on both sides, the purpose of the British 'to get the discussion of the League out of the Council and into the hands of a special committee.' President Wilson, according to his contention 'evidently expected that it would be discussed by the Council itself, and its principles, if not its details, worked out by the heads of States as the basis of the settlements.' (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 236.)

There is nothing in Colonel House's papers to indicate the existence of such an intrigue or that Wilson believed in it. There is much to show that the President himself desired a committee. Such a committee, so far from hindering the creation of a Covenant, was the only practical means of securing it. Colonel House's letter of January 19 to the President shows that House himself took the creation of such a committee for granted and also took for granted that Wilson favored it. A memorandum by Wiseman, written January 23, reads: 'In the afternoon saw House, who is anxious to push the League of Nations rapidly. He wants me to get either Cecil or Smuts to sound the Japanese, Italians, and French, and have them come into line with the President's proposal before the Committee meet.' Reference of the matter to a committee was not, as Mr. Baker argues, suggested by the enemies of the League for the purpose of side-tracking it, but was rather demanded by its friends as a means of facilitating its creation.

The *procès-verbal* of the Council of January 21 (referred to by Mr.

The formal sanction thus given by the Peace Conference to the principle of the League and the decision that it should be given a place as an integral part of the Treaty, was the first great triumph of Wilson at the Conference. It was the result of many informal conversations which had been carried on during the apparently fruitless weeks, when the Conference seemed to be accomplishing nothing. Without these discussions the principle of a League might have been long and perhaps uselessly debated in the open Conference or Council. The same was to be true of the details of the Covenant later drafted by the Committee. Agreement had already been reached in private conversations as to the salient

Baker himself) shows that the President believed he had already reached an agreement on principles: 'President Wilson then explained . . . that he had found his ideas in substantial accord with Mr. Bourgeois [France], General Smuts, and Lord Robert Cecil [Great Britain].' And the *procès-verbal* of the first meeting of the Committee shows that Wilson did not want to talk about principles and that he believed that the Conference would accept any well-devised plan drafted by the Committee. As a matter of fact, Wilson approved enthusiastically House's plan for drafting the Covenant in committee rather than in the Council, thus avoiding constant consultation with the heads of Governments. 'President Wilson states [the *procès-verbal* of February 3 reads] that if the delegates consulted with their Governments they would not arrive anywhere. There is no use consulting one's Government about each particular point. The duty of the delegates is to form a plan and to present it to their Governments.' In fact, it was Wilson himself who on January 22 suggested to the Council of Ten that 'an initial draft for the League of Nations be made by a commission appointed by the Great Powers.' 'Still more erroneous,' writes Mr. D. H. Miller (*op. cit.*, I, 82), 'is Baker's idea that there was something Machiavellian in the proposal "to get the discussion of the League out of the Council and into the hands of a special committee." The notion that the proposal of a Committee would tend to delay the Covenant is fantastic; the fact on the contrary was that without some sort of a Commission or Committee there would have been no Covenant at all. . . .'

Mr. Baker's thesis that the French endeavored to hamper the creation of a League is by no means supported by the papers of Sir William Wiseman, who reports Tardieu as anxious to see the Covenant completed as soon as possible. In a memorandum of January 23, Wiseman writes: 'Saw Tardieu at 10.30. He thinks the Conference is going too slowly, but is satisfactory in the sense that President Wilson will be able to return to the States and say that the League of Nations has been agreed upon.'

features of the Covenant before the Committee met, so that it proved possible in ten sittings to settle its form. Although this Covenant provided the merest 'scaffolding for the essentials of international action,' nevertheless it possessed the supreme merit of winning the approval of the Conference.

III

During the interval between the endorsement of the League's principles by the Peace Conference on January 25 and the first meeting of the Committee on February 3, strenuous efforts were made by the Americans and British especially interested in the fortunes of the League, to reach an agreement upon its outstanding features. The chief problem came in the discussion of mandates. President Wilson was enthusiastically in favor of his development of General Smuts' original plan. Although no one at Paris at any time urged the return of the German colonies, Wilson was definitely opposed to their outright annexation by the victorious nations. The British Colonial Premiers insisted that the German colonies conquered by them must be annexed. Hughes of Australia and Massey of New Zealand demanded the colonies south of the Equator as necessary protection for those Dominions, and even Smuts, the sponsor of the mandate principle, was slow to apply it to the German African colonies. 'The whole project,' says Lord Eustace Percy in the standard history of the Peace Conference, 'seemed in danger of splitting on the rock of South African and Australian nationalism.'¹ The Dominions were naturally supported by the French, whose claim to Syria was strongly pressed, and by the Japanese, who had an eye on the German colonies in the Pacific north of the Equator. If compelled to accept the mandate principle, they wished it applied so as to make possible virtual an-

¹ Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference at Paris*, II, 26.

nexation. Sir William Wiseman noted the issue in a memorandum of January 27.

Wiseman Memorandum

I attended a meeting in Colonel House's room, with Robert Cecil and Miller, to discuss the League of Nations. We found only two important points of difference between the British and American views. One was the Freedom of the Seas, which narrows down to a question of blockade. This they agreed to leave until they could each have the expert opinions of their sailors and international lawyers. The other question is that of the German colonies — South-West Africa and the Pacific Islands. House quite agrees that these should go to South Africa and Australia respectively, but objects to them being considered 'conquered territory.' He wants them to be handed over by the League of Nations to Australia and South Africa as mandatories. Cecil accepted this, and said he thought the Colonies would also, providing there was no question of cancelling the mandate. House argues that the League of Nations must reserve the right to cancel the mandate in cases of gross mismanagement, but says the President would agree that the peoples concerned should be able at any time to vote themselves part of Australia and South Africa, thereby cancelling the mandate.

I afterwards learned that, while this conversation was going on at the Hôtel Crillon, the very same matter was being discussed at the Quai d'Orsay, and George was taking a different view. He was supporting the Dominions' claim that these particular territories should be considered as conquered and part of the respective Colonies.

While Wilson fought for the principle of mandates in the Council, into which on January 24 and January 27 Lloyd

George introduced the Colonial Premiers, House sought in conferences with Cecil and Smuts to find a compromise. Ultimately an article drafted by Smuts, defining different types of mandates, proved the solution. House also made it his business to keep representatives of the neutral Powers in touch with the progress of discussions.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *January 27, 1919*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

President Ador of Switzerland called yesterday. He was much concerned about the neutral Governments not being represented upon the League of Nations. He is in favor of it, but believes that his people will not approve an organization in the formation of which they have had no part.

I suggested that the Great Powers might be willing to confer with neutral representatives unofficially and ask them to make any suggestions or criticisms as the formation of the League progressed. He was entirely satisfied with this.

If this is agreeable, I would be perfectly willing personally to keep in touch with the representatives of Switzerland, Poland, and Spain. Each delegate representing the Great Powers on the League of Nations might also keep in touch with three other neutral Governments. In this way there would be no hurt sensibilities and the cause would be very much strengthened.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*January 27, 1919*:¹ I had an interesting and valuable meeting with Lord Robert Cecil this afternoon,' wrote House in his diary, 'upon the subject of the League of Nations.'

¹ This excerpt refers to the meeting described in the Wiseman Memorandum quoted above.

Sir William Wiseman and David Miller were present. Lord Robert and I practically differed not at all, and yet there were some strong points of difference between his draft and ours. This is because, so he tells me, he could not get his views adopted. We argued at considerable length, especially upon the question of the German colonies, and whether or not the mandatory principle should be applied to them. I contended for it strongly and he accepted it, but objected to the clause by which a colony could by applying to the League of Nations ask for a change of Mandatory Power. This he thought impractical and said the Dominions would not consent. I convinced him that it was best for Great Britain as a whole to take what we had proposed rather than what the Dominions proposed. The result I thought would be presumably the same and in the end the Mandatory Power would in a short time persuade the colony to annex itself.

'While we were discussing this particular feature, Lloyd George, the President, and the Prime Ministers of the Dominions were discussing the same question at the Quai d'Orsay but upon different lines. Lloyd George and the President finally had a private conference . . . Balfour takes practically the same view that Lord Robert does, and which nearly agrees with my own.

'I urged Lord Robert to commit the Prime Minister and Mr. Balfour to the Covenant of the League of Nations which he and I have so nearly agreed upon. When this is done, I promised to take it up with the President.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, January 28, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I believe the entire British delegation, including the other Dominion representatives, are opposed to Hughes in his claim for annexation as opposed to the mandatory system.

Either Hughes claims the Pacific Islands by right of conquest and as a reward for Australia's services in the war, or he must accept the mandatory of the League of Nations for the better government of the backward people of the Pacific Islands. It is doubtful if public opinion in Australia is really behind Hughes, and if he persists in his claim the best solution would be to tell him the whole arguments on both sides must be published in order that the world may judge Australia's claims, but so far as the Conference is concerned his proposal strikes at the whole idea of the League of Nations and cannot be accepted.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'January 28, 1919: The President called me over the private wire at 9.30 and I have just had a twenty-minute talk with him. He is much disturbed at the turn of things this afternoon. The French and British are demanding that if the "mandatory" is used by the League of Nations as to the German colonies, it shall be used immediately and the different Powers designated now rather than later. The President asked my advice as to procedure. He had in mind to tell them that if they maintained their attitude he intended to give both sides to the public. In lieu of this I suggested that he tell them that he did not believe they voiced the opinion of the Conference as a whole, and that it was his purpose at the next general meeting to bring the matter before the Conference and ask for an opinion. My purpose in this is that, since proceedings of the General Conference are public, he will get exactly the same publicity as he would by the method he suggested and there could be no criticism by the Powers.¹

¹ President Wilson did not follow this advice. The *procès-verbal* of the meeting of the Council on January 30 reads, that President Wilson protested that: 'It was stated that, as regards President Wilson's ideals, he (President Wilson) did not know how his ideals would work. If these

'January 29, 1919: General Smuts came to see me at 10.30 in order to see whether we could not get together on the colonies question. He had drafted a paper which he said Lloyd George and some of them approved, but which they had not offered Hughes and Massey. They did not want to present the paper unless they knew it was satisfactory to the President. When I read it I saw they had made great concessions from the position they took yesterday, and I told him that with a few slight verbal changes I was ready to accept it.

'Lloyd George "cut" the meeting at the Quai d'Orsay and waited for Smuts' return. They had their meeting with the Prime Ministers of the Colonies and succeeded in putting the resolution through. In the mean time, I had sent it to the Quai d'Orsay with a memorandum on the margin stating that I approved. . . .

'The President came to-night and had a meeting with the Commissioners, and among other subjects discussed was this memorandum. He was not ready to accept it as a whole or at once.¹

'January 30, 1919: Lord Robert Cecil was my most important visitor. We went over the Covenant for the League of Nations and there was but little disagreement between us. He agrees with our views more than he dares admit, because

articles continued to appear, he would find himself compelled to publish his own views. So far he had only spoken to people in that room and to the members of the American delegation, so that nothing had been communicated to the Press regarding President Wilson's views, either by himself or by his associates. . . . Nevertheless the time might come when he would be compelled against his own wishes to make a full public *exposé* of his views.'

¹ Ultimately this memorandum was accepted by the President and became Article XXII in the final draft. Colonel House's endorsement for Wilson's benefit was as follows: 'L. G. and the Colonials are meeting at 11.30 and this is a draft of a resolution that Smuts hopes to get passed. He wants to know whether it is satisfactory to you. It seems to me a fair compromise. E. M. H.'

For the text of the resolution, see appendix to this chapter.

he sees that his people will not follow him. I am to get Orlando in line and he is to get the French, and when this is done we will have a general meeting [of the Committee].

'We discussed the colonial question and agreed absolutely. Strangely enough, at the same time that Cecil and I were discussing it here, the President was having "a first-class row" with Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Hughes and Massey. It looked as if the whole thing had "gone to pot." However, the row may do good. It will teach them all a lesson. The President was angry, Lloyd George was angry, and so was Clemenceau. It is the first time the President has shown any temper in his dealings with them.¹ . . . The British had come a long way, and if I had been in his place I should have congratulated them over their willingness to meet us more than halfway.

'The President, Orlando, and I met at the Hôtel Murat to-night in order to compare our Covenant for the League of Nations with that which the Italians have drawn. The meeting was very successful. We came to near agreement and without much difficulty. The exceptions that Orlando made to our draft were rather pertinent and some of them we agreed to accept. . . .

'I suggested to the President that we meet with the British to-morrow night in my rooms at the Crillon, and that the following night we bring the British and Italians together, leaving the French for another day. . . .

'*January 31, 1919:* We had a most successful meeting in my rooms, consisting of the President, General Smuts, Lord

¹ Sir William Wiseman wrote in a memorandum immediately after this incident: 'I walked down to the Quai d'Orsay with the Prime Minister, and pointed out the necessity of coming to an agreement on these questions with the President through House and not discussing them at the Conference. He was very anxious that House should attend Conferences.

'I went on to see House and explained the situation, and he, as usual, is intensely helpful.'

The result was that the Colonial Premiers finally accepted the principle of mandates as defined by Smuts.

Robert Cecil, and myself. David Miller was the only other person present. We discussed our difficulties regarding the League and brought them nearly to a vanishing point. We decided that Miller, representing us, and Hurst, representing the British, should draft a new form of Covenant based upon the one which the President and I jointly prepared. . . . The President remained behind for a quarter of an hour in order to talk and felicitate with me over the successful outcome of the evening's conference.

'I took occasion to tell him that he should devote just as much time to the League of Nations before he left for home as was necessary; that the relative importance of the League and the other things that were being done at the Quai d'Orsay were not to be compared. In the one instance, the world was being turned upside down and a new order was being inaugurated. In the other instance, it was simply a question of boundaries and what not, which had been the subject matter of peace conferences since time immemorial. I urged him, therefore, to put his back under the League and make it his main effort during the Conference. I thought he had a great opportunity to make himself the champion of peace and to change the order of things throughout the world.

'The President asked what I thought he should talk about at the reception which the Chamber of Deputies is to give him on Monday afternoon at five o'clock. I thought if he would speak on the League of Nations and say that France had really made its birth possible because of the position she had been forced into by Germany, and the obvious necessity of such a war never again being possible. He seemed pleased with the suggestion.

'*February 2, 1919:* David Miller brought me the revised Covenant for the League of Nations.¹ He was up until four o'clock this morning and was at it by 8.30 again in order to

¹ Generally known as the 'Hurst-Miller Draft.'

get it finished and printed to present to the President and me this afternoon, so we might look it over before tomorrow's meeting. I have sent Miller to the Hôtel Murat to go over it with the President as he has with me, explaining what changes have been made in our draft and the reasons for making them.'

The first meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations was called for the evening of February 3. On the evening before, President Wilson came to the Crillon to go over the Hurst-Miller draft with Colonel House.¹ He expressed some dissatisfaction with it and asked House and Miller to rewrite his own second Paris draft, taking over from the Hurst-Miller draft clauses upon religious equality, the publication of future treaties, and the prevention of commercial discrimination among members of the League. Miller took this new document and by superhuman efforts succeeded in having it printed by the early morning of February 3.² It was this and not the Hurst-Miller draft which the President wished to place before the Conference Committee in the evening as the basic document for discussion.

But the British not unnaturally objected to this change of programme, which would make the initial plan before the Committee a purely American rather than an Anglo-American proposition. Largely at the insistence of Colonel House,

¹ The Hurst-Miller draft, although it included material not in Wilson's plan, was expressed more succinctly, perhaps with greater clarity. It covers only seven and a half printed pages, to Wilson's ten and three quarters.

² Mr. R. S. Baker is apparently unaware of the existence of this draft. In his *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement* he mentions the first and second Paris drafts only. The President altogether made four drafts, one in Washington, and three in Paris. A letter sent by Wilson to D. H. Miller indicates that it was the third Paris draft which he hoped would serve as the basis of the Commission's work; this is in accord with the impressions of House and Wiseman. See Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant*, I, 75.

Wilson finally agreed that the Hurst-Miller draft and not his own third Paris draft should be presented to the Committee.

'February 3, 1919: I had my usual call from Wiseman,' wrote House. 'He said Lord Robert was greatly perturbed when he heard that the President, Miller, and I had gotten together last night and revamped our own Covenant of the League of Nations.

'Miller, the President, and I worked [last night] from a little after eight until after ten o'clock. I tried to get the President to accept the [Hurst-Miller] draft which had been agreed upon Friday night which Cecil, Smuts, he, and I had approved. He said the document had 'no warmth or color in it' and he very much preferred the one which we already had. I agreed with him, and yet I knew the wisest thing to do was to accept the other as a basis for our discussions today. After we revamped our own, Miller remained up the entire night supervising the printing of it and had it ready for us by breakfast this morning. Sir William thought it would be exceedingly unwise to let Lord Robert come into the general meeting of the Committee this afternoon feeling as he did, and asked what suggestions I had to make. I told him to have Cecil come a quarter of an hour before the meeting and I would undertake to have the President here and we would see what could be done.

'I telephoned the President and told him we were making a mistake in not keeping Lord Robert Cecil in harmony with us; he was the one man connected with the British Government who really had the League of Nations most at heart. . . .

'The three of us met promptly at 2.15 in my study. The meeting bade fair to be stormy for the first seven or eight minutes. After that, things went better and the President finally decided . . . to take the joint draft of Miller and Hurst

and use it as a basis for discussion. After that, everything went smoothly.¹

'The full committee of fifteen met in one of my salons and all during the discussion Lord Robert was on our side. I think the President was quite content that he had yielded the point. . . .

'I could not help thinking that perhaps this room would be the scene of the making of the most important human document that has ever been written.'

IV

The Committee, or Commission as it came to be called, appointed by the Conference to present a plan for a League of Nations was the most distinguished of the Peace Conference. President Wilson had chosen himself with Colonel House to represent the United States, and was in the chair for all the February meetings of the Commission except the last. The two ablest of the British advocates of the League, Cecil and Smuts, were selected by Lloyd George. The importance of the Commission was further enhanced by the presence of the Italian Prime Minister, whom House had discovered to be an ardent and open-minded supporter of the League idea and more than any one else ready to sink personal opinions in his desire for speed and unanimity.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, January 24, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

It occurred to me after you left this afternoon that it would be a good move to get Orlando to appoint himself

¹ Sir William Wiseman, who was in close touch with both Cecil and House, describes the incident as follows: 'House persuaded the President to revert to the Hurst-Miller draft, and when Cecil got down at 2.15 the President was ready to agree. The President had then to keep the meeting going with a speech while Miller went around to his office and got enough copies of the old draft to be handed around.'

one of the two to represent Italy on the Committee for the League of Nations. He has agreed to do this and with much enthusiasm.

Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts will undertake to do some missionary work not only with the Italians but with the Japs. In a few days I think we will have the situation sufficiently well in hand to call a meeting of the Committee as a whole.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

The Commission included two delegates for each of the Principal Powers, and one each for Serbia, China, Brazil, Portugal, and Belgium. Later at the demand of the smaller Powers, delegates were added for Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Greece, and Rumania. In general the smaller Powers chose their ablest delegates, and the Commission included such distinguished names as Venizelos, Hymans, Koo, and Ves-nitch.

'It was in Colonel House's office at the Crillon — on the third floor —' writes Mr. Baker, 'that this meeting of the nations to make a new world constitution was held. . . . It was Colonel House who cunningly staged the meetings. The President sat at the head of the table. On his right was Orlando, the Italian Premier, the only other chief of a Great Power. On his left sat Colonel House himself, active, bright-eyed, watchful, silent. In a chair just behind and between them, leaning forward to whisper, was the American legal adviser of the Commission, David Hunter Miller. On Colonel House's left were the British members, Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts. This was what may be called the pro-League bloc. Farther away sat the French delegates, M. Bourgeois and M. Larnaude. . . .

'Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda were there for Japan: silent, unemotional, but watchful; rising with power



N. MAKINO



S. CHINDA

WASSEL EINHAGEN

AN DER UNIVERSITÄT

only when their own interests were affected. Koo, for China, spoke much more than the Japanese put together and was nearer the American position than any other delegate.'¹

'Of all the nineteen members of the Commission,' writes Mr. Miller, 'the one heard least of all was an American. Colonel House spoke only at one meeting, and that was an occasion when the President was away and a few words from a representative of the United States were necessary. But a pilot does not have to talk, if he steers well. And the final agreement of the Commission, its rejection of the proposals which would have sunk the ship and its acceptance of those changes which were necessary to obtain unanimity, were due to the confidence which the representatives of Great Britain, of France, of Japan, and of other less important Powers had in Colonel House, and to the extraordinary influence which he exerted, supported as he was by the authority of the President.'²

The League of Nations Commission held ten meetings, and on February 13 was ready to lay the draft of the Covenant before the Plenary Conference. Historians have commented with irony or admiration upon this reconstruction of the international system in ten days. As a matter of fact the Commission did not make the Covenant in this period. It was made before they met. The functions of the Commission were almost entirely critical, a reworking of the Hurst-Miller draft, which was itself the result of long consideration and numerous preceding drafts.

At the first meeting on February 3, Wilson made the suggestion that the Anglo-American draft be accepted as a basis for discussion; he was supported by Orlando and without debate it was so agreed. This decision not merely made for speed but left the advantage with the British and the

¹ *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 278-79.

² D. H. Miller, in *What Really Happened at Paris*, 408.

Americans, who were the most enthusiastic supporters of the League. Both Cecil and Wilson urged the elimination of anything that would hamper speed, and objected to a general discussion of principles. The President was all for informality and did not even wish notes made of the discussions, lest he should be hampered in changing his mind.¹ He was finally persuaded to accept a secretariat, and *procès-verbaux* were made of the conversations; but when Koo suggested that it would be well to furnish the nations not represented with copies of these *procès-verbaux* the President 'objected to this on the ground that it would lead to publicity.'

Thus the Committee worked rapidly, striving always to accept without talk the points on which they were agreed and to isolate for discussion those that raised differences of opinion. Of the latter the most important were the question of the representation of the smaller States upon the Council; the problem of disarmament and the disposal of an armed force by the League; the question of religious and racial equality; the wording of the section on mandates. It was finally settled that the smaller Powers should be granted a representation of four upon the Council and that the Dominions and India, which enjoyed separate representation at the Peace Conference, should be granted the same in the Assembly of the League. General Smuts' statement on mandates, distinguishing between different types, was accepted and remained unchanged throughout later drafts. The religious clause advocated by President Wilson was finally dropped, and the effort of the Japanese to introduce an article concerning the principle of racial equality proved unsuccessful. The French endeavored persistently and likewise without success to provide for an international army, or at least an international staff; coupled with their opposition to Germany's entrance into the League, this would have made of the League a continuance of the anti-German alliance. The

¹ Miller, *op. cit.*, 409.

proposition was consistently opposed by Wilson and Cecil, and it received no effective support from the smaller Powers.

'The most serious hitch,' wrote Steed, 'came on February 11th when Wilson absolutely declined to accept the French demand for the creation of an international force that should operate under the executive control of the League of Nations. M. Bourgeois urged the French view with much eloquence and pertinacity. Wilson claimed that the Constitution of the United States did not permit of any such limitation upon its sovereignty; and Lord Robert Cecil took a similar view in regard to the British Empire. The French stood their ground and declined to surrender the claim which, in their view, could alone prevent the League of Nations Covenant from being a philosophical treatise, devoid of practical authority. Thus the sitting broke up towards midnight on February 11th, leaving the position very strained.'¹

The French finally agreed to pass the draft tentatively, and by the morning of February 13 the Commission was ready for the second reading. An article by Steed in the *Daily Mail* of that date urged compromise and the necessity of completing the Covenant in some form, even if imperfect; for if the Commission failed there would never be another chance.

'The difficulty consists in the fact that the Peace Conference is engaged upon a double task. It has to frame a peace with Germany and to secure from her adequate reparation for her misdeeds. It has also to frame a peace for the world at large that shall form a valid protection against future wars when the immediate lessons of this war have been forgotten or have become merely historical memories.

'Some Allied countries concentrate their minds almost

¹ Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 282.

exclusively upon the first aspect of this double task. Others think chiefly of the second aspect. The real difficulty is to find a common denominator between the two.

'This common denominator can be found only in a wisely constructed plan for the League of Nations. If the plan be made with exclusive reference to the conditions of the Great War and the problems to be solved in the immediate future, it may prove unacceptable to some important nations and unworkable in practice. It must not be made, so to speak, solely under the influence of shell-shock.

'On the other hand, it must not be too far removed from the practical lessons of the war. It must not be too other-worldly.

'The way out is to create a healthy embryo and to let it grow. No man can tell exactly how it will grow. But it is certain that it will grow into a great and powerful organism exactly in proportion as the spirit in which it is created is honest and unselfish.

'If it be not made now, it may never be made and, for lack of it, the nations may revert to the bad old system of alliances and armaments, the parent of future wars and step-mother of civilization.'¹

The spirit of this article, which was directed at the French plan of creating an anti-German alliance as well as at Wilson's unwillingness to compromise, was not reflected in the Commission's discussion of February 13, when the second reading of the Covenant was taken up. The French demanded that the preamble contain a reference to German responsibility for the war, and Bourgeois again raised the question of an international staff. But the lack of support for their demands, coupled with the skill of Lord Robert Cecil who presided in Wilson's absence, enabled the Commission to accept the draft Covenant unanimously.

¹ *Paris Daily Mail*, February 13, 1919.

It was extraordinary that the delegates of fourteen nations should have been able to agree upon the Covenant. It was only possible because of the amount of work carried on between the meetings by the drafting committees and in informal conversations. Of this essential fact, as well as of the atmosphere of the Commission, excerpts from the papers of Colonel House give us a glimpse.

v

'We made considerable progress,' wrote House, on February 4, 'in the meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations. . . . Hymans, Cecil, the President, and Bourgeois did most of the talking. The Japs never speak. General Smuts speaks so seldom that it is practically not at all. My province is to keep things running smoothly, . . . to find in advance where trouble lies and to smooth it out before it goes too far.

'Cecil and I do nearly all the difficult work between the meetings of the Committee and try to have as little friction at the meetings as possible. The President often tells me that under no circumstances will he do a certain thing and, a few hours later, consents. . . .

'Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda came for advice concerning what Japan had best do regarding the race question. There is a demand in Japan that the Peace Conference through the League of Nations should express some broad principle of racial equality. Chinda and Makino do not desire to bring it up themselves if they can avoid doing so. I advised them to prepare two resolutions, one which they desired, and another which they would be willing to accept in lieu of the one they prefer.

'Chinda and Makino said: "On July 8th at Magnolia you expressed to Viscount Ishii sentiments which pleased the Japanese Government, therefore we look upon you as a friend and we have come for your advice."

'I took occasion to tell them how much I deprecated race, religious, or other kinds of prejudices. It was not confined, however, to any one country or against any particular class of people; prejudice exists among the Western peoples against one another as well as against Eastern peoples. One can cite the contempt which so many Anglo-Saxons have for the Latins, and *vice versa*. This is one of the serious causes of international trouble, and should in some way be met.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, *February 5, 1919*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I enclose two papers which I think you should have before the meeting to-night.

The first is a draft of the preamble and articles one and two as provisionally adopted last night.

The second is article three as drafted at a meeting at which Lord Robert Cecil, General Smuts, Orlando, and Mr. Koo were present. I tried to get Bourgeois, but he could not be reached.

To-night Orlando will propose the adoption of article three as drafted.

You will note that the next to the last paragraph of article three is the same as the last paragraph of article two in Provisional Draft. If article three is adopted as drafted the last paragraph of article two will be left out.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'*February 5, 1919*: I showed the President the draft that Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda had brought this afternoon. The resolution they wanted we discarded at once, but the resolution which they had prepared as a compromise the President thought might do by making a slight change, which he did in his own handwriting. Later in the evening

I showed Chinda what we had prepared, and he seemed to think it would be satisfactory. He wished to first discuss it with his colleagues.

February 6, 1919: The meeting of the League of Nations Committee last night broke up earlier than usual. We did not sit later than eleven. This was by request of one of the French members who lives out of town and has difficulty in catching trains.

'The main controversy was over the number of members which the smaller Powers should have in the Executive Council. The smaller Powers wished four and were not prepared to accept my suggestion of two. They would have been entirely content with two if the Smuts-Wilson plan which we put in our first proposal had not suggested giving them four. The debate grew so warm that after an hour Lord Robert Cecil moved that we pass it up for the moment and go on with the balance of article three and others.

'We then moved quickly, and adopted down to and including article six. Our worst difficulty was about India. The President had declared to me that under no circumstances would he consent to the admission of a delegate from India, because it was not self-governing. General Smuts very cleverly offered the suggestion that India being one of the signatory Powers, would have automatically a right to a delegate, therefore the article would not apply to her, but to subject states or colonies that might desire admittance to the League. The President accepted this and, I think, rather gladly.

'No one seems to have thought that the British in a general conference of the League of Nations will have six votes to the other Great Powers' one; that is, the British Isles will have one, and there will be one each for Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and India. When this dawns on the Conference I am wondering what they will do. As far as I am concerned, I shall not bring it up and for rea-

sons which seem to me sufficient. If Great Britain can stand giving her Dominions [separate] representation in the League, no one should object.

'Viscount Chinda brought another draft covering the race question. He found, after consultation with his legal adviser, that the one we agreed upon was practically meaningless. The one he brought to-day will not be accepted either by our people or the British Colonies. The Japs are making the adoption of a clause regarding immigration a *sine quo non* of their adhesion to the League of Nations. I have a feeling that it can be worked out by a satisfactory compromise which will in no way weaken the American or British Dominions' position and yet will satisfy the *amour-propre* of the Japanese.

'February 7, 1919: We had the usual meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations last night. We did not adjourn until eleven. Many important articles were adopted. Practically everything originates from our end of the table; that is, with Lord Robert Cecil and the President. . . . The President excels in such work. He seems to like it and his short talks in explanation of his views are admirable. I have never known any one to do such work as well. The President, perhaps, lays too much stress on details. It is not a hard-and-fast trade we are making with one another, and a more flexible instrument would be better than a rigid one. It is the spirit back of the Covenant that counts more than the text.

'February 8, 1919: We held a meeting of the Committee for the League of Nations this morning at 10.30 and continuously until after one. We will not meet again until Monday morning. We did not make as good progress as we should. Last night we agreed to form a committee to smooth out some of the phrasing of two or three of the articles about which we agree in principle, but cannot quite phrase to our liking.

'February 9, 1919: I had a good many callers to-day, including Viscount Chinda and Baron Makino, who came again upon the inevitable race question. I have placed them "on the backs" of the British, for every solution which the Japanese and I have proposed, Hughes of the British Delegation objects to.

'February 11, 1919: We had a meeting in my rooms of the Committee for the League of Nations. It lasted from 10.30 A.M. until 1.30 P.M. Bourgeois took up a large part of the time insisting that we have an international army, and he could not be silenced even though the President repeatedly told him that the United States could not possibly join such a league.

'February 12, 1919: A great many callers to-day. Massingham of *The Nation* is disturbed over the way the League is arranging for representation. He believes there should be a representation of the minority. As a matter of fact, all labor and socialist organizations want just this and the President has done his best to meet it, but has been able to draw up nothing which seems to us practical. I asked Massingham to submit something if possible before 10.30 to-morrow, when the Committee meets again. He said General Smuts was in full sympathy with this purpose, and I therefore advised that he see Smuts and agree upon the formula and have Smuts present it to-morrow morning.

'Viscount Chinda called again to say he could get nothing definite from the British and that he intended to present a resolution himself which would be more drastic than the one the President agreed to accept. His idea is that while it will not be adopted, it will be an explanation to his people in Japan.¹ He thanked me warmly for the interest I had taken

¹ The text of this clause was as follows:

'The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord, as soon as possible, to all alien nationals of States members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect, making no distinction, either in law or fact, on account of their race or nationality.'

and said his Government and people would always remember my "considerate sympathy."

'*February 13, 1919*: This has been a memorable day. We finished the Covenant for the League of Nations. The President sat with us in the morning from ten-thirty until shortly after one in order to have a second reading of the draft. We got through with about a quarter of the Covenant or, to be precise, with six of the articles. The President could not come in the afternoon, and I asked Lord Robert Cecil to take the chair. We agreed to try and make a record and, much to our gratification, we finished the other twenty-one articles by half-past six o'clock. . . .

'Lord Robert took several votes this afternoon and in this way stopped discussion.

'We had arranged to have another meeting to-night at 8.30. When I telephoned the President at seven o'clock that we had finished, he was astounded and delighted.

'We passed [by] Article 21 of the old draft because Baron Makino was insistent upon the race clause going in if the religious clause was retained. I would not agree to eliminate the religious clause without first giving the President a chance to express himself, but tentatively promised that it should be withdrawn, in which event Baron Makino promised to withdraw, for the moment, the race amendment which neither the British nor we could take in the form in which he finally presented it.

'Makino agreed upon a form the other day which the President accepted and which was as mild and inoffensive as possible, but even that the British refused. . . . I understand that all the British Delegation were willing to accept the form the President, Makino, and Chinda agreed on, excepting Hughes of Australia. He has been the stumbling-block.

'Bourgeois tried in every way possible to get in some clause by which we should have an international army under the

direction of the League. Failing that, he tried for an international staff. Lord Robert was willing to accept the insidious staff proposal made by Bourgeois and Larnaude. I objected to it, and Lord Robert sustained me by making a talk against it. Then Bourgeois and his confrère insisted upon putting in something about the Hague Tribunal. They have the greatest reverence for that institution. . . .

'In talking to the President afterward, he agreed to the proposal to eliminate Clause 21 [religious clause] after I had explained the trouble and told him that an informal vote was taken which resulted in practical unanimity against it.

'Perhaps for the President's *penchant* for the number 13, his attention was called to the fact that the Covenant was finished on the 13th of the month and that the number of articles was double that number.¹

'It would be interesting to observe how much of the original draft of the Covenant made at Magnolia remains in this document. Of course we have added a great many clauses since its revision was undertaken, but we have added them from the Wilson-Cecil, Miller documents. In speaking to the President about the matter, he said that as far as he was concerned he preferred the original draft as agreed upon at Magnolia last summer. Certainly that document was more human and a little less legalistic.

'*February 14, 1919*: Gordon wrote a cable to Tumulty for the President's approval, inviting the Foreign Relations Committee of both the Senate and the House to dine with him as soon as practicable after his arrival, and requesting them to refrain from comment in Congress upon the League of Nations until he had an opportunity to discuss it with them. When I first proposed this several days ago, he declared he would not do it and that the most he would do would be to make an address to Congress. This seemed

¹ If the religious clause which the President desired had been retained, there would have been twenty-seven articles.

wholly inadequate because it would not please Congress, since they would take it that he had called them together as a schoolmaster, as they claim he usually does. There would be no chance for discussion, consultation, or explanation, and they would not regard it as a compliment but rather the contrary.

‘He read the cable that had been prepared and changed only one word. It was sent immediately.’

The President to Mr. Tumulty

[Cablegram]

PARIS, February 14, 1919

Please deliver to each Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate and the House the following message from me.

‘Last night the Committee of the Conference charged with the duty of drafting a constitution for a League of Nations concluded its work and this afternoon before leaving for the United States it is to be my privilege and duty to read to a Plenary Session of the Conference the text of the twenty-six articles agreed upon by this Committee.

‘The Committee which drafted these articles was fairly representative of the world. Besides the representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, representatives of Belgium, Serbia, China, Greece, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Brazil, and Portugal actively participated in the debates and assisted materially in the drafting of this Constitution. Each article was passed only after the most careful examination by each member of the Committee. There is a good and sufficient reason for the phraseology and substance of each article. I request that I be permitted to go over with you article by article the Constitution reported before this part of the work of the Conference is made the subject of debate in Congress. With this in view I request that you dine with me at the White House as

soon after I arrive in the United States as my engagements will permit. I have asked Mr. Tumulty to fix the date of this dinner.'

Please arrange this dinner for a date as soon as practicable after my arrival.

WILSON

'February 14, 1919: The newspaper men sent in a request for a five-minute interview with the President. . . . He consented reluctantly and then, to my astonishment, went into the other room and talked to fifteen or twenty American correspondents for nearly an hour, all of them standing. He spoke in the pleasantest and frankest way to them. When he got to talking he was so enthused with what he had to say that . . . it was one o'clock when he left for his luncheon.

'At 3.30 there was a plenary meeting of the Peace Conference at the Quai d'Orsay. . . . After some discussion with the President and Lord Robert Cecil, word was sent to Clemenceau through Frazier that the order of the afternoon would be that the President, acting as Chairman for the Committee to prepare a Covenant for the League of Nations, would make a report and read the Covenant which had been constructed, and that he would make a speech upon the subject. That Lord Robert Cecil would follow with a speech; then Orlando and perhaps Venizelos. This programme was literally carried out with the exception that Bourgeois also spoke for France.

'We tried to get Bourgeois not to mention any of the reservations he had made concerning the Covenant, but our efforts were futile. . . .

'Returning to the Crillon, I saw the newspaper correspondents as usual and after dinner went to the Hôtel Murat to bid the President and Mrs. Wilson good-bye and go with them to the station. Practically all official France was at the station. From the curb to the train itself, a distance of

many hundred feet, a beautiful red carpet was spread with palms and other evergreens on each side, making a corridor of some fifteen or twenty feet wide and extending several hundred feet. The President and Madame Poincaré, M. Clemenceau, and his entire Cabinet, the British Ambassador, and everybody else of prominence was there. The President bade me a fervent good-bye, clasping my hand and placing his arm around me. The entire occasion was a fitting tribute to him and was an appropriate ending to a very memorable visit. He looked happy, as well indeed he should.'

VI

Thus at the Plenary Session of February 14, the League of Nations was born. Wilson had achieved a notable, almost an astounding, triumph. In the face of apathy and increasing opposition, he had translated his ideal of a new international order into concrete terms. At the moment when the materialistic reaction, inevitable after four years of war, threatened to capture the Conference, he had successfully emphasized the higher purposes of mankind and pointed the way to a safer and better future. Concerning his presentation of the Covenant to the Conference on February 14, Steed wrote in the Paris *Daily Mail* the next day:

'It was impossible to listen to the document which President Wilson read, to his comments upon it and to the declarations of the Allied representatives, without feeling that the affairs of the world were being lifted into new dimensions. The old dimensions of national individualism, secrecy of policies, competitive armaments, forcible annexations for selfish purposes and unqualified State sovereignty, were raised, if only for an instant, to a higher plane on which the organized moral consciousness of peoples, the publicity of international engagements and of government by the consent of and for the good of the governed, became prospective realities.

Feb 14/19
Dear Sam -
Your speech was as
great as the occasion -
I am very happy -
Bless your heart. Show you
from the bottom of my heart - W.W. Platt.

Is Venezuela going to speak?
RECORDED
W.W.
[Feb 14/19] PHILADELPHIA

Feb 14/19
If the Prime Minister
has not notified Venezuela
then he may not be prepared.
- Suppose you send him word Platt.

NOTES EXCHANGED BY WILSON AND HOUSE AT PLENARY SESSION OF
FEBRUARY 14, 1919, WHEN DRAFT OF COVENANT WAS READ AND EXPLAINED

YRABOLU ZITNACIEM

APR. BOA. JPN

'How long will the instant last? . . . No man can yet say. All that can be said is that yesterday a sense that something new, something irrevocable, had been done, pervaded the Conference Hall. All the speeches were made in the tone of men who were not, indeed, afraid of their own handiwork, but were obviously conscious of the boldness of attempting to frame a new charter for civilized and uncivilized humanity.'

On February 15, Wilson sailed, triumphant and confident, with the Covenant in his pocket, to confront his enemies in the Senate. But he left behind him unsettled issues at Paris, for the determination of which Europe clamored. If speed had been important in December, by February it was vital.

APPENDIX

General Smuts' Resolution on Mandates

January, 1919

1. Having regard to the record of the German administration in the colonies formerly part of the German Empire, and to the menace which the possession by Germany of submarine bases in many parts of the world would necessarily constitute to the freedom and security of all nations, the Allied and Associated Powers are agreed that in no circumstances should any of the German colonies be restored to Germany.

2. For similar reasons, and more particularly because of historic oppression by the Turks of all subject peoples and the terrible massacres of Armenians and others in recent years, the Allied and Associated Powers are agreed that Armenia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Arabia must be completely severed from the Turkish Empire. This is without prejudice to the settlement of other parts of the Turkish Empire.

3. The Allied and Associated Powers are agreed that advantage should be taken of the opportunity afforded by the necessity of disposing of these colonies and territories formerly belonging to Germany and Turkey which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, to apply to these territories the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation, and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in the constitution of the League of Nations.

4. After careful study they are satisfied that the best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should

be entrusted to advanced nations who, by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position, can best undertake this responsibility, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as mandatories on behalf of the League of Nations.

5. The Allied and Associated Powers are of opinion that the character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances.

6. They consider that certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory power until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory power.

7. They further consider that other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory subject to conditions which will guarantee the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the military training of the natives for other than police purposes, and the establishment of fortifications of military and naval bases, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other members of the League of Nations.

8. Finally they consider that there are territories such as South West Africa and the Pacific Islands which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the mandatory state, and other circumstances, can best be administered under the laws of the mandatory state as if they were integral portions thereof, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

In every case of mandate, the mandatory state shall render to the League of Nations an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.

CHAPTER X

SPEEDING THE SETTLEMENT

Clemenceau . . . is anxious to speed up and make an early peace with Germany.

Colonel House to President Wilson, February 23, 1919

I

DURING the course of the Peace Conference, opponents of the League of Nations raised the criticism that the time and attention given to the framing of the Covenant prevented the Conference from concentrating upon the boundary and economic problems which must be solved before a treaty with Germany could be drafted, thus delaying the settlement at a moment of world crisis. The complaint formed one of the main lines of attack upon President Wilson, both at Paris and in the United States.

To a certain extent the complaint was justified. The President's preoccupation with the Covenant, although it took comparatively little time, monopolized his mental and nervous energy. His mind was so completely engaged with problems relative to the League that other issues became of secondary importance for him. It was thus that he did not proceed to meet the issue of the secret treaties at the very start of the Conference, by standing upon the validity of the pre-Armistice Agreement in which the Allies had endorsed the Fourteen Points. When he later met this issue he stood upon less secure ground, so that the contest he waged was complicated and long-drawn-out.

In another sense, however, the creation of the League, so far from postponing the settlement actually hastened and facilitated it. There were many problems which could not be solved at the moment, but must wait for a less hectic atmosphere, many arrangements which would for some time de-

mand international supervision. If it had not been for the existence of the League, to which control of these problems might be and was turned over, agreement upon the treaties would have been postponed indefinitely. Furthermore, the meetings of the Commission that framed the Covenant did not directly prevent the Council from attacking the economic and territorial questions. These meetings were held in the morning or evening, so that with one exception they did not conflict with the sessions of the Council.¹ The chiefs of state, including Mr. Wilson, were left with ample time to consider the specific issues relative to the German Treaty. It was not the drafting of the Covenant which prevented the Council from taking up the questions of the left bank of the Rhine, the Saar, the principle of reparations, the disarmament of Germany; it was rather that the Council had first to be educated by the reports of investigating committees, and next that they spent much of their time upon questions of executive policy: composing quarrels between Czechs and Poles; discussing the Russian *impasse*; planning new terms to be imposed upon Germany in the renewal of the Armistice; debating the raising of the blockade.

Europe was hungry and torn by the spirit of social unrest and nationalistic exuberance; it waited, feverish and excited, for the settlement. Whether or not the treaties proved satisfactory, it was vital that something should be decided and that the régime of uncertainty be ended. The demand was heard at Paris, but not until the beginning of February was its insistence recognized.

II

The first determined effort to reach a decision regarding the chief issues of the Treaty with Germany was begun just before President Wilson's departure for the United States.

¹ On that occasion, the afternoon session of February 13, Wilson attended the Council of Ten and not the Commission meeting.

It resulted directly from the difficulties connected with the renewal of the Armistice. The Germans had shown decided unwillingness to comply with the stipulations laid down in the Armistice; the Allies on their side displayed an equally strong tendency at each renewal, to insert new and more arduous conditions. While the political chiefs delayed the framing of treaty terms, the military leaders wished to put into the Armistice various conditions which, if they were accepted, would prejudice the final settlement in both its territorial and economic aspects; if they were refused by the Germans, a revival of actual warfare seemed imminent. The dangers of this situation were apparent, and a movement developed in which President Wilson soon took the lead, with the purpose of ending this policy of pin-pricks and drafting a preliminary treaty to include terms which, as regards military matters, would be final. General Bliss later described the circumstances: ¹

‘When the time for the third renewal of the Armistice — February 11th — approached, the situation had grown more serious. The Allied armies were greatly reduced and the process of reduction was rapidly continuing. Notwithstanding the fact that the arms called for by the terms of the Armistice had been surrendered and that the Germans had abandoned on the field still more of many important articles of equipment than they had surrendered under the Armistice, there was a growing fear in certain quarters that there was still a great accumulation of arms in Germany and that their manufacturing plants were still producing them in quantities. When we consider the total demoralization of Germany at that time, it is difficult to believe that there was much ground for this apprehension. Nevertheless, the fear existed. It made itself evident in the still more drastic terms

¹ Tasker H. Bliss, ‘The Armistices,’ in *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 16, p. 521.

that were proposed to be imposed in this renewal of the Armistice. . . .

'The American representative [General Bliss] expressed the following opinion: that the Allies had every reason for supporting the then existing Government in Germany; that this Government was as nearly a democratic one as could be expected at that time and under the circumstances; that the continual pin-thrusts being made by the Allies were playing into the hands of the opponents in Germany of this Government; that, if another revolution came, this Government would probably be succeeded either by an imperialistic military one, or by a bolshevist one; and that, finally, instead of these continual additions of new terms to the Armistice, there should be drawn up at once the final military peace terms which, being imposed upon Germany without further delay, would relieve the Allies of all further apprehension. . . .'

'*February 5, 1919:* General Bliss told me,' wrote House in his diary, 'of the meeting of the military part of the Supreme War Council at Versailles. President Wilson and I had this under discussion last night, and the President directed Bliss not to force the Germans to make radical changes in the Armistice to the advantage of the Allies. Bliss strongly recommended this position and the President accepted it. . . . [Drastic extension of Armistice conditions] is unfair and is not worthy of the Allied Governments.'

'At the meeting the British, represented by General Wilson, and the Italians, represented by General Diaz, voted for further encroachment on German territory. Bliss was outvoted two to one. Foch said nothing and did not indicate his mind. However, he asked Bliss to remain behind and they discussed the question together for three quarters of an hour. Foch told Bliss that he was in thorough sympathy with the American position and that the position taken by

the British and Italians might bring a clash, and then everything would flame up again. The Armistice would be a thing of the past, and war of a certain sort would be on. Foch expressed the opinion that an immediate peace should be made with Germany so that the wheels of industry should be started in motion throughout the world. This has been my contention all the time. He thought the situation full of peril for us all. . . .

'I asked the President to come down in advance of the meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations, in order to tell him of the conversation between Bliss and myself. I suggested that before this matter was passed upon at the meeting of the Supreme War Council day after tomorrow, he either see Foch or get permission to use what he said to Bliss when he argued the matter with Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando.'

At Wilson's request, House undertook to discuss with the British and French the perils involved in progressive stiffening of the Armistice terms. The matter was introduced into the Council, where after long debate it was decided to refer the problem to a special commission under the presidency of Marshal Foch, which should be composed of military and economic experts. France was represented by M. Clementel and General Dégoutte; Great Britain by Lord Robert Cecil and General Thwaites; Italy by M. Crespi and General Cavallero; the United States by Mr. Norman Davis and General Bliss. It was a distinguished body and the report which it laid before the Council on February 12 proved convincing. The final paragraph of the report was as follows:

'The members of the Committee desire to express this, their opinion: to obtain as rapidly as possible a final result and to put a stop to the difficulties which are constantly renewed by the Germans, the members of the Committee

are of the opinion that Naval and Military terms of peace should be drawn up immediately by a Commission appointed for the purpose, and shall be imposed on the enemy.'

The suggestion was strongly supported by Mr. Balfour, who agreed with House as to the need of hastening every essential aspect of the German Treaty and who had already expressed his doubt of the policy of imposing fresh conditions on Germany through the Armistice. He proposed to the Council, accordingly:

'That only inevitably small changes, or no changes whatever, should be made in the Armistice until the Allies were prepared to say to Germany: "These are the final naval and military terms of peace, which you must accept in order to enable Europe to demobilize and so to resume its life on a peace footing and reestablish its industries."'

President Wilson advocated an even more direct endorsement of the Commission proposal and an immediate drafting of the final military and naval terms, renewing the Armistice in the mean time without any change and making it terminable on a few days' notice. This would permit demobilization and finish off one important section of the peace.

Clemenceau protested. Like many of the French, he did not want demobilization before the complete Treaty terms were ready, since the Allies would thus deprive themselves of the force with which to compel Germany to accept the hard territorial and economic conditions which were to go in the Treaty:

'Once more, in his long career,' said Clemenceau, 'he felt compelled with great regret to state that his views differed very considerably from those he had just heard. What

would happen when the military terms were signed and the Allied armies demobilized? What force would be left to impose the economic and political terms on Germany? He did not think his hearers would allow themselves to be deceived. Let them read the German newspapers. It would be seen that they breathed nothing but threats. Ebert had said: "We will not accept terms that are too hard." The Allies, then, could take no step towards a military settlement or demobilization until all terms were decided upon.'

Mr. Balfour, however, pointed out that the purpose of drafting the military terms at once was to hasten the process of German disarmament:

'His plan might be good or it might be bad, but its object was to get over the danger which M. Clemenceau foresaw, so that Germany would not longer be able to resist, and the Allies would then be in a position to exact those reparations which might be thought to be just.'

He proposed, accordingly, resolutions designed to carry out the suggestion of the Commission, which Wilson had supported, for drafting an immediate military treaty. At the afternoon session Clemenceau gradually withdrew his opposition, influenced apparently by the promise of the military experts that they could draft the terms very rapidly. He pointed out, however, that the departure of Mr. Wilson would necessarily delay final decision:

'If the President had been staying,' Clemenceau stated, 'he would have raised no objection . . . but, as he was going, the difficulty arose, as he was quite unwilling to discuss the matter while President Wilson was away.'

But Wilson himself removed this objection by insisting

that as regards military questions there was no reason why the terms should not be settled in his absence:

‘M. Clemenceau had paid him an undeserved compliment,’ said the President. ‘In technical matters most of the brains he used were borrowed: the possessors of these brains were in Paris. He would, therefore, go away with an easy mind if he thought that his plan had been adopted in principle. He had complete confidence in the views of his military advisers. . . . He did not wish his absence to stop so important, essential and urgent work as the preparation of a preliminary peace.’

The proposal for an immediate treaty, finally approved by Clemenceau, was embodied in a resolution of which the following is the essential portion:

Resolution of the Supreme Council

PARIS, February 12, 1919

‘Detailed and final naval, military, and air conditions of the preliminaries of peace shall be drawn up at once by a Committee to be presided over by Marshal Foch and submitted for the approval of the Supreme War Council; these, when approved, will be presented for signature to the Germans, and the Germans shall be at once informed that this is the policy of the Associated Governments.’

This resolution was not designed to interfere with hastening work on the territorial and economic aspects of the Treaty, upon which the various committees of the Peace Conference were engaged. President Wilson had discussed with Colonel House the desirability of pushing the work along every essential line during his absence in the United States. His opinion was that if questions other than the military could be prepared for final settlement, so much the

better; he authorized House to act for him during his absence and, in the session of February 12, informed the Council of the fact.

'President Wilson said that . . . he hoped to return by the 13th or 15th March,' the *procès-verbal* states, 'allowing himself only a week in America. But he did not wish that, during his unavoidable absence, such questions as the territorial question and questions of compensation should be held up. He had asked Colonel House to take his place while he was away.'¹

'February 14, 1919: The President came down this morning at ten,' House wrote in his diary, 'and did not leave until one. We sat in my private study for twenty minutes together, and during that time settled all the important questions that were on my mind to take up with him before he left for America. I outlined my plan of procedure during his absence: we could button up everything during the next four weeks. He seemed startled and even alarmed at this statement. I therefore explained that the plan was not to actually bring these matters to a final conclusion but to have them ready for him to do so when he returned. . . .

'One of the main things we should do was to fix a programme regarding what was necessary to make a preliminary peace with Germany, as follows:

'1. A reduction of their army and navy to a peace footing.

'2. A delineation of the boundaries of Germany. This to include the cession of the colonies.

¹ Mr. R. S. Baker (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, chapter xvii) endeavors to prove that Wilson was taken by surprise and displeased by the Council's attempt to prepare a preliminary treaty covering territorial and economic questions during his absence. He quotes the first and the last sentence of the above passage, but omits entirely the key-sentence expressing Wilson's hope that these questions would be taken up. See appendix to this chapter, and *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 290

'3. The amount of money to be paid for reparation and the length of time in which to pay it.

'4. An agreement as to the economic treatment of Germany.

'I asked him if he had anything else to suggest in addition to these four articles. He thought they were sufficient.

'I asked him to bear in mind while he was gone that it was sometimes necessary to compromise in order to get things through; not a compromise of principle but a compromise of detail; he had made many since he had been here. I did not wish him to leave expecting the impossible in all things.'

III

On the same evening, February 14, President Wilson left Paris for his voyage to America. Colonel House, fully empowered to rush forward the studies necessary to the drafting of the Treaty with Germany, set to work with the British Foreign Secretary, who quite as much as House desired active progress.

'*February 16, 1919:* A long conference with Mr. Balfour this afternoon. . . . I outlined my views as to the best method of procedure in order to make a preliminary peace with Germany and to wind up quickly the business of the Conference regarding boundaries, etc., etc. He agreed to this, and is to see the Japanese delegates to-morrow. I promised to see the Italian delegates and obtain their consent. When this is done, he and I should see Clemenceau and try to get him in line with us.'

Lloyd George and Orlando had left the Conference to meet pressing political problems at home; they had given full powers to their Foreign Secretaries at Paris. Evidently all were agreed on the need of hastening the peace. But on

Wednesday, February 19, as Clemenceau in his automobile was driving from his apartment in the rue Franklin to meet Balfour and House, he was wounded by a Communist who fired seven shots point-blank at the Prime Minister. One of the bullets narrowly missed the spine and lodged behind the shoulder blade. 'Fortunately, the rascal was a bad shot,' remarked Clemenceau. Retaining consciousness and complete *sang-froid* he was able to walk to his bedroom. But despite the assurance that the wound was not fatal, the work of the Conference seemed threatened with long delay.

'Balfour and I,' wrote House, 'had an engagement with Clemenceau at ten o'clock. I received word at a little after nine that an attempt to assassinate him had been made and that he had been wounded. Balfour came shortly before ten to the Crillon and we had an hour and a quarter together. Baron Sonnino then came, and the three of us conferred for three quarters of an hour. We then went to the Ministry of War and left our cards and made inquiry regarding the President of the Council.

'Outside the personal side of it, it is a great misfortune that Clemenceau should have been shot at this time. He had come to our way of thinking that it was best to make a quick and early peace with Germany. He was brought to this, not only by a realization that Germany was as Foch said "flattened out," but because there are grave signs of unrest in the French army. I have been trying very hard to . . . make the Allies feel that if peace is not made soon, trouble may some day come overnight and make it imperative that a hasty and ill-considered peace be signed.

'*February 20, 1919:* Dutasta, Secretary General of the Peace Conference, called on Lansing and me to ask whether in the circumstances we were willing to defer meetings at the Quai d'Orsay until Monday. He said that by Sunday they would be able to determine whether Clemenceau would be

ready soon to take part or whether the Conference had better proceed without him. We agreed with reluctance, first stipulating it should be only for a day, but afterward agreeing if the British would consent that we would also. They went to Balfour and he refused any delay further than to-day's meeting. I think he acted wisely, for, heaven knows, the serious business we have in hand should not wait on any man's illness or misfortune.

'February 22, 1919: I received word that M. Clemenceau would like me to call for a conference. . . . I was with him for a little over twenty minutes. The poor fellow has not been able to leave his chair since he was shot. He speaks of it as "the accident." He should not be permitted to see visitors.'

The indomitable spirit of the Prime Minister prevailed over the advice of those who wished the Conference to await his complete recovery. He agreed with Balfour and House that work on the German Treaty should be pushed, an opinion in which Marshal Foch concurred.

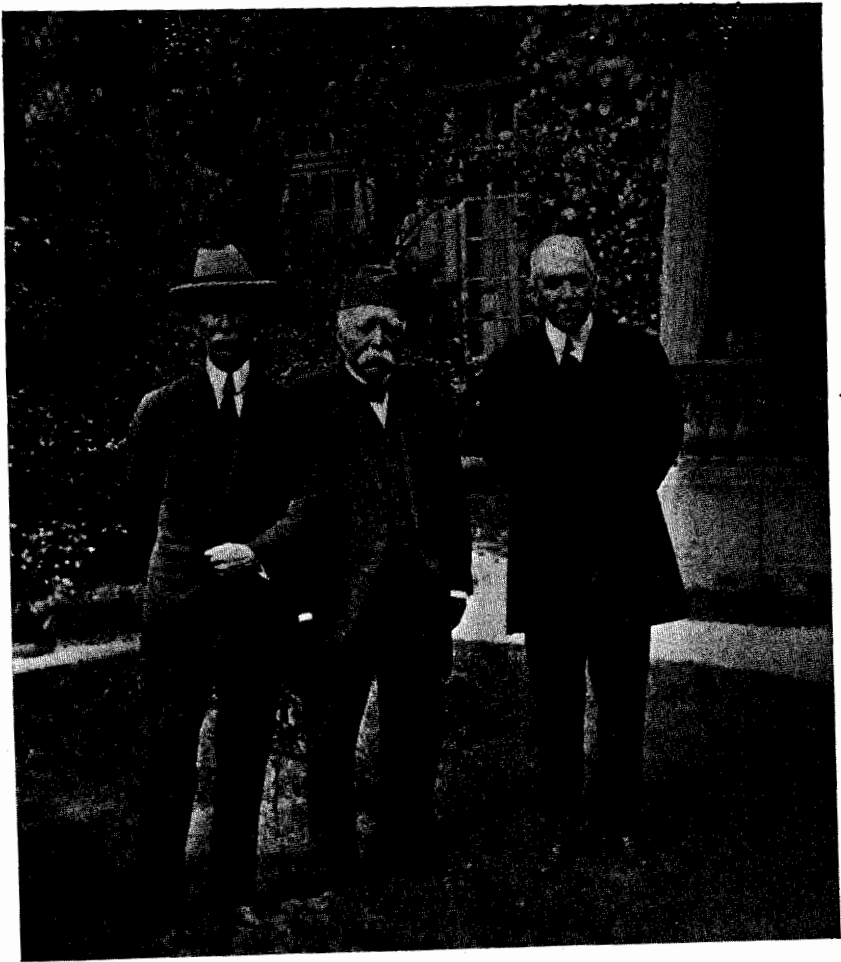
Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, February 19, 1919

The following memorandum by the Chief of the British General Staff has just been sent me:

'I had an interesting interview with Marshal Foch this morning in which he expressed the following views: As the result of his recent discussions with the German representatives at Trèves, he is of opinion that under existing conditions we can dictate terms of peace to Germany. The German Government will agree to whatever terms we exact. But, he says, there is no time to lose. At present Germany has only one thought, and that is peace, the reasons being that her Government is insecure and wants peace in order to consolidate its position, and the people fear above all things



HOUSE, CLEMENCEAU, AND BONSAI

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a renewal of hostilities. Further fighting would take place on German soil, and the Germans are afraid of the devastation of their territory. In the opinion of the Marshal, Germany has at present no military forces with which she could hope to dispute the advance of the Allied armies.

'For these reasons Germany will agree to our terms if we are prompt, but no one can say how long the existing conditions will last. Delay is dangerous. The Marshal, therefore, strongly advocates the settling at once of the three principal conditions of the peace that the Allies intend to impose upon Germany; namely: 1. The strength of her armed forces; 2. Her frontiers; 3. The indemnity she is to pay. He considers that if these matters could be settled by the Peace Conference during the next few days, and if he could be entrusted with the mission of proceeding again to Trèves with the Allied terms, say this day week, he would guarantee that the Germans would accept the terms on the following day. The world would then pass from a state of war to a state of peace for which it longs so ardently, and there would be universal rejoicing.

'As regards the three points mentioned above, Marshal Foch anticipates no difficulty in coming to an agreement during the next forty-eight hours as to the strength of Germany's peace army and navy. He is strongly in favour of saying to the Germans in this preliminary peace treaty that, whatever may be the fate of the Rhenish provinces and whatever form of government for these provinces the Allies may decide in favour of, under no circumstances will the German Empire extend beyond the Rhine. That in his opinion is essential for the security of France, and makes the settlement of the Western frontier a simple matter. He also considers that there should be no insuperable difficulties in settling a provisional frontier between Germany and Poland, which would be capable of modification in detail later. The Marshal would settle on a lump sum for Germany to pay, and

suggested 100 *milliards* of francs. It is, he says, not his business to consider the actual sum, but he pleads forcibly for the principle of including a lump sum by way of indemnity in the terms to be presented to Germany the next time he goes to Trèves. If the conditions of a preliminary peace treaty can thus be imposed on Germany, the Allies can then turn their attention to the Russian problem, which must take time to solve. The Marshal thinks the Allies may lose the war if they fail to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the Russian question, either by Germany settling it in her own interests, or by the spread of anarchy. He favours the solution of helping all the anti-Bolshevik elements in Russia, and all the neighbours of Russia who are resisting Bolshevik encroachment. He would go so far as to accept German coöperation after the signing of his preliminary treaty of peace, and thinks it might be very valuable.'

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, February 23, 1919

At his request I had a conference yesterday with Clemenceau.

1. He is anxious to speed up and make an early peace with Germany. He . . . realizes the danger of delay.
2. He is insistent upon the creation of a Rhenish Republic. There will be about four million of Germans aggregated in this way. He desires that this Republic should be exempt from the payment of any indemnity; that they should have no armed force; that everything should be done to make them prosperous and contented so that they will not want to join the German Federation and if they have such a desire they will not be permitted to do so.
3. On the east, Clemenceau thinks that Dantzic should go to Poland. Our experts also believe this to be the best solution and they are joined, I understand, in this belief by the

British experts, but the British Government disagree on this point.

4. Clemenceau says that German Austria will not join the German Federation if they received an intimation from the Allies that they do not wish them to do so. He is insistent that this intimation be given them.

5. He thinks the entire terms should be given at once and that the military terms should not be made now [separately] as at first planned.¹ There was afterwards common agreement on this point at our meeting at the Quai d'Orsay.

6. He thought he would be able to attend meetings in a few days. I doubt it. I feel he is by no means out of danger.

7. I assume that you are getting full reports of the meetings at the Quai d'Orsay.

EDWARD HOUSE

Colonel House was far from approving the French in their proposal to separate permanently the Rhinelands from Germany, and he shortly received from President Wilson a very definite warning against even a temporary separation. The President also urged him to beware of being hurried into final decision on German boundaries, which demanded long and careful consideration. On February 20, he sent House a cable regarding the views of Marshal Foch, of which the following is a paraphrase of the more important sentences:

... I have just read the memorandum given you by the Chief of the British General Staff of an interview with Marshal Foch. It seems to me like an attempt to use the good offices of the French to hurry us into an acquiescence in their plans with regard to western bank of Rhine. ... I know I can trust you and our colleagues to withstand such a pro-

¹ This Mr. Baker (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, 1, chapter xvii) regards as a betrayal of Mr. Wilson. At least the President was informed of it and in his reply to House raised no objection.

gramme immovably, except of course I am willing to have the strictly military and naval terms promptly decided and presented to the Germans. I am not willing to have anything beyond the military and naval terms [settled] and believe that the Conference of Ten would be going very much beyond its powers to attempt anything of this sort. The determination of the geographic boundaries of Germany involves the fortunes and interests of the other peoples, and we should not risk being hurried into a solution arrived at solely from the French official viewpoint. . . . Warm thanks for full information you are sending.¹

It was by no means part of House's plan to push the territorial and economic questions to the point of decision before the President's return. He was anxious, however, to clear the ground during the President's absence by hastening the work of the expert committees; the President himself had told the Council that he did not wish those matters to be held up while he was away. He therefore cabled back to Wilson the details of the plan which he had evolved with Mr. Balfour for hastening work on the treaties. The President evidently accepted this plan as desirable, for he sent no further comment.

It was agreed that at the Council meeting of February 22, Mr. Balfour should present resolutions designed to push forward the work on the territorial and economic clauses.² Mr.

¹ Wilson to House, February 20, 1919.

² As presented to the Council, they read as follows:

'(1) Without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace, to Germany at an early date, the Conference agrees that it is desirable to proceed without delay to the consideration of other preliminary Peace Terms with Germany and to press on the necessary investigations with all possible speed.

'(2) The Preliminary Peace Terms, other than the Naval, Military and Air Conditions, shall cover the following points:

(a) The approximate future frontiers of Germany:

(b) The financial arrangements to be imposed on Germany:

Balfour, by the initial phrase of his resolutions, 'without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military, and Air Conditions of Peace, to Germany at an early date,' was careful to leave untouched the question of a speedy military treaty with Germany. He was not anxious to upset the decision of February 12, in which Mr. Wilson had concurred so heartily. He regarded the military terms as the most important of all, he wished to do nothing that would delay them, and he believed that by hastening them the final settlement would be advanced. 'If the final Military Proposals,' he said, 'were shortly to be ready for consideration by the Conference, should not advantage be taken of that fact to obtain an important instalment of the Preliminary Peace?'

But, unfortunately, the report of the military experts was not ready, and it seemed a pity to lose time which might be utilized to prepare the political and economic terms. 'A general feeling of impatience,' said Mr. Balfour, 'was now becoming manifest in all countries on account of the apparent slow progress the Conference was making in the direction of Final Peace. It would be folly to ignore altogether the danger that feeling might produce.'

The French were naturally in sympathy with the proposal, since Clemenceau from the beginning had seen danger in proceeding to demobilization before the complete terms were presented to Germany. Clemenceau had yielded when it was assumed that the military terms could be drafted in a

(c) Our economic relations with Germany after the war:

(d) Responsibility for breaches of the Laws of War.

'(3) In order that the Conference may have at its disposal with the least possible delay the results of the labours of the various Commissions which have been investigating these subjects it is requested that the various Commissions will send in their reports to the Secretary-General not later than Saturday, March 8th. This will not apply to Commissions set up after February 15th which may be unable to render their final reports at so early a date, but it is requested that in these cases interim reports may be presented dealing with all matters affecting the preliminaries of Peace with Germany.'

few days. Now that it was clear that there would be delay, he urged strongly the attempt to prepare the political and economic terms and, if possible, insert them also in a preliminary treaty.

'He had that morning,' said Mr. Balfour, 'in company with M. Pichon, discussed the question with M. Clemenceau, who inclined to the view that the Naval and Military Terms of Peace should not be separated from the other aspects of the case. M. Clemenceau was extremely anxious to expedite matters but he thought that end would be best obtained by waiting until a conclusion had been reached on all subjects. M. Clemenceau held the view that if the stimulus towards a rapid decision were removed by the acceptance of the Naval and Military Terms by Germany, the other questions would be delayed for an infinity of time by small controversies.'

Colonel House supported Balfour strongly.

'Mr. House said he was very glad to see that the Conference intended to bring about as soon as possible a Preliminary Peace. In his opinion, the Peace Negotiations should have commenced on November 11th last, directly after the signing of the first Armistice. He had always felt that delay could only be favourable to Germany, and the longer the signing of Peace were postponed, the more chance would there be of circumstances becoming less favourable to the Allies. In regard to the two proposals now before the Conference, very severe military terms would have to be imposed on the Germans. And, he thought, the Germans would be more inclined to accept those conditions if, at the same time, the whole Peace Terms were made known to them. The Germans would then be made fully cognisant of their position.'

Mr. Lansing also agreed:

'It would be a mistake,' he said, 'to treat the military terms of peace as distinct from the other terms of peace. He would prefer to embody all the terms of a preliminary peace in one document: a separate treaty being made with each of the enemy countries on identic lines.'

Objection was raised by Sonnino alone, who pointed out that concentration upon the German Treaty would postpone the Austrian.

'He fully agreed that everything should be done to speed up the settlement of all questions. He would prefer first to get the military conditions out of the way, after which all the rest could be examined together. But, if the Conference decided to make a distinction and to separate the German question from the Austro-Hungarian question, and let everything else slide, the situation so created would spell revolution in Italy. Such a procedure would mean an indefinite prolongation of the Peace Negotiations with all other enemy countries: Italy would be obliged to keep up armaments whilst the other Allies were demobilizing, thus bringing about in Italy a state of general discontent which could not with safety be allowed to continue.'

After long discussion House proposed that Balfour's original proposition be accepted, on the understanding that 'similar proposals would be drawn up for the other enemy countries, with such alteration as might be necessary. The Conference would then, without delay, appoint the necessary Committees to deal with the various questions which still required to be examined and reported on.'

The House proposal did not commend itself to Balfour, who feared that it might delay the preparation of reports for the German settlement, because of lack of experts; Sonnino also disagreed with House, for he feared that this plan, al-

though ostensibly providing for work on the Austrian Treaty, would result in completing the German Treaty before the Austrian was ready. But the proposal offered the only possible compromise, and was accepted.

‘It was clear to me,’ wrote House in his diary that evening, ‘that when Sonnino demanded amendments to the Balfour resolution, the German peace terms would be so entangled with the Austrian peace terms as to make for interminable delay. I therefore suggested segregation. Balfour was afraid of this because he did not think they had sufficient men to man so many different committees. I told him that England was so near that he certainly should be able to do this if we were able to do so.’

A further interesting change in the resolution was proposed by Mr. Lansing and adopted, to the effect that in the paragraph referring to the scope of the terms to be presented to Germany the words ‘*inter alia*’ should be inserted.¹

According to Colonel House’s diary he suggested this to Mr. Lansing, in order to block any future attempt to exclude the League of Nations Covenant from the preliminary treaty. The formal resolution of the Peace Conference ensured its inclusion in the final treaty; but if the resolution on the terms of the preliminary treaty were too narrow, the argument could be made that it should not there appear.

‘My thought was,’ wrote House, ‘that we would want to

¹ This made the paragraph read: ‘The Preliminary Peace Terms, other than the Naval, Military and Air Conditions, should cover *inter alia* the following points:

- (a) the approximate future frontiers of — (for *Germany only*: and the renunciation of colonial territories and treaty rights outside Europe);
- (b) the financial conditions to be imposed on —;
- (c) the economic conditions to be accorded to —;
- (d) the responsibility for breaches of the laws of war.’

include in the [preliminary] treaty with Germany the Covenant for the League of Nations. I did not want to bring this up at the time, and I explained to Lansing that if we did, it would cause an interminable discussion with the French and that we had better merely leave room for that and any other subjects without mentioning them by name.'

Thus the Council decided to push as rapidly as possible the work on a general preliminary treaty with Germany. One criticism might be made of the policy which led to this decision; namely, that it would delay the military treaty, to the immediate drafting of which the Council was committed. This criticism was voiced by Lord Milner on February 24:

'Speaking for myself, personally, I still think that the final disarmament of Germany, I mean our bringing her down to that degree of strength for war purposes which we are willing to allow her permanently to maintain, is extremely urgent, that it is a step which we ought to take as soon as we possibly can, and that it is a step which when taken, will greatly expedite the acceptance, not only by Germany but by all our enemies, of all other conditions of peace. It is also an absolutely essential preliminary to our own demobilization on anything like the scale on which we all hope to demobilize . . .

'I do not wish to raise any further discussion over the Resolutions which we are just about to pass. But I hope I am justified in assuming that the passing of these Resolutions does not preclude us from proceeding at once to impose upon Germany those final military, naval and other conditions of a like nature, which Marshal Foch and his colleagues are at present discussing, if when we see them, they commend themselves to us. I hope in other words that it still remains free to any one of us to raise at that juncture the question of their immediate presentation.'

The discussion that followed Milner's statement left the question of a separate military treaty undecided, to depend upon whether the military experts presented the draft terms shortly and whether they proved satisfactory to the Council. As it turned out, the report of the committee of military experts was not ready before March 3, and the Council found so much to change in it that it was returned for revision. It was not until March 17, after Wilson's return, that the military terms finally 'commended themselves' to the Council, thus fulfilling Milner's conditions, and were approved. By that time the final economic and political conditions seemed so nearly ready that the idea of presenting a separate military treaty was tacitly dropped.¹

IV

Mr. Balfour's speeding-up resolution thus did not, as Milner feared, postpone the formulation of the military terms, and it certainly furnished an impetus to solid work which became apparent in many directions. All the commissions agreed, as Tardieu expressed it, 'to make an effort.' Questions which could not be settled finally by commissions were isolated and analyzed by Clemenceau, Balfour, and House, who outside of the Council of Ten began to hold regular conferences similar in character to those preceding the Supreme War Council meetings at the time of the Armistice.

The reparations problem had been handed over to an expert Commission, of which Mr. Lamont, Mr. Norman Davis, Mr. Baruch, and Mr. Vance McCormick were the American members. The Commission divided into sub-committees to consider the questions of categories, or the nature of German responsibility for reparations, German capacity to pay, and methods of making Germany pay. In Wilson's absence the American members frequently consulted with House, who from the beginning advised a shelving of the question of

¹ See appendix to this chapter.

whether war costs and pensions should be included with direct damage in the reparations account, and a concentration upon the study of German capacity to pay. The pre-Armistice Agreement seemed to the Americans to make it plain that indirect war costs and pensions should not be included. House did not want to argue the matter, since he believed that a fair study of German capacity would show her practical inability to pay more than, or even as much as, the pre-Armistice Agreement called for.¹

Unfortunately it proved just as difficult to reach agreement upon the question of German capacity. The French and the British had grossly exaggerated the sums which they could extract from Germany, and their early estimates exceeded those of the American experts by sums that ran into the hundreds of billion dollars.

'February 21, 1919: Thomas Lamont and Vance McCormick,' wrote House, 'came to report on the progress of the Committee on Reparations. They are getting along better and there is some reason to hope that they can bring in a report before a great while. The British now put in a tentative total demand on Germany of one hundred and twenty billion of dollars, and the French think Germany should pay a total of two hundred billion of dollars. In other words, the French

¹ The discussion over categories was nevertheless continued. House telegraphed to Wilson asking for his decision, and the President replied flatly refusing to approve the inclusion of indirect war costs, which were accordingly not included. The President later yielded to the arguments of General Smuts and agreed to approve the inclusion of pensions in the Reparation categories. See Mr. Lamont's statement in *What Really Happened at Paris* (Scribner, 1921), 271-72. The paraphrase of President Wilson's cable runs as follows: I feel that we are bound in honor to decline to agree to the inclusion of war costs in the reparation demanded. The time to think of this was before the conditions of peace were communicated to the enemy originally. We should dissent and dissent publicly if necessary not on the ground of the intrinsic injustice of it but on the ground that it is clearly inconsistent with what we deliberately led the enemy to expect and cannot now honorably alter simply because we have the power.

want Germany to pay two hundred times as much as the French paid the Germans in '71 and which the French then claimed to be excessive. They wish the payments to run for fifty-five years. . . .

'Our people think that the maximum cannot be over twenty-two billions of dollars and are inclined to believe that it should be under that amount.

'*February 27, 1919*: Davis and Lamont were pre-luncheon callers to report on the question of reparations. They came later this afternoon to again report and I advised them to agree to the sum of forty billions of dollars, but to hedge it around with safeguards, as far as the United States was concerned, so that in no event would we be either legally or morally bound to help enforce its collection.¹ That amount seems perfectly absurd. . . .'

Agreement was equally difficult in the matter of German boundaries. The French insisted that, for their security, the territories on the left bank of the Rhine must form a separate political entity. To this both Balfour and House were definitely opposed. At first House hoped that it would be possible to satisfy France by insisting upon the protection that she would receive from the League. Soon, however, he came to recognize the overwhelming force and unanimity of French feeling that future invasions by Germany must be made absolutely impossible by pushing Germany, at least in the military sense, behind the Rhine. He recognized the in-

¹ It was finally decided because of the French and British attitude not to insert any fixed sum in the treaty. 'M. Clemenceau,' writes Mr. Lamont, 'was the first of the Premiers — prompted in this instance by his Minister of the Treasury, M. Klotz — to make the declaration that whatever sum the "experts" might finally compromise and agree upon as the sum to demand from Germany, that would still fall far short of the expectations of the French populace; that no Government accepting such a sum as final could endure. Mr. Lloyd George, who never lent a deaf ear to political considerations, readily fell in with this point of view.' *What Really Happened at Paris*, 262.

evitability of compromise and agreed that until the Treaty stipulations were fulfilled and the League was recognized as an international force, the French ought to hold the bridge-heads and perhaps occupy the Rhinlands.

'February 9, 1919: [Conference with Balfour.] We talked at great length of the French proposal of setting up a "Rhenish Republic" as a buffer state between Germany and France. The French have but one idea and that is military protection. They do not seem to know that to establish a Rhenish Republic against the will of the people would be contrary to the principle of self-determination, and that if we should establish it, the people could at any time become federated with the other German States. If we did such a thing, we would be treating Germany in one way and the balance of the world in another. We would run the danger of having everything from the Rhine to the Pacific, perhaps including Japan, against the Western Powers. The Germans would at once begin to intrigue to bring about such a combination against England, France, and the United States. Their propaganda would be that England and the United States were undertaking to form an Anglo-Saxon supremacy of the world, and that we were using France as a pawn for the accomplishment of our purpose. . . .

Yet we both have a profound sympathy for France and for the unhappy situation in which she finds herself — a situation which is serious because there are practically two Germans to one Frenchman. The only hope France has for the future is the League of Nations and the spirit we hope to bring about through it. If after establishing the League, we are so stupid as to let Germany train and arm a large army and again become a menace to the world, we would deserve the fate which such folly would bring upon us.

*'February 11, 1919: [Conference with Louis Aubert.]*¹ The

¹ Distinguished publicist, at this time working with André Tardieu,

fact that there are two Germans to one Frenchman, and the further fact that Russia now feels more kindly toward Germany than she does toward France, makes the situation dangerous. I did not think, though, it could be improved by the plan which the French had in mind. It would be bad for France, as well as for England and the United States, to impose a wrong upon Germany, and it would react against us as the German wrong to France in '71 had reacted upon her. To do Germany an injustice would give her the sympathy of a large part of the world, particularly that part in close proximity to her. If the conditions we impose upon her are unjust, it will simply mean the breeding of another war. . . . Our only chance for peace, I thought, was to create a League of Nations, treat Germany fairly, and see that she did not have an opportunity to again equip and maintain an army that would be formidable.

'February 19, 1919: [Conference with Balfour.] Balfour was afraid we would get into difficulties with the French regarding the establishment of the Rhenish Republic upon which they are insistent. I thought perhaps a way out could be found. If Germany is not permitted to conscript men for the army for ten years, and if their present army is demobilized down to 150,000 men, there certainly can be no danger of an invasion of France. The French might occupy the bridge-heads of the Rhine until after Germany had fulfilled the obligations laid upon her by the Peace Treaty.

'February 23, 1919: I had a talk with André Tardieu in Vance McCormick's rooms at the Ritz. He said it was not the intention of the French to insist that the Rhenish Republic, of which Clemenceau spoke to me, should forever be barred from a union with Germany. That in five, ten or some other number of years, when the League of Nations was working as a protection against war, they would have no ob-

and in charge of the labors of the French High Commission corresponding to those of the Inquiry.

jection to its going where the inclination of the people might lead them. This of course relieves that question of one of its most objectionable features, since otherwise it would be quite contrary to the policy of self-determination.'

Besides these crucial problems that touched the German Treaty, a multitude of others demanded daily attention, some of them closely involved with the settlement, some relating to current policy. Belgium asked for preferential treatment in the matter of reparations and feared French influence in Luxembourg. What should be done with the interned German navy? Now that the Bolsheviki had refused to enter the Prinkipo Conference,¹ what attitude should the Allies assume? What arrangements should be made for getting food into Austria-Hungary and Germany? The quarrel between Italians and Jugo-Slavs was fast becoming acute. French credit was threatened and steps must be taken to save it. Could the League of Nations be actually put into operation to assist the Conference in meeting current issues? What form should the proceedings of the Conference take when the Germans were called in?

Of this welter of problems House daily sent word to the President. Agreement must be reached and quickly, and agreement was not possible except by compromise. How far ought a policy of compromise to be followed? If the Colonel's papers seem confused they represent, in that respect at least, an accurate reflection of the situation.

¹ An invitation had been extended by the Peace Conference to all the factions in Russia to meet in the island of Prinkipo to settle their differences. The Bolsheviki had refused.

V

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, February 23, 1919

George will not arrive in Paris until Friday, February 28th. No action will be taken respecting Russia until after his arrival. I have ascertained his views respecting this question and they are substantially as follows:

'No foreign intervention in Soviet Russia and no foreign troops to be sent to aid of non-Bolshevik Russia unless volunteers choose to go of their own accord, but material assistance to be supplied to these Governments to enable them to hold their own in the territories which are not anxious to submit to Bolshevik rule. Russia must save herself. If she is saved by outside intervention she is not really saved. We are bound to give moral, material, and if necessary military support to protect Poland, Finland, and other such states against Bolshevik invasion. The military party in France and England both favor intervention, but have absolutely declined to commit themselves as to how the expense thereof would be met. France surely cannot pay and I am sure we cannot either. Will America bear the expense?'

I do not think we shall have any difficulty reaching an agreement respecting our Russian policy after George arrives, inasmuch as his views apparently coincide with ours.¹

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, February 24, 1919

You have no doubt received the text of the separate resolutions adopted to-day regarding the preparation of prelimi-

¹ Three days before, on February 20, the President had sent a cable to House, of the first sentence of which the following is a paraphrase: I hope you will make plain that we are not at war with Russia and will in no circumstances that we can now foresee, take part in military operations there against the Russians.

nary peace terms with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey.¹

1. General Bliss is working with the military authorities and their report will be cabled when the same has been prepared.

2. Our territorial experts are in substantial agreement with the British and the French respecting boundaries of Germany. Tardieu, who since attempt on Clemenceau's [life], has become more prominent, said to me yesterday that France would be willing to have the Rhenish Republic set up only for a limited period of years, at the end of which the population would be permitted to decide for themselves what their future should be. He said that in this way a breathing space would be given us all and France would secure protection until she recovered from the present war. The principle of self-determination would be in this way safeguarded.²

3. It now seems possible that we shall arrive at a solution of the reparation matter which we can accept without abandoning the principle accepted by Germany and the Allies at the time of the Armistice. In the event, however, that this principle is seriously threatened with repudiation by the Allies, it may be wise for us to intimate that, as we do not wish to impair in any respect the agreement between the Associated Governments and Germany at the time of the Armistice, we would prefer to withdraw from any participation in any recovery from Germany except to the extent of our own claims for reparation which we can satisfy out of the funds in the hands of the Alien Property Custodian. If this intimation is given it may be that the Allies will reconsider their position.

4. The statement of the economic conditions to be ac-

¹ *Supra*, 339.

² President Wilson did not at all agree with this. See below, p. 358, paraphrase of his cable of March 10 to Colonel House.

corded Germany will necessarily have to be made in general terms.

5. At the present time the plan we are pursuing is as follows: the giving of priority to the work of committees involving matters essential in the preparation of a peace treaty with Germany. Reports from these committees should be available by March 8th and should upon your arrival be in shape so that you can consider them without delay. After you have approved them they should be submitted to a Plenary Session of the Conference and an agreement of all of the Powers reached respecting them. If this procedure is followed it ought to be possible to summon the Peace Conference for a date not later than the first week of April.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February 25, 1919*

I suggest that you ask Mr. Taft to come and see you. He is the leader of those in the United States who are trying to sustain you in your fight for a League of Nations. Sincere congratulations over your admirable speech at Boston. It is commended here in the highest terms.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February 26, 1919*

1. George is desirous of arranging his engagements so that he can be in Paris at a time most advantageous from your standpoint. He can either come the latter part of this week and remain here for about a week or can be here on about March 14th and remain here for approximately ten days. His Labor Committee is expected to report on March 20th, but he can probably put off receiving this report for five or six days at the most, provided he is engaged in Conference in Paris during that time. I suggest that you authorize me to

express to him your hope that he arrive on March 14th and stay as long as practicable. Please cable me as soon as possible respecting this matter.

2. Last Monday night Pichon and Klotz called. They were very much disturbed over the French financial situation and stated that unless England furnished France with some sterling exchange almost immediately, there would be a serious break in the price of the French franc with disastrous results. They stated that the British Chancellor of the Exchequer would come to Paris if he could see me for a conference respecting this matter. I agreed to see him at any time he came. On Thursday at noon Klotz, Tardieu, and other French Treasury officials called on me and asked me to intervene at once with England so that France would be furnished immediately with a few million pounds of sterling exchange to tide them over until the Chancellor of the Exchequer could come to Paris for conference. I promised to do what I could. I at once took steps to point out to Lloyd George the unfortunate effect which would be caused by French financial difficulties at this time and I urged that some sterling exchange be given the French to tide them over their difficulties. George directed that this be done. Klotz expressed deep gratification of French Cabinet for this assistance. British Chancellor of the Exchequer will come to Paris early next week for conference.

3. Tardieu has submitted memorandum on French position respecting left bank of Rhine.¹ I will cable you about this fully when I have had an opportunity of studying it.

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *February 27, 1919*

I suggested to Balfour and Cecil this morning that we make an effort to start the League of Nations functioning at

¹ Published in *The Truth about the Treaty*, 147 ff.

once. They approved my plan, which is this: Let the Members of the Committee which formed the Covenant act as the provisional executive council proposed in the Covenant. Have the Council of Ten which sits at the Quai d'Orsay or the Plenary Conference refer certain matters to the League. Have the League report back to the Council of Ten or the Plenary Conference as the case may be, with recommendations. In the mean time it is our purpose to call in the neutrals and explain the Covenant to them and say that an invitation is soon to be extended to them to become members.

We will not call the Committee together unless the French, Japanese, and others agree not to offer any amendments to the Covenant until you return. I anticipate no difficulty in this. . . . Having an English-speaking Secretary-General will lessen our difficulties and not put us at such disadvantage as would a French or Italian Secretary-General. It would also enable us to take the Chairmanship of the Executive Council if we so desire. Please give me your views.

EDWARD HOUSE

Paraphrase of the President's Cablegram to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, March 4, 1919

Your plan about starting the League of Nations to functioning at once disturbs me a little because I fear that some advantage would be given to the critics on this side of the water if they thought we were trying in that way to forestall action by the Senate and commit the country in some practical way from which it would be impossible to withdraw. If the plans you have in mind can be carried out with the explicit and public understanding that we are using this machinery provisionally and with no purpose of prejudicing any subsequent action, but merely for the purpose of facilitating the processes of the Peace Conference, perhaps this danger would disappear. The people of the United States are undoubtedly in favor of the League of Nations by an over-

whelming majority. I can say this with perfect confidence, but there are many forces, particularly those prejudiced against Great Britain, which are exercising a considerable influence against it, and you ought to have that constantly in mind in everything you do.¹

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, February 27, 1919

At the request of the Belgians I am trying to get the French and English to agree to give Belgium a priority claim of five hundred million dollars so that she can negotiate a loan and immediately begin industrial activities. Balfour says the British will be sympathetic to the plan. I shall present it to the French to-morrow. Balfour and I also have agreed to talk with Clemenceau within a few days concerning Luxembourg. We shall ask him to keep hands off and let Luxembourg determine for herself whether or not she wishes an economic or even closer union with Belgium.

EDWARD HOUSE

'February 28, 1919: Signor Crespi, Italian Minister of Finance, . . . wished to tell about the difficulties with the Jugo-Slavs, and the controversy he was having with Hoover over supplying a sufficient number of food trains for Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slav territories. I suggested that as soon as the President returned we will try to come to an understanding as to the delineation of the territory between the Jugo-Slavs and Italy.

'March 1, 1919: We had an interesting session at the Quai d'Orsay for the reason that Clemenceau presided for the first

¹ On the same day that the President sent this, and before Colonel House received it, the latter cabled to Wilson: 'We have not yet found a satisfactory way to make the League of Nations function as I suggested, and nothing will be done till after your arrival. In the mean time we will try to shepherd the neutrals into the fold.'

time since he was shot. I notice a marked difference in him as a presiding officer now that he is trying to speed up our work. We finished in something like an hour. In ordinary times we would have been at it all afternoon and perhaps carried the work over for another day.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, March 1, 1919

The French Minister of Finance has agreed to give Belgium priority on five hundred millions provided the British will assent to the principle that valuables or their equivalent taken from the Allied countries should also have priority. I shall take the matter up with the British in a few days.¹

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, March 1, 1919

I got in communication with Lloyd George by telephone. He thinks that it is essential for you to come directly to Paris as soon as possible. His difficulties with the coal miners and other laborers culminate around the 24th or 25th of March and it will be necessary for him to return to England by then. If you arrive in Paris by the 13th or 14th we both believe it may be possible to settle the preliminary peace terms with Germany by the 23d and name a day for the regular Peace Congress in which the Central Powers are to participate. I have April 2d tentatively in mind for the assembling of the Congress. The preliminary peace terms for Austria should also be ready early in April. The Brussels trip can be taken

¹ This priority was assured to Belgium by the Peace Treaty. Clemenceau later declared in the Senate: 'We have not obtained priority for our own reparations . . . and yet, at a critical moment, Belgium having great need of us, I pleaded for her and obtained for her a priority payment of two and one-half billions [of francs].' See Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 226.

during the interim between the call of the Peace Congress and its date of assembling. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *March 4, 1919*

. . . The situation in Germany, particularly in Bavaria, is extremely critical and I have tried to impress both the British and French with the necessity of getting food into these countries immediately. After a conference with Clemenceau and Balfour we agreed to bring the question of supplying Bohemia before the Council of Ten to-morrow. Clemenceau asked that he be given a short time to bring the French public to a realization of the importance of sending food into Germany, when he promises earnest coöperation with us in that direction.

Balfour and I also took up with Clemenceau the question of Luxembourg. He has agreed to withdraw the French troops stationed there and I shall confer with Pershing on Thursday as to whether American troops shall occupy it.

Everything has been speeded up and I feel confident that by the time of your arrival all questions will be ready for your approval.

Lloyd George is expected here to-morrow night.

EDWARD HOUSE

'March 4, 1919: I took up with Clemenceau and Balfour the method of procedure at Versailles when the Germans arrive. Within the last few days I have thought that we should not call the regular Peace Conference, at which there would be all the belligerents in the late war, until after the Germans have accepted our terms. I suggested that we ask the Germans to be at Versailles immediately after the 20th. When we have completed our terms, we would hold a Plenary Meeting of the Allies at the Quai d'Orsay in the morning and

pass upon the Treaty as we and the Allies have drawn it. At this Plenary Session a committee should be appointed to go to Versailles and present the Treaty to the German plenipotentiaries. They in turn would have to go to Berlin for consultation with their Government. When they returned, our committee should meet them at Versailles for the purpose of signing the document and for no other purpose.

'It is to be remembered that we are not holding a Peace Conference at present, but merely a conference between the Allies and ourselves for the purpose of agreeing upon terms to offer Germany at the Peace Conference to be held later.

'If we did not adopt some such method there would be an interminable lot of speeches and confusion. If the Germans were invited into a general peace conference for discussion, the President would speak, Lloyd George would speak, Orlando undoubtedly would wish to tell his people in Italy what he thought of the matter, Venizelos and nearly every other head of a delegation would demand a hearing, and he, Clemenceau, would want to tell the people of France what he thought about it. Clemenceau held up his hands and said, "No, not I, not I." Nevertheless he and Balfour agreed that the method which I proposed should be carried out because it was the most expeditious thing to do.'

VI

'*March 6, 1919:* The most interesting feature of the day was lunch with Lloyd George at his apartment. . . . I thought that if the British did not consent to the sinking of the German fleet instead of partitioning it, it would lead to a large naval programme in America and that England and the United States would be in the same attitude toward one another in the future as England and Germany had been in the past. He readily recognized this, and asked me to say this at the Quai d'Orsay when the question came up. . . .

'We agreed to send for Orlando immediately, and that he (Lloyd George), Clemenceau, and Orlando should thresh out everything before the President came and arrive at decisions. The President could agree or point out wherein his views were not as ours. In this way matters might be greatly expedited.

'*March 7, 1919:* Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and I met at the Ministry of War this morning at 10.30. . . .

'We did our work rapidly and both George and Clemenceau felt encouraged that so much could be done so quickly. It was agreed that we should meet again in a day or two to decide matters before going to the Quai d'Orsay. . . .

'I shall leave to the *procès-verbal* the details of the meeting of the Council of Ten at the Quai d'Orsay. We were in session from three until nearly six o'clock and it was a stormy session — stormier, indeed, than the *procès-verbal* will indicate. However, it was a good lesson inasmuch as it proved how essential it is to have meetings in advance, as George, Clemenceau, and I had this morning. The matters that came up this afternoon [which were considered in the morning] were decided almost immediately and with but little discussion, and the question of feeding Austria, which the three of us did not decide beforehand, took practically the entire afternoon.'

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

PARIS, *March 7, 1919*

Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and I in conference this morning discussed the following subjects:

1. The distribution of the sum which Germany is to be called upon to pay. George said he could not sustain himself with his people if on a question of priority all of this sum should go to France and Belgium for reparation. He suggested that it be apportioned as follows: three parts for

reparation and two parts for costs of war.¹ France, Belgium, and all countries at war with Germany should participate in these two parts as well as Great Britain. I thought this proposal of George fair, but there must be no demand on Germany inconsistent with our terms of armistice with Germany and the Fourteen Points. Clemenceau seemed to think the proposal just, but reserved final judgment until he could consult his financial experts.

2. We took up the question of feeding Germany and Clemenceau did not disagree with the plan which George and I presented from our experts. However, Germany has refused to turn over any shipping until a satisfactory plan has been mutually agreed upon which will provide food until next harvest.

3. The left bank of the Rhine was discussed, but no tentative agreement was reached.² . . .

4. The naval terms declared for the dismemberment, or sinking of the German ships, but the French made reservation in favor of partitioning them amongst the Allies. The British were on the point of yielding to this, but I told George that we could never consent to the British augmenting their navy so largely; if this were done it would surely lead to American and British rivalry in this direction. We finally agreed that the ships should be partitioned but that Great Britain, the United States, and Japan should sink those coming to them.

5. In discussing the dismemberment of the Turkish Em-

¹ The proposal was not understood by House to mean that a demand would be made on Germany for payment of indirect war costs; as House stated two sentences later: 'There must be no demand on Germany inconsistent with our terms of armistice with Germany.' Lloyd George's proposal concerned merely the basis of the division of reparations among the Allies.

² President Wilson cabled in reply to this on March 10. The paraphrase of his cable runs in part: I hope you will not even provisionally consent to the separation of the Rhenish Provinces from Germany under any arrangement, but will reserve the whole matter until my arrival.

pire both Clemenceau and George expressed the wish that we accept mandatories for Armenia and Constantinople. I thought the United States would be willing when the proposal was brought before them.

6. George was unwilling to accept that clause in our military terms to Germany relating to conscription. He offered a substitute which Clemenceau and I accepted, which provided for a volunteer army of 200,000, the period of service to be for twelve years. This was afterwards adopted by the Council of Ten this afternoon. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

'*March 8, 1919:* Admiral Benson came to tell of his labors with the Allied Admirals in the matter which Lloyd George and I referred to them about the distribution and sinking of German ships. . . .

'The meeting at the Quai d'Orsay was a repetition of that of yesterday, only France was in the position of Italy the day before. Yesterday the French saw quite clearly that the Italians were obstructing the sending of necessary food into the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, while to-day the Italians saw just as clearly that the French were trying to obstruct the sending of food into Germany. We sat for four hours before reaching a conclusion.

'*March 10, 1919:* [Conference with Clemenceau and Lloyd George.] We agreed upon another committee to delineate the boundary lines of Germany. . . . Clemenceau named Tardieu, I named Mezes, and Lloyd George, Philip Kerr. I earnestly urged that after the President's return the Quai d'Orsay meetings should be, if not discontinued, held only at intervals, and that the three Prime Ministers and the President should continue the meetings we have held in the President's absence. . . .

'We discussed the question of the boundary between Italy and Austria on the northeast, and that of the Jugo-

Slavs in Dalmatia. I had with me a map showing the London Treaty, and the recommendations of our experts. Both Clemenceau and George were in favor of our line rather than the London Treaty. None of us thought that Italy should have the Tyrol. . . . Neither of them were in favor of giving the Italians Fiume, but thought, as a compromise, it might be internationalized.

'George and I discussed the sinking of the German ships, and he said that an agreement between Great Britain and the United States must be reached not to rival one another in naval building.¹

'*March 12, 1919:* It has been a most interesting day. Orlando called around ten o'clock to confer upon the various phases of the Italian situation. He remained for nearly an hour. . . . I foresee trouble for him because Lloyd George and Clemenceau are not [even as] sympathetic with their demands as the President and I, and we are nowhere near agreement with them. I pledged him to Switzerland as the seat of the League of Nations.

'In the afternoon I went to the Quai d'Orsay, where the air terms were taken up. Lloyd George asked to see me in the anteroom and we went out and talked for nearly a half-hour. He said he was seriously troubled concerning the French. In the first place, he could not agree with them upon the question of the boundary of the Rhine and the creation of a Rhenish Republic upon the terms they had in mind. He was willing to give them protection in other directions. . . . He would also be willing to say that in the event of an invasion, the British would come at once to the rescue, but he was not willing to maintain an army indefinitely at the bridgeheads of the Rhine and to do the other things the French desired which we both agree will eventually lead to another war.

¹ See *infra*, p. 418, for the later discussions which may be regarded as originating the idea of the Washington Conference.

'He said the financial question was another difficulty. . . .

'Another difficulty is Syria. George declares the French are making trouble for themselves and war is sure to come if they insist upon their present plans. . . .

'Clemenceau came a little after five. He was distressed at the turn matters were taking with the British. . . .'

VII

So far as the energy of the Conference was concerned, no criticism could be passed on the work of February and early March. The absence of President Wilson and the British and Italian Prime Ministers did not prevent the development of a sound and swiftly operating organization. A few weeks later, Steed wrote of this period, in the *London Times*: 'During their absence Colonel House, who has never found a difficulty in working with his colleagues, because he is a selfless man with no personal axe to grind, brought matters rapidly forward.' The commissions assigned to the different problems had progressed far. On February 27, House wrote in his diary: 'I am delighted with the way things are going.'

But as the expert commissions separated essentials from unessentials, it became clear that the conflict between the various solutions advanced by the British, French, and Americans was so real that no agreement could be reached without very broad concessions on all sides. The chance of imposing the American point of view as contained in the Fourteen Points had passed. An unbending insistence by President Wilson on his programme would precipitate an open quarrel with the European Prime Ministers. They protested that if they yielded it would mean the overthrow of their Governments. All were caught in a net of circumstances which made free and reasonable decisions impossible. Tales of confusion in Central Europe, Russia, the Far East, the Near East, complicated the problems at Paris. The only

chance of improvement lay in rapid settlement, and the only chance of rapid settlement lay in compromise. So much House confessed to his diary on March 3.

'It is now evident,' he wrote, 'that the peace will not be such a peace as I had hoped, or one which this terrible upheaval should have brought about. There are many reasons why it will not be one. . . .

'The American Delegation are not in a position to act freely. The elections of last November in the United States have been a deterrent to free action by our delegates. The British elections and the vote of confidence Clemenceau received in the French Chamber of Deputies, put the finishing touches to a situation already bad. If the President should exert his influence among the liberals and laboring classes, he might possibly overthrow the Governments in Great Britain, France, and Italy; but if he did, he would still have to reckon with our own people and he might bring the whole world into chaos. The overthrow of governments might not end there, and it would be a grave responsibility for any man to take at this time.

'I dislike to sit and have forced upon us such a peace as we are facing. We will get something out of it in the way of a League of Nations, but even that is an imperfect instrument. . . . All our Commissioners, experts, and economists tell of the same *impasse* and come almost hourly for consultation. . . . The situations are many in number and both varied and complex in character. It is Archangel and Murmansk at one moment, the left bank of the Rhine the next, Asia Minor, the African Colonies, the Chinese-Japanese differences, the economic situation as to raw materials, the food situation as it affects the various countries of Europe, enemy and neutral, and the financial situation as it relates to the United States, and the Allies. These are some of the many questions which are constantly brought up.'

On March 14, President Wilson landed at Brest. He found that the Conference had made enormous progress in the month of his absence, in the sense that the committees were ready to report and the main questions had been reduced to a point where, provided concessions were made to the French or British point of view, decisions might be reached very quickly. But if he would not yield, the Conference might be indefinitely prolonged. No commitments had been made for him in his absence.

The President faced a difficult problem. Should he compromise and, if so, to what extent?

APPENDIX

In Chapters XVI and XVII of his *Woodrow Wilson and the World War*, Mr. R. S. Baker reviews some of the incidents related in the above chapter and reaches the conclusion that they give evidence of an attempt to sidetrack the League of Nations and settle important issues contrary to Wilson's wishes during the President's absence from Paris.

Mr. Baker's thesis is that the moment the President left Paris, the anti-Wilson forces mobilized; the resolutions presented by Mr. Balfour on February 22, calling for speeding-up of work on economic and territorial problems connected with the German Treaty, he regards as an attempt to frustrate the proposal for an immediate military treaty, which the Council and Mr. Wilson in particular had approved. He accuses Mr. Balfour of presenting the resolutions under instructions from Lloyd George, who 'began to think he had gone too far with this League business.' Colonel House, he avers, yielded to Mr. Balfour's suggestion because he did not wish to enter into a quarrel with the Allies and because 'there was nothing hard, clear, sure, definite in his intellectual processes.' Mr. Balfour's suggestion of hastening decisions on points other than the military terms, Mr. Baker insists, 'would wreck the entire American scheme for the peace. . . . Thus while it is too much to say that there was a direct plot, while Wilson was away, to kill the League or even cut it out of the Treaty, one can affirm with certainty that there was an intrigue against his plan of a preliminary military and naval peace — which would have indirectly produced the same result.'¹

The charges against the British representatives, particularly Lord Balfour, are so serious that in justice to the Allies they demand careful examination.

In 1922, when Mr. Baker's chapters first appeared in print, they were brought to Lord Balfour's attention by Colonel House. 'If my memory

¹ Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 295, 296, 306.

serves me rightly,' wrote House, 'you and I were moved solely by a desire to accelerate the Treaty, and we were acting as much upon my initiative as your own.' At the suggestion of Lord Balfour there was prepared in the British Foreign office a memorandum covering the charges that had been raised. This he sent to Colonel House and it is here published, with the consent of the Foreign Office, together with two explanatory letters from Lord Balfour.

Lord Balfour to Colonel House

LONDON, July 17, 1922

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE —

I have been a long time answering your letter, but the reasons for the delay will be obvious from what follows.

Since I received it I asked — to look into the matter. He very kindly acceded to my request, and has written an able and elaborate report upon it, which I send herewith for your confidential information.

This disposes, I think conclusively, of the charges contained in Mr. Baker's article. But the whole incident raises a problem of considerable difficulty.

Mr. Wilson, entirely oblivious of the pledges of secrecy with regard to the records of what passed in the Supreme Council and the Council of Four — pledges of which I believe he was the most ardent advocate — has handed over all the papers to a friend of his, Mr. Baker, in order to provide material for a series of articles in the *New York Times*.¹ I have no reason to believe that Mr. Baker the least desires to misuse the confidential information which had been thus placed at his disposal; but he writes, I imagine, with a purpose — a very legitimate purpose — of doing justice to Mr. Wilson's work in Paris. He has, I understand, little opportunity of comparing notes with those who were there; and, in such circumstances, it is not unnatural that he should do less than justice to other actors in the drama. As you point out, he was certainly wrong in his statement that Mr. Wilson was kept in ignorance by me of the Secret Treaties, — an error which I feel the more acutely, because it is a calumny which, if I remember rightly, I have already publicly contradicted. He is also wrong in the account of what passed during President Wilson's absence in America, contained in the copy of the *New York Times* which you sent me. Whether he has committed other errors of importance, I do not know, as the articles, so far, have not been brought to my notice. You and I and, I should imagine, most of those who worked together in Paris are, or may be, the victims of these doubtless unintentional misrepresentations. How are they to be dealt with?

The first answer that suggests itself is that the articles should be studied one by one as they come out, and compared with the documents on which they profess to be founded. But there are one or two practical objections to this course of the most serious kind. The records which

¹ The articles referred to were chapters from *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, which were first published in serial form.

have to be gone through are immense in bulk, and to hunt down particular errors and misrepresentations at this distance of time may involve considerable labour. — could, of course, do it better than anybody else; but he is a very hard-worked man, and though he has most kindly dealt in a very able fashion with the particular point raised in your letter, we can hardly ask him, in ordinary circumstances, to repeat the operation.

And there is yet a further difficulty. How are we to deal with the refutation when we have got it? I should, in any case, be reluctant to engage in a newspaper controversy on the other side of the Atlantic. But, quite apart from this, we can only refute errors professedly based upon confidential documents by ourselves making use of these documents. And how can we do this without committing the very error which Mr. Wilson has committed, and of which we, who loyally worked with him in Paris, think we have some reason to complain? We certainly could not do so without asking the other Governments of the Allied and Associated Powers, and perhaps not without asking the survivors among those who took a leading part in the discussions, of which these are the confidential records. On the other hand, to allow historic errors to be disseminated on the authority of a writer who justly claims to have access to the original sources of information, and to leave these errors uncontradicted, would be interpreted by the malevolent, and perhaps by the indifferent, as an admission of guilt.

I was absolutely open in 1917 with President Wilson about the Secret Treaties; the last thing that you and I thought of in 1919 was to take advantage of President Wilson's temporary absence in America to reverse his policy. I am charged, it seems, with both these crimes; you are charged with the second. Are we to remain silent? If we protest, what form should our protest take? I am in perplexity as to how these questions should be answered, and should much like to have your advice on the subject.

I hope you and Mrs. House are keeping well. It is a great disappointment not seeing you this summer. We should have had much to talk about.

Yours ever

BALFOUR

LONDON, *July 28th, 1927*

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE,

I hear that you wish to publish the memorandum on the subject of the charges made by Mr. Ray Stannard Baker in regard to certain proceedings at the Paris Peace Conference, which I sent for your confidential information with my private letter of July 17th, 1922.

In that letter I set forth in full the difficulties I felt in rebutting these charges. Mr. Stannard Baker's articles were based on a partial use of some of the proceedings of the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference, which all concerned had agreed to treat as confidential, but which President Wilson had inadvertently allowed Mr. Baker to use, and even to

quote in writing his articles. I pointed out that we could only rebut his charges by ourselves making use of the same material as he, in which case we should fall into the very error which Mr. Wilson had committed in entrusting these proceedings to Mr. Baker, and of which we felt some reason to complain.

Five years, however, have now passed. Some of the participators in these events have died. But Mr. Baker's charges have never been rebutted, and are perhaps believed by some of those who have read his articles. I think that in the interests of international amity it is necessary to show that the negotiations with which Mr. Baker's article is concerned were in fact conducted with good will on all sides, in a spirit of mutual frankness, and without any of those implications of intrigue with which Mr. Baker credits them.

I do not think it possible that harm can be done to the reputation or memory of any one concerned in these transactions by the publication of the memorandum which I sent to you in 1922. I therefore remove the ban which I placed in my previous letter and authorise you, if you think fit, to publish the memorandum in your memoirs.

Yours ever

BALFOUR

P.S. I must ask that in publishing my letter of July 17th, 1922, and this letter (if you decide to publish it) you will omit ——'s name, leaving a blank space where it is mentioned in each case.

Memorandum

'The suggestion that there was anything savouring even remotely of a plot against the League of Nations in President Wilson's absence is supported by no evidence whatsoever. "The League was scarcely mentioned in the conferences until just before the President returned," complains Mr. Baker. Why? Because the text of the Covenant had been formally laid before the Peace Conference in Plenary Session by President Wilson, as Chairman of the appropriate Commission of the Conference, on February 14th the day before he sailed for America. To tamper with it in the absence of the President, one of its principal authors, was unnecessary and undesirable. Its further consideration and final acceptance was reserved until after Mr. Wilson's return.

'An insinuation which in Mr. Baker's article follows closely on the extract quoted above is that the British Empire Delegation became militaristic; that this is proved by Mr. Churchill having been sent to the Peace Conference, and by the fact that Sir Robert Borden sat in the Supreme Council.

'The facts are that Mr. Churchill was present at precisely three meetings of the Council, namely on Friday, February 14th, Saturday, February 15th, and Monday, February 17th, after which he returned home. He was there not to discuss the Peace Treaty, but for the consideration of allied policy towards Russia, a question of great military importance in which Mr. Churchill's Department — the War Office — were specially concerned. Throughout the Conference it was the practice of the British

Government to attach Ministers to the Delegation, whose Departments were specially interested in the questions being discussed whenever they could be spared. Thus, Mr. Chamberlain, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Law Officers of the Crown, Lord Milner, who was Colonial Secretary, etc. were at different times attached to the Delegation although they were not plenipotentiaries. Mr. Churchill's presence was merely an application of a well-recognised procedure.¹

As regards Sir Robert Borden, no one could possibly accuse him of being militaristic. Neither could he have been considered as hostile to the League of Nations of which he has always been a warm partisan — and part of Mr. Baker's suggestion is that there was an attempt at this time to subvert the Covenant of the League. As a matter of fact Sir Robert Borden took Lord Milner's place as 'second string' during the Prime Minister's absence in London at precisely one meeting of the Supreme Council, viz. on February 18th.

'The main point, however, which Mr. Baker seeks to make is that Mr. Wilson wished to have a preliminary naval and military peace with Germany, and that after he had left, there was a plot to get rid of this plan. There is the further suggestion that Mr. Balfour aided and abetted the plot to get rid of it by a proposal he made shortly after for expediting the work of the Commissions on other branches of the Peace Treaty, and that he was inspired to do this by Mr. Lloyd George who had returned to London, and suffered 'one of his characteristic catapultic changes of opinion.' Dealing first with the latter point, the records of the British Government provide no evidence that the Prime Minister changed his mind in the smallest degree. In fact, the Prime Minister during his absence in London never hampered Mr. Balfour by any instructions at all. He left an entirely free hand to a colleague who knew his views and shared them. Any action which Mr. Balfour took in coöperation with others in order to speed up the completion of the peace treaties was taken entirely on his own initiative, though, of course, the Prime Minister and his colleagues were kept fully informed.

'Coming to the main charge referred to above, it is necessary to recall exactly what did occur during this period.

'Early in February, 1919, the German Armistice became due for renewal and as usual, a number of proposals were made for stiffening its terms. President Wilson and other members of the Supreme Council felt that these additions to the Armistice were only a source of additional pin-pricks to Germany, which cumulatively might result in serious trouble. Eventually, a special Commission, under the Presidency of

¹ As a matter of fact the *procès-verbal* shows that instead of bringing Mr. Churchill to Paris to exploit Wilson's absence, especial pains were taken to bring him to Paris before Wilson left. The *procès-verbal* reads: 'Mr. Churchill said that . . . in view of the imminent departure of President Wilson, the Cabinet had asked him to go over and obtain some decision as to the policy on this matter [Russia].' After attending three meetings of the Council (at one of which Wilson was present) he left Paris two days after Wilson sailed. [Note by C. S.]

Marshal Foch, composed partly of military advisers of the Government and partly of their economic advisers, was appointed to report on the position. On this Commission the British Government was represented by Lord Robert Cecil and General Thwaites, the French Government by M. Clementel and General Degoutte, the American Government by General Bliss and Mr. Norman Davis and the Italian Government by M. Crespi and General Cavallero. The report of the Commission, which was considered by the Supreme Council on February 12th, 1919, ended with the following recommendation:

“Nevertheless the members of the Committee desire to express their opinion that to obtain as rapidly as possible, a final result, and to put a stop to the difficulties constantly raised by the Germans, the members of the Commission consider that naval and military terms of peace should be drawn up immediately by a Commission appointed for the purpose and imposed on the enemy.”

“When this proposal was discussed at the Supreme Council, Mr. Balfour made the suggestion that “only essential small changes or no changes whatever should be made in the Armistice until the Allies were prepared to say to Germany: ‘these are the final naval and military terms of peace which you must accept in order to enable Europe to demobilise and so to resume its life on a peace footing and reestablish its industries.’”

“President Wilson went further and suggested the renewal of the Armistice on the present terms for a period which would be terminated on a few days’ notice and that meanwhile the final military and naval terms of peace should be drawn up and presented separately to the Germans for acceptance on the understanding that nonacceptance of the whole of the terms would mean an immediate resumption of hostilities.

“M. Clemenceau at first strongly protested and urged that the military terms could not be separated from the political, economic and financial terms. At the end of the morning meeting on February 12th, Mr. Balfour put President Wilson’s idea into the form of resolutions. These were considered the same afternoon when President Wilson further developed his idea that the military terms of peace should be isolated from the other conditions of peace.

“He therefore thought it was possible to frame the terms of Germany’s disarmament before settling the Terms of Peace. He was encouraged in this belief by the assurance that the Military Advisers could produce a plan in forty-eight hours. It might take more than forty-eight hours for the heads of Governments to agree to this plan.”

“M. Clemenceau demurred at some length at the idea of discussing a matter of such importance in the absence of the President who was about to return to America on a visit. To this, President Wilson replied that —

“In technical matters most of the brains he used were borrowed; the possessors of these brains were in Paris. He would, therefore, go away with an easy mind if he thought that his plan had been adopted in principle. He had complete confidence in the views of his Military Advisers. . . . If his plan were agreed on in principle, he would be prepared to go away and leave it to his colleagues to decide whether the programme drafted by the technical advisers was the right one. He did

not wish his absence to stop so important, essential and urgent a work as the preparation of a Preliminary Peace. He hoped to return by the 13th or 15th March, allowing himself only a week in America. But he did not wish that during his unavoidable absence, such questions as the territorial question and questions of compensation should be held up. He had asked Colonel House to take his place while he was away."

'After some further discussion, the Supreme Council accepted part of Mr. Balfour's draft conclusions, which included the following:

"Detailed and final Naval, Military and Air Conditions of the Preliminaries of Peace shall be drawn up at once by a Committee to be presided over by Marshal Foch and submitted for approval to the Supreme War Council; these, when approved, will be presented for signature to the Germans, and the Germans shall be at once informed that this is the policy of the Associated Governments."

'This ends the first phase of the period covered by Mr. Baker's article, namely that prior to the President's departure, in which it is desired to draw attention more particularly to the following points:

'The first idea of a Preliminary Naval and Military Peace was put forward not by Mr. Balfour or President Wilson, but by a Joint Committee of Military and Economic experts, including Lord Robert Cecil, M. Clementel and Mr. Norman Davis: Mr. Balfour supported the idea; President Wilson pressed it, and Mr. Balfour put it into the shape of resolutions; Mr. Clemenceau, though he did not much like it, finally accepted it; the idea at the time was that the military men would only require forty-eight hours to draw up the terms though it was admitted that the politicians would require longer to consider them: at any rate, only a short period was contemplated; President Wilson left the matter in the hands of his own substitutes with perfect confidence.

'We now come to the second stage, i.e. the period of President Wilson's absence from Paris. On February 22nd, ten days after the proceedings described above, the Military Report on the Naval and Military Conditions of Peace was still awaited. The original forty-eight hours contemplated by the President had already extended to ten days and still the report was incomplete. The subject was still with Marshal Foch's Commission. Until their report emerged, nothing more could be done by the Council of Ten. A good deal of the remainder of the work of the Conference was sticking. It was in these circumstances that Mr. Balfour put forward his resolutions for expediting the remainder of the work of the Conference. The resolutions were shown to and agreed by Colonel House and several other members before being formally presented to the Supreme Council.

'In introducing his resolutions before the Supreme Council on February 22nd, Mr. Balfour pointed out that —

"A general feeling of impatience was now becoming manifest in all countries on account of the apparent slow progress the Conference was making in the direction of Final Peace. It would be folly to ignore altogether the danger that feeling might produce. . . ."

'Later in his speech he said that —

"he had that morning, in company with M. Pichon, discussed the ques-

tion with M. Clemenceau,¹ who inclined to the view that the Naval and Military Terms of Peace should not be separated from the other aspects of the case. M. Clemenceau was extremely anxious to expedite matters, but he thought that end would be best obtained by waiting until a conclusion had been reached on all subjects. M. Clemenceau held the view that if the stimulus towards a rapid decision were removed by the acceptance of the Naval and Military Terms by Germany, the other questions would be delayed for an infinity of time by small controversies."

'Mr. Balfour added that he personally, "was in favour of his own proposal, but would be glad to hear the views of his colleagues."

'That Mr. Balfour was not committed in any way to a view against the original idea of presenting the final Naval and Military Terms in advance of the rest of the Peace Treaty to Germany, is proved by the first clause of his resolutions, which runs as follows:

"(1) *Without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace to Germany at an early date,*² the Conference agrees that it is desirable to proceed without delay to the consideration of other Preliminary Peace Terms with Germany and to press on the necessary investigations with all possible speed."

'From the words in italics, it will be seen how careful Mr. Balfour was, in drafting the resolutions intended to expedite the general work of the Conference, to avoid prejudicing the plan to present separate naval and military terms of peace.

'Mr. Balfour's colleagues in the Supreme Council, however, were inclining to a different view. M. Pichon emphasised M. Clemenceau's desire to press on the whole of the Preliminary Peace Terms and stated that M. Clemenceau was warmly supported by Marshal Foch and his Military Advisers. Colonel House in the course of his first speech is recorded to have spoken as follows:—

"In regard to the two proposals now before the Conference, very severe military terms would have to be imposed on the Germans. And, he thought, the Germans would be more inclined to accept those conditions if, at the same time, the whole Peace terms were made known to them. The Germans would then be made fully cognisant of their position."

'Mr. Lansing was even more definite.

"Mr. Lansing expressed the view that it would be a mistake to treat the Military Terms of Peace as distinct from the other terms of Peace. He would prefer to embody all the terms of a Preliminary Peace in one document: a separate treaty being made with each of the enemy countries on identic lines. . . .

"He was strongly of the opinion that when Peace terms came to be discussed with Germany, a complete document should be presented, including everything, and not merely a few Naval, Military and other conditions. He thoroughly agreed with M. Clemenceau's point of view."

¹ This was shortly after the attempted assassination of M. Clemenceau [C. S.].

² The italics are not in the original.

'Later on,

"Mr. House enquired whether the Conference agreed to accept M. Clemenceau's proposal that all the terms of Peace should be dealt with together, instead of first dealing with the Military terms."

"Mr. Balfour said he would be prepared to accept that proposal, provided it expressed the unanimous view of the Conference."

'Note again how cautious Mr. Balfour's language was in expressing agreement to over-ride the original proposal for the presentation of separate Naval, Military and Air terms of peace. He would only agree provided the Council was unanimous.

'During the discussion on this day, Saturday, February 22nd, the words already quoted at the head of Mr. Balfour's resolution, namely, "without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace to Germany at an early date," were dropped out. This was done, not on Mr. Balfour's, but on Mr. Lansing's suggestion. Mr. Lansing's object was to have a text which could be made to apply to all the enemy countries, a separate resolution being drawn up for each country. In the course of the discussion, Mr. Balfour evidently formed the impression that the original idea to present separate Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace had been thrown overboard, for towards the end of the discussion he is recorded as saying:

"Mr. Balfour thought that a decision had been reached that the Conference should not proceed with the Military Terms of Peace as a separate proposal. . . ."

'On the Monday following, namely, February 24th, the discussion of this subject was resumed and the Supreme Council had before them redrafts of Mr. Balfour's proposal, prepared in accordance with Mr. Lansing's proposal referred to above. On this occasion there were four separate but practically identical resolutions applying the speeding-up process to Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, as well as to Germany, this being a point on which Baron Sonnino had insisted with great force.

'This was the occasion on which Lord Milner, who at the previous meeting had spoken briefly in favour of pushing on with the Naval and Military Terms with Germany, made the speech quoted in Mr. Stannard Baker's article. His plea was undoubtedly a strong one and perhaps it should be repeated here:

"Speaking for myself, personally I still think that the final disarmament of Germany—I mean our bringing her down to that degree of strength for war purposes which we are willing to allow her permanently to maintain—is extremely urgent; that it is a step which we ought to take as soon as we possibly can; and that it is a step which when taken, will greatly expedite the acceptance, not only by Germany, but by all our enemies, of all other conditions of peace. It is also an absolutely essential preliminary to our own demobilisation on anything like the scale on which we all hope to demobilise." "Till Saturday last I thought we were all agreed upon this. Now I feel some doubt about it."

'Most of the above is quoted by Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, but the following passage is not:

"I do not wish to raise any further discussion over the resolutions which

*we are just about to pass.*¹ But I hope I am justified in assuming that the passing of these resolutions does not preclude us from proceeding at once to impose on Germany those military, naval and other conditions of a like nature, which Marshal Foch and his colleagues are at present discussing, *if, when we see them they commend themselves to us.*¹ I hope in other words, that it still remains free to any one of us to raise at that juncture the question of their immediate presentation."

'This statement gave rise to some discussion, the result of which was in effect to leave open the question of whether separate Naval, Military and Air Terms were to be imposed until the Council had seen the report of Marshal Foch's Committee. It was on this understanding that the resolution for speeding up the various Treaties of Peace were passed.

'It will be seen from the above that Lord Milner, in fact, took much the same view as Mr. Balfour. Mr. Balfour had carefully safeguarded the position in his original draft resolutions on which, of course, Lord Milner had been consulted. Mr. Balfour had eventually consented, though somewhat reluctantly, in the course of discussion, to the proposals of his colleagues on the Supreme Council, to drop the idea of separate Naval and Military conditions being presented to Germany, but, after Lord Milner's intervention, the question still remained an open one, pending examination of the terms to be presented by Marshal Foch's Committee. It should be noted however that Lord Milner's words are very guarded. He does not oppose the speeding-up resolution, on which, indeed, he had been consulted beforehand. His proposal to put forward separate Naval, Military and Air Terms, is conditioned by the words "if, when we see them, they commend themselves to us." It will now be shown that this latter condition was not fulfilled until several weeks had elapsed.

'The Military Terms first came before the Supreme Council on March 3rd, that is to say nearly three weeks after the question had been remitted to Marshal Foch's Committee. Their preparation had occupied Marshal Foch's Committee nearly three weeks, instead of the 48 hours anticipated by Mr. Wilson, and, as the President had foreseen, the Council of Ten was destined to take some time in accepting them. On March 3rd there was only a preliminary consideration. Before March 6th the Terms had been revised. On March 7th the Supreme Council remitted them back to Marshal Foch's Committee for new Military Terms to be drawn up, based on the principle of voluntary service and long service. It was not until Monday, March 17th, more than a month after the question had been remitted to Marshal Foch's Committee, *and after the return from America of President Wilson* that the greater part of the Naval, Military and Air Terms were approved and even then some points remained over for settlement. Thus ends the second stage—namely the period of the President's absence in America.

'Reserving comments for the moment, we pass now to the third stage of these proceedings, which followed Mr. Wilson's return to Paris.

'No formal resolution to reverse the decision of February 12th had been taken. The Naval, Military and Air Terms had not yet been finally

¹ The italics are not in the original.

settled by the Supreme Council. The meeting to deal with them was postponed from Saturday, March 15th to Monday, March 17th, to give President Wilson time to study them.

'That the question was still quite open is shown by the following extract from the proceedings of the Supreme Council on March 17th:

"President Wilson, continuing, said that the paragraph¹ as it now read indicated that these terms would be part of the Armistice, but *if they were to constitute the Preliminary Treaty of Peace,*² the wording was not correct. In this matter he found himself in considerable difficulty and he would be compelled to seek legal advice. *He had assumed that this preliminary Convention would only be temporary until the complete Treaty was prepared,*² and that it would have the character of a sort of exalted Armistice, the terms being reincluded in the formal Treaty. If this preliminary Convention had to be submitted to the Senate for a general discussion there, he knew from the usual slow process of legislatures that it would be several months before it would be ratified.

"Mr. Balfour expressed the view that the statements made by President Wilson were most important and serious. As he understood the situation, *the policy accepted was that a Preliminary Treaty should be made,*² each clause of which should be a part of the Final Act, so that by the settlement of the Preliminary Peace a great part of the final Permanent Peace would actually have been conquered. It now appeared that the American Constitution made that full programme impracticable.

"President Wilson said he did not feel quite sure of his ground, and he proposed that the question should be postponed until he could consult the constitutional lawyers, in whose opinion he had more confidence than in his own. For the present, it appeared to him that they would have to use the alternative phraseology prepared by M. Fromageot, namely:

"After the expiration of a period of three months from the date of exchange of ratifications of the present stipulations, the German laws, etc."

'Although the greater part of the Naval, Military and Air Terms were settled at the Council of Ten on March 17th, a few knotty points as already mentioned remained over for settlement. As late as April 25th, the Council of Four (which had superseded the Council of Ten as the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference) was obliged to devote a whole meeting to the discussion of certain details of the Naval articles. It is interesting to note that the document which came before the Council on this date is headed, "Draft articles concerning the Kiel Canal for insertion in the *Preliminary Treaty of Peace with Germany*" and the same terminology is used in the Minutes, thus showing that the idea of a Preliminary Treaty was still alive.

'It has not been found possible to trace when the idea of a Preliminary Peace was dropped. No formal decision seems to have been taken on the subject. The Naval, Military and Air Terms had taken far longer to settle than had been expected, and, thanks to Mr. Balfour's "speed-

¹ Article 48 of the draft Naval, Military and Air Clauses.

² Italics are not in the original.

ing-up" resolutions of February 22nd, the remainder of the work of the Conference was by the fourth week in April very little behind the Naval, Military and Air Terms. In these circumstances (and apart from the constitutional difficulties in passing a Preliminary Peace through the Senate, which Mr. Wilson had discovered on his return from America) the main reason for the decision of February 12th had disappeared by the end of April and the Allied and Associated Powers were in a position on May 7th to present a complete draft of the Peace Treaty to the German Delegation.

'From the above narrative it will be seen that after President Wilson's departure to America misgivings in regard to the plan of a separate Naval, Military and Air Preliminary Peace Treaty were first expressed by M. Clemenceau, while still in bed suffering from a wound; that Mr. Balfour and M. Pichon at once reported his views to the Supreme Council; that M. Pichon quoted Marshal Foch in support of M. Clemenceau's opinion, and that Colonel House and Mr. Lansing strongly supported the same idea; that Mr. Balfour wished on February 22nd to pass the "speeding-up" resolutions without prejudice to the idea of a Preliminary Peace, and only dropped the words to this effect contained in the original draft of his resolution in deference to the unanimous views of his colleagues; that no formal resolution rescinding the decision in favour of a separate Preliminary Peace was taken either in President Wilson's absence or after his return; that the question was still quite open after President Wilson's return on March 15th, and remained open at least until April 25th; that after his return to Paris President Wilson could have pressed forward his original plan, had he been so minded; but that in all probability the unexpected difficulty in settling the Naval, Military and Air Terms, and the progress made with other parts of the Treaty made it not worth his while.

'The record of these events provides ample justification and logical reasons for the change of plan, against which President Wilson never seems to have raised any kind of protest or objection. Moreover the change of plan came about in the give and take of open discussion between men of different nations working together in complete loyalty to one another as well as to President Wilson during his absence. Everything is recorded in the official Minutes of which Mr. Wilson received copies. There is no trace of that "intrigue" which Mr. Baker declares "one can affirm with certainty" to have existed.'

In further consideration of Mr. Baker's charge that President Wilson's policy was impaired by the plan to hasten work on the economic and territorial aspects of the Treaty, it should be noted that House discussed this plan with Wilson on February 14 and that Wilson acquiesced. 'I asked him,' wrote House, 'if he [Wilson] had anything else to suggest in addition to these four articles. He thought they were sufficient.' (See above, p. 330). A fact that weakens Mr. Baker's thesis even more clearly is Wilson's statement in the Council on February 12 of his own interest in hastening work on the territorial and economic questions: 'He did not

wish his absence,' said Wilson, according to the *procès-verbal*, 'to stop so important, essential and urgent work as the preparation of a preliminary peace. He hoped to return by the 13th or 15th March, allowing himself only a week in America. *But he did not wish that, during his unavoidable absence, such questions as the territorial question and questions of compensation should be held up.* He had asked Colonel House to take his place while he was away.' Mr. Baker knows of this important statement by the President to the Council, because he quotes the passage (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 290), but he omits from his quotation the sentence italicised. His omission of this sentence and his insertion in brackets of a passage not in the original *procès-verbal*, completely alter the sense of the original statement.

Furthermore, the President after his departure was fully informed by House's cables of the plans to hasten the economic and territorial terms to be embodied in a preliminary treaty when ready; there are clear references in House's cables of February 24, March 1, and March 4; President Wilson raised no objection, as might have been expected if he regarded these plans as likely to interfere with his policies.¹ After his return to Paris, at the first meeting of the Council on March 17 the President uttered not one word of protest, not any intimation that he disapproved of the Balfour resolutions.

A further charge of Mr. Baker should be reviewed. He regards the words '*inter alia*' suggested by Mr. Lansing as an addition to the resolution providing for the completion of the Treaty, as having a sinister intent and one likely to hamper Mr. Wilson's policy; he insinuates that they gave the Japanese an opportunity to initiate their Shantung claims.² Quite aside from this lapse in Mr. Baker's chronology, for the Japanese had advanced their claims some weeks previously, it is possible to find in Colonel House's diary a simpler explanation of Mr. Lansing's amendment without impugning the good faith of the Secretary of State. Colonel House states that he himself suggested these words so as to leave room for the introduction of the Covenant of the League into the preliminary treaty. Their purpose was to further Wilson's policy.

The papers of Colonel House, like the British Foreign Office Memorandum, furnish clear indication that, in making his charge of an intrigue, Mr. Baker has advanced assumptions and insinuations without a tittle of evidence.³ The House papers show Wilson discussing with House the

¹ In one cable, that of February 20, previous to the presentation of the Balfour resolutions, the President warns House against 'being hurried' into decisions. (See above, p. 336.) But the Balfour resolutions did not provide for decisions and the President made no objection to them.

² 'Here was where the Shantung settlement, so bitterly attacked in America, was begun — while Wilson was away.' Mr. Baker himself states, quoting documents, that on January 27, Wilson being present, the Japanese put forward their claim to German rights in Shantung. *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, I, 301, II, 229.

³ Mr. D. H. Miller writes of Mr. Baker's thesis: 'The effort to prove a plot where none existed could not well go further.' *The Drafting of the Covenant*, I, 98.

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very plans which Mr. Baker asserts 'would wreck the entire American scheme for the Peace.' They show House cabling to Wilson the progress of those plans through the Balfour resolutions, and in his cables of February 27 and March 4 (cited above) explaining how he hoped to push the future of the League. They show that in order to maintain a semblance of probability in his charges against the British, Mr. Baker has been forced to omit essential passages from the official record.

CHAPTER XI

CRISIS AND COMPROMISE

Clemenceau . . . had had a meeting with Lloyd George and the President all afternoon. I asked how they had gotten on. . . . 'Splendidly, we disagreed about everything.'

Colonel House's Diary, March 20, 1919

I

VARIOUS historians, especially those writing from an American point of view, have presented the Peace Conference as though it were a clear-cut conflict between two sets of ideals, personified by Clemenceau on the one hand and Wilson on the other; a conflict between the evil of the old European diplomatic system and the virtue of the new world idealism. Such a picture is attractive to those who will not try to understand the complexities of historical truth. In reality the Peace Conference was not nearly so simple. It was not so much a duel as a general *mêlée*, in which the representatives of each nation struggled to secure endorsement for their particular methods of ensuring the peace. The object of all was the same — to avoid a repetition of the four years of world devastation; their methods naturally were different, since each was faced by a different set of problems.

Inevitably each nation put forward a solution which was colored by self-interest. This was, in a sense, just as true of the United States as of France, Italy, or Great Britain. We sacrificed very little in announcing that we would take no territory (which we did not want), nor reparations (which we could not collect). Our interest lay entirely in assuring a régime of world tranquillity; our geographic position was such that we could advocate disarmament and arbitration with complete safety. Wilson's idealism was in line with a healthy *Realpolitik*.

But American methods did not fit so perfectly the peculiar problems of European nations, dominated as they were by geographical and historical factors. According to the American programme, we ourselves gave up nothing of value, but we asked the European nations to give up much that seemed to them the very essence of security. We might insist that the most certain prevention of war lay in disarmament and reconciliation. The French would reply that the British and Americans, protected by the Channel and the Atlantic, could afford so to argue; France had been invaded too often not to insist upon better guarantees than written promises. We might insist that it was good business to write off German Reparations as a bad debt. The Europeans replied: 'Shall we who were attacked, then pay the entire cost and let the aggressor go scatheless? Not until we have exhausted every possible chance of making him pay.'

Even if Allied leaders themselves agreed to the wisdom of American proposals, they were prevented from accepting them by the force of public opinion. Clemenceau was branded as a traitor because he refused to break up Germany; if he had yielded on the occupation of the Rhineland he would have been hurled from power and replaced by a more stubborn Premier. Lloyd George admitted that the public estimate of German capacity to pay was absurd, but he did not care to tell the electorate. Orlando would gladly have accepted a compromise solution of the Adriatic question; it was forbidden him by the political forces in Italy. The Prime Ministers were far from exercising supreme power. By arousing popular emotion during the war, an orthodox belligerent measure, they had created a Frankenstein monster which now held them helpless. They might compromise, if they possessed the skill, but they would not be permitted to yield.

It took time for the Americans to realize these essential facts. During the first month of the Conference, no firm

attempt was made to grapple with the vital issues. It was only during the process of intensive study in February and March that the force of European convictions became plain. Then suddenly, and before the President's return, in every technical commission and in the Supreme Council it was clear that no settlement at all could be reached unless every one made concessions. The Conference might sit until Doomsday, but no delegation would succeed in imposing what it regarded as the ideal solution.

During the first week of March Colonel House, whom Wilson had left in his place, faced these unavoidable facts. The moral he drew was that if the Conference appeared condemned to a settlement of compromise, and accordingly vicious, it could at least bestow upon Europe the benefit of a speedy decision. Better an unsatisfactory settlement in April than the same sort of settlement in June: sketch in the main lines of the Treaty at once, and leave it to the League to complete and if possible to correct. On March 6 an editorial, which was entirely in line with House's policy, appeared in the Paris *Daily Mail* to this effect:

'... The test of the forthcoming work of the chief Allied statesman will lie in the degree to which they can rapidly do practical justice to the Allied and Associated peoples and also to the enemy. As things stand, the greatest injustice towards Allied and enemy peoples alike, is delay in the conclusion of peace.

'Any statesman of sound sense and reasonable knowledge who has busied himself with the issues before the Peace Conference during the last two months, could sketch in twenty-four hours the main lines of a fair peace settlement. With the help of honest experts, he could fill in his sketch within a week. If the Allied statesmen cannot do jointly what most of them could do singly, they had better entrust one of their number with the task and leave him to do it.

'What would he do first? He would undoubtedly recognize that the foremost requirement is now to make peace with Germany. He would take the reports of Allied officers who have recently returned from Germany upon the conditions of that country and, in the light of them, would conclude that lack of food, lack of employment, lack of means of transport and lack of organization are likely to reduce the German people quickly to a state of chaotic anarchy unless remedies be applied. He would see that friendly peoples in Central Europe are in no better plight. He would recognize that, since effective remedies cannot be applied until the peace preliminaries are signed, the preliminaries must be presented at once to the enemy. To this end he would instruct the expert military, naval, economic, and political advisers of the Allied Governments to complete those preliminaries and would communicate them forthwith to the enemy representatives, insisting that they must be accepted within ten days of presentation.

'Upon their acceptance, he would send into Germany Allied military and civilian commissioners to see that the terms were carried out, on pain of complete suspension of the supplies which should be made available from the moment the preliminaries were signed.

'He would then settle in the light of the reports of the special commissions of the Conference such territorial questions between the Allies as are ripe for immediate treatment, having regard in each case to the principles of nationality and of government by the consent of the governed, and to the vital economic interests of the peoples concerned.

'Questions not ripe for immediate settlement he would refer to the Executive Council of the League of Nations, which should be appointed and begin to work pending the final revision of the Covenant.'

The problem was perhaps not quite so simple as the

writer of this leader made it to appear, but such a solution would have had the merit of ending the long delay. It would necessitate great concessions by the Americans, and House asked himself what might constitute reasonable compromise. In each case he based his final conclusion upon the advice of the American experts.

As regards Reparations, Colonel House's favorite solution was attractive economically, but quite impossible under existing political conditions. His original suggestion had been that a general indemnity syndicate should be created, composed of Allies, enemies, and neutrals, each contributing according to capacity. This syndicate should underwrite, to the extent that seemed economically and financially feasible, the cost of repairing the damage done by the war. This plan received little serious consideration, for it was entirely out of tune with the prevalent chorus of 'make Germany pay.' House's second solution was to write into the Treaty a lump sum for Reparations, within German capacity to pay, according to the judgment of financial experts and not inflated by political factors in Allied countries. If the French and British would not agree to the statement of a lump sum which the Americans regarded as reasonable, House was willing to postpone the decision by adopting the suggestion of John Foster Dulles, that the total amount of reparations be not stated in the Treaty, and that a commission be organized to determine at its leisure how much Germany owed under the terms of the pre-Armistice Agreement, how much she could pay, and by what methods. The solution was unquestionably bad, since it made Germany sign a blank check with every inducement to avoid work, for the more she worked the more she would have to pay. But it was better than writing an impossible sum into the Treaty. House worked hard but vainly with the British to persuade them to agree upon a definite but reasonable sum of reparations.

'Davis and I feel,' he wrote on March 16, 'and I so expressed myself to Balfour, that the wise thing to do would be to tell the British public that Germany is bankrupt and that the British financial experts and statesmen were mistaken in believing she could pay the enormous sums they and their public at one time had in mind. That if it were possible to get such an amount out of Germany, it would only be possible in the event the British would consent to lend the Germans an enormous sum in order to revive their commerce. If they did this, Germany would then become not only a competitor for British trade throughout the world, but would probably come near monopolizing it. It would be better therefore to accept Germany as a bankrupt and take what she could actually pay, or what was in sight, rather than create another British debt in order to place Germany in a condition to be a commercial rival. . . .

'*March 17, 1919:* Wiseman came again after lunch and said George was worried about the question of Reparation, both as to amount and as to how he was to satisfy the British public. The feature of my suggestion [to Wiseman] was that the sum of thirty billion dollars could be set as a maximum figure, and that a commission should meet once a year to determine how much Germany could pay the following year and also determine whether the amount of thirty billions was excessive for reparation demands. In this way the French and English could let Germany evade an impossible payment.'

But Mr. Lloyd George could not bring himself to naming any sum in the Treaty likely to disappoint Allied hopes, and he supported the French whose opposition to setting forth a lump sum was unyielding.¹ In these circumstances,

¹ 'At the time when this question of naming the sum was a burning one,' writes Mr. Lamont, 'Mr. Lloyd George summoned one or more of the financial delegates many times into conference with him and his own

House agreed with the American experts that it was necessary to fall back upon the *pis aller* of leaving the matter to a commission for later decision.

In regard to German boundaries, House followed the opinion of the experts of the American Inquiry to the effect that 'in the basin of the Saar a proposal to reestablish the frontier of 1814, with possible enlargements so as to include secure possession of the adjacent coal fields, may be entertained, irrespective of strategic considerations, as a suitable compensation (with due allowance on the German war indemnity) for the destruction of the French coal mines of Lens and Valenciennes.' House was determined that if possible the French should be persuaded to give political control of this region to the League for a period of years, so as to permit the inhabitants later to express their desires. He accepted a solution for the Rhine problem which also made use of the League: 'A buffer state,' he wrote, 'should be created for a period of five years and then the League of Nations should decide whether the buffer state should exercise self-determination or should continue for another five-year period.'

Colonel House laid himself open to severe criticism by thus

experts, and at one time I thought he had become convinced of the utility of the American programme. Then he began to turn the other way to M. Clemenceau's solution. We begged him not to do so. We even went so far as to declare that if he would go back to England and address the House of Commons as he alone could, pointing out boldly that his pre-election estimates as to Germany's capacity to pay were wrong, he would gain overwhelming support and a tremendous added political prestige. But he declined to do this — and who am I to say that Mr. Lloyd George, probably the most skilful politician of modern times, was in this particular situation impolitic? All I feel is, if at this critical juncture both M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George had had a little more confidence in their own strength they would have joined with President Wilson and settled this question of German indemnity once for all, thus avoiding, to a considerable measure, the terrible consequences of continued unsettlement that have plagued Europe and the whole world since the Peace Conference adjourned and left the German indemnity open.' *What Really Happened at Paris*, 267.

accepting what seemed like compromise to many who had not studied the detailed difficulties of the territorial problems. In his notes of the period Mr. Baker, who returned to Paris with the President on March 14, wrote: 'The Colonel would make peace quickly by giving the greedy ones all they want!' A comparison of the demands of the French with the suggested compromises does not entirely bear out the remark. 'No man in the Peace Conference,' wrote Mr. Steed, 'was more opposed than Colonel House to the idea of "giving the greedy ones all they wanted"; but no man knew better that mere obstinacy in defending abstract ideas, without considering where compromise was practically expedient and harmless, could only end by bringing Wilson into collision with facts, and by discrediting him while spoiling the peace.'¹ It was certainly true that House was convinced that no essential advantage would be gained by the Americans through another month of discussion. If compromise was necessary, it were best to compromise quickly. 'My main drive now,' he wrote on March 14, 'is for peace with Germany at the earliest possible moment.'

Another argument for compromise lay in the fact that President Wilson's position was far weaker in March than it had been in January. His visit to the United States, instead of consolidating American opinion behind his policy at Paris, had merely revealed the strength of the Senatorial opposition. The Republicans in Congress, already antagonized by the election manifesto and by the personnel of the Peace Commission, began to make a constitutional issue of what they termed the President's disregard of Senatorial prerogative. He failed to placate the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and public opinion was manifestly divided on the League of Nations. It was clear that the President could not carry the Covenant through the Senate without clarification and amendment, in particular an amendment relating to the Monroe Doctrine.

¹ Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 317.

Thus Wilson returned to Paris compelled to ask of the Peace Conference the favor of inserting in the Covenant clauses of peculiar interest to the United States. Was it likely that the Europeans would grant this favor, without exacting from him reciprocatory concessions of equal interest to France, Great Britain, and Italy?

II

The President landed at Brest in a mood quite hostile to any compromise. He was not himself inclined to yield to the Senate demand for amendments to the Covenant, and he was irritated by the unfriendly reaction to his declaration that the Covenant would be so intertwined with the Treaty that the two could not be separated.¹ He questioned House's belief that he would have to make broad concessions to France. Mr. Wilson was not fully impressed with the need for speed, and intimated that he thought the German Treaty should not be given precedence. Evidently he desired a complete world settlement.

'March 14, 1919: I went up on Wednesday evening,' wrote House, 'after our dinner and reception, on the President's special train to meet him at Brest. It was a hard trip and the weather was as bad as weather can be, even at Brest. . . .

'I had ample opportunity this morning to go over the entire situation with the President and to get from him his story of his visit to the United States. He said, "Your dinner to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was a failure as far as getting together was concerned." He spoke with considerable bitterness of the manner in which he was treated by some of the Senators. Knox and Lodge remained perfectly silent, refusing to ask any questions or to act in the

¹ In the Metropolitan Opera House, March 4. The statement sounded in his opponents' ears unpleasantly like a threat.

spirit in which the dinner was given. However, I said to the President that the dinner was a success from my viewpoint, which was that it checked criticism as to his supposed dictatorship and refusal to consult the Senate about foreign affairs. He admitted this. I said that it also had a good effect upon the people, even if it had failed to mollify the Senators themselves.

'The President comes back very militant and determined to put the League of Nations into the Peace Treaty.¹

'*March 17, 1919:* In talking with the President this morning, he insisted that peace should be made simultaneously with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. His thought was that Germany should be tied up with the settlements made with these countries. Since both Austria-Hungary and Turkey are being dismembered, this would delay peace for an interminable time and I thought another way out could be found. A clause could be put in the treaty with Germany binding her to accept the treaties which were subsequently to be made with the other states.

'I have asked David Miller and T. W. Gregory to give me their opinions as to the legality of this suggestion.'

One method of hastening the work President Wilson adopted enthusiastically. He agreed to give over the meetings of the Council of Ten, which had led to delay, and to continue the informal conversations at which Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and House were able to debate rapidly and effectively the critical issues, as they arose. Two days before the President's arrival House suggested this to Clemenceau: 'I made an appointment for the President, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George to meet here in my rooms on Friday, and to cut out the Quai d'Orsay meeting, which he readily promised

¹ A reference probably to the Senate resolution for separating League from Treaty, rather than to European opposition to putting the Covenant in the preliminary treaty.

to do.' On the afternoon of Wilson's arrival, March 14, was held what may be regarded as the first meeting of the 'Council of Four,' although on this occasion Orlando was absent. It took place in House's room in the Crillon.

'They remained together from three to five o'clock discussing the Western boundary question and the amount of reparation Germany should be forced to pay. During the latter part of the afternoon they had Montagu, Davis, and Loucheur on hand. I also had Tardieu and Mezes in the event they needed them.'

Thereafter, all the more important decisions of the Prime Ministers were taken at these informal meetings, although it was not until March 24 that they became sufficiently regular to assume the title of the 'Council of Four.' The method made for speed and efficiency. On the other hand, the meetings were conducted with such secrecy that, so far as the American delegation was concerned, it was impossible for even those whose work demanded exact knowledge to keep track of the progress of negotiations. No American secretary was present, and the *procès-verbal*, drafted by Sir Maurice Hankey, was not sent even to the American Peace Commissioners. Mr. Baker, who had been chosen by the American Commission to interpret the work of the Conference for the press correspondents, wrote to House even before the Council of Four began its regular secret sessions, insisting that, while he could not expect to get news direct from the President, he ought at least to be allowed access to the *procès-verbal*; as it was, he was compelled to gather information from his British friends.¹

As Mr. Wilson became involved in the discussions, he also realized the need of speed and the necessity of some sort of compromise. But neither the French nor the British were

¹ R. S. Baker to House, March 19, 1919.

quick to respond. It was with the greatest difficulty that Lloyd George was persuaded not to go back to London, on March 18, and then only as the result of a joint letter written by the President and signed by the other Prime Ministers.

'*March 17, 1919:* Wiseman came to tell me that . . . he had seen Lloyd George and explained the necessity of his remaining in Paris all of this week and next. I asked him to say to George that there were no political matters in England that could not be better attended to in Paris. It was here that the eyes of the world were focussed and if we did our work well or badly, quickly or slowly, we should be judged by results. George replied that if we would get the President to write him a letter requesting him to remain and would get Clemenceau and Orlando also to sign it, he thought he could put off going to London for two weeks.

'When I told the President this I handed him a pad and asked if he would not write the letter. . . . I had it typed while he was talking to the Economic Council. I then sent Frazier to the Ministry of War to get Clemenceau's signature and to the Hôtel Eduard VII for Orlando's. The letter was sent back by 2.30 and immediately sent to the Quai d'Orsay to be handed Lloyd George before the meeting. It was quick work. . . . His going would have meant delaying of peace for just so long as he remained away.'

Joint Letter to Mr. Lloyd George

PARIS, *March 17, 1919*

DEAR PRIME MINISTER:

It seems to us imperative, in order that the world may wait no longer for peace than is actually unavoidable, that you should remain in Paris until the chief questions connected with the peace are settled, and we earnestly beg that you will do so. If you can arrange to remain for another two

weeks we hope and believe that this all-important result can be attained.

We write this with a full comprehension of the very urgent matters that are calling you to England, and with a vivid consciousness of the sacrifice we are asking you to make.

Sincerely yours

WOODROW WILSON
G. CLEMENCEAU
V. E. ORLANDO

Lloyd George remained, but negotiations proceeded slowly. The differences between the British and French were in some cases quite as marked as between the French and Americans; even if President Wilson agreed to concessions he did not thereby ensure the unanimity necessary to completing the Treaty draft. The British objected yet more strongly than the Americans to the French demand for occupation of the Rhinelands, and they were not inclined to approve any concessions to France on her eastern border until the Anglo-French differences regarding Syria were arranged.

'Perhaps the most interesting feature of the day,' wrote House on March 20, 'was going with André Tardieu to call on Clemenceau at his request. He had had a meeting with Lloyd George and the President all afternoon. I asked how they had gotten on. . . . 'Splendidly, we disagreed about everything.'

'*March 22, 1919:* The President looked worn and tired. . . . I am discouraged at the outlook. We are not moving as rapidly now. From the look of things the crisis will soon be here. Rumbblings of discontent every day. The people want peace. Bolshevism is gaining ground everywhere. Hungary has just succumbed. We are sitting upon an open powder magazine and some day a spark may ignite it. . . .

'If the world were not in such a fluid state I should not object to matters going as deliberately as they have been going, but under present conditions we are gambling each day with the situation.

'*March 24, 1919:* The evidence is overwhelming that the public everywhere is getting weary of what is being done in Paris. It is not that we are taking too much time for normal conditions, but since the world is crumbling about us it is necessary to act with a celerity commensurate with the dangers that confront us.

'I saw the President for nearly an hour at his residence, and pointed out the necessity of forcing the Conference out of the rut into which it has fallen. He asked what I had to suggest. I said it was necessary to tell George, Clemenceau, and Orlando that immediate peace was not only imperative, but if we did not make it in a reasonable time we should find ourselves with a Peace Treaty and no one excepting ourselves to sign it. . . . I urged him to settle once and for all the question as to whether the League of Nations was to go into the peace Treaty.¹ Tell them that the Covenant for the League of Nations would either be written into the Treaty of Peace or we would have none of it; that the only excuse we could give for meddling in European or world affairs was a league of nations through which we hope to prevent wars. If that was not to be, then we would not care to mix again in their difficulties.

'The other three questions to be put to the Prime Ministers were: 1. The amount of reparation; 2. What was necessary to satisfy France and safeguard her future; 3. What should be the boundary lines between the old Austria-Hungary and Italy.

'I advised doing away with the Quai d'Orsay meetings and

¹ The complaint was again being voiced that the necessity of amending the Covenant was leading to delay, and a fresh demand was being made that the League be separated from the Treaty.

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EMIR FAISAL

YRABLU IITBACRBM

APR 1964

for him [Wilson] to meet with the Prime Ministers in continuous session until these three essentials to peace had been determined. He said he would do it. . . . The Quai d'Orsay meetings are at an end for the present, and the Prime Ministers and himself meet to-morrow at eleven to get at grips with the questions outlined.

'*March 27, 1919:* Suggested to the President that he make a statement regarding the Covenant and to say something which would refute the general belief which X and others have fostered, that peace was being delayed because the President wished to have the League of Nations included in the Peace Treaty.

'*April 2, 1919:* Last night and to-day I finished reading pages 83 to 167 of the diary. . . . It is sealed and placed in a safe deposit box. On reading over so many pages it reminds me of how very inconsistent a large part of the diary will appear and also what a false prophet I shall have made of myself in many instances. At the beginning of this last reading I predicted an early peace, even thought we might be ready as early as March 20 to ask the Germans to Versailles. It is now April 2 and we are no further along than we were the day this prediction was made, almost a month ago. . . .

'*April 4, 1919:* A long conference with Lord Robert Cecil about the situation as it exists to-day. We both see the world crumbling about our feet, and see the need not only for peace, but the lifting of all trade restrictions and the bringing the world back to the normal. Even after peace is made our trouble will not end, for it will be many weary months before it will be possible to start industries and get the currents of commerce properly flowing.'

III

The chief stumbling-blocks in the path of agreement were as always the problems of Germany's western frontier, Reparations, and the military security of France. On March 26,

Lloyd George assumed the leadership in the movement of protest against French claims by presenting a note entitled 'Some Considerations for the Peace Conference, before they finally draft their terms.' It was a skillful exposition of Wilson's own position, a protest against the peril involved in a peace of victory. 'Injustice, arrogance displayed in the hour of triumph will never be forgotten nor forgiven.' He proceeded to argue against the transfer of Germans to alien sovereignty, to underline the probability of driving Germany into the arms of Bolshevism, to ask for the admission of Germany to the League.

But Lloyd George was himself standing upon shaky ground. The French replied that his suggestions applied merely to Germany's Continental position. The concessions he suggested would not reconcile Germany. The Germans cared just as much about their colonies, their navy, their mercantile marine. Would the British agree to yield their own demands on these points which seemed vital to British security? If England's imperial position must be protected, the same was true of Continental France and of the new nations of Central Europe who would prove the last bulwark against the Bolshevism Lloyd George feared.

A solid working understanding between Lloyd George and Wilson in opposition to French claims was impossible, partly because of their differences in regard to reparations. They were hampered also by the atmosphere of Paris, where German war guilt was assumed as a proved fact; every one was afraid of being called pro-German. 'The position of the English and the Americans toward France,' writes Nitti, 'was such that every objection of theirs was bound to appear as an act of ill will, a pleading of the enemy's cause.'¹

In such circumstances Wilson and Lloyd George were led inevitably to compromise, although each yielded slowly and not without securing important concessions from France.

¹ Nitti, *The Wreck of Europe*, 114-15.

Colonel House's friendship for Clemenceau made him naturally an intermediary together with André Tardieu, who was Clemenceau's chief agent.¹ Later, House wrote of Tardieu: 'No man worked with more tireless energy and none had a better grasp of the delicate and complex problems brought before the Congress. He was not only invaluable to France, but to his associates from other countries as well. He was in all truth the one nearly indispensable man at the Conference.'

On March 17, three days after the return of the President, Clemenceau sent to House his statement of the French position on the problem of the Rhine and French security.

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, March 17, 1919

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I am sending you personally and confidentially a copy of the note which I have addressed this morning to MM. Wilson and Lloyd George.

Very affectionately yours

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

The above-mentioned note maintained the necessity of separating the left bank of the Rhine, in a political and economic sense, from the Reich, and establishing the military occupation of the Rhine by an interallied force. The French, however, would yield their demand for permanent occupation and agree to a date being set for evacuation (presumably after thirty years), provided that the left bank be completely demilitarized as well as a zone fifty kilometers east of the river; provided, also, that the Allies through a permanent commission of inspection retain the right to supervise the

¹ See Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty, passim*; H. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 309-11, 313-15, 317; C. T. Thompson, *The Peace Conference Day by Day*, 282 ff.

execution of conditions by Germany, and give to France the right to occupy the Rhine in case of non-fulfillment; provided, also, that France be granted her claims in the Saar and provided, finally, that Great Britain and the United States agree to consider as an act of aggression any entry of the German army into the demilitarized zone and in such case to bring military aid.

The suggestion of an Anglo-American guarantee to France had been made by Lloyd George to House during Wilson's absence.¹ It was repeated at the first meeting of the Premiers with the President on March 14. House proceeded to define it, and on March 20 took it to the French Prime Minister.

'*March 20, 1919:* . . . Clemenceau read it with keen delight and substituted but one word, which was "attack" instead of "invasion." . . . I have my doubts as to the Senate accepting such a treaty, but that is to be seen. Meanwhile it satisfied Clemenceau and we can get on with the real business of the Conference. It is practically promising only what we promise to do in the League of Nations, but since Clemenceau does not believe in the League of Nations it may be necessary to give him a treaty on the outside.'

Colonel House's draft, after its approval by Clemenceau, was submitted to Lloyd George and Balfour, who also accepted it in principle. By March 27 it was recognized as an essential part of the compromise. It read as follows:

'Because of the havoc which Germany has brought upon the world by her attacks upon Belgium and France in 1914, and in order to prevent as far as possible such another disaster to humanity, we hereby solemnly pledge to one another our immediate military, financial, economic and moral sup-

¹ See *supra*, p. 360.

port of and to one another in the event Germany should at any time make a like unprovoked and unwarranted attack against either one or more of the subscribing Powers.'¹

'March 27, 1919: In thinking about this matter to-day,' wrote House, 'I thought I ought to call the President's attention to the perils of such a treaty. Among other things, it would be looked upon as a direct blow at the League of Nations. The League is supposed to do just what this treaty proposed, and if it were necessary for the nations to make such treaties, then why the League of Nations? I did not shake him, for . . . he committed himself to Clemenceau and he does not wish to withdraw his promise, a position which I thoroughly commend.'

Agreement, however, was still far distant. Lloyd George and the President both were firm in their opposition to a thirty-year occupation of the Rhinelands, and the President refused to approve French annexation of the Saar. On March 28 the crisis of disagreement seemed acute:

'Lloyd George asked me to have lunch with him,' wrote House on that day, 'for the purpose of discussing the Russian question. However, when I got there he had just returned from the President's house and showed signs of considerable excitement. It seems that the long-expected row between either Clemenceau and the President, or Lloyd George and Clemenceau, had actually come.'

¹ President Wilson changed the language of House's draft, omitting reference to 'the havoc which Germany has brought upon the world' and summarizing the gist of the proposal in a brief note which he gave to the French Government on March 28, as follows: 'In a separate treaty by the United States, a pledge by the United States, subject to the approval of the Executive Council of the League of Nations, to come immediately to the assistance of France as soon as any unprovoked movement of aggression against her is made by Germany.' The official French attitude is admirably expressed by Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 202 ff.

Upon this occasion it was the Saar that caused the flare-up, Mr. Wilson asserting that no one had ever heard of the Saar until after the Armistice, and Clemenceau rejoicing with an intimation that the President laid himself open to the charge of pro-Germanism¹ and a hint that no French Prime Minister could sign a treaty which did not satisfy France's claim to the Saar.

'Then if France does not get what she wishes,' said the President, 'she will refuse to act with us. In that event do you wish me to return home?'

'I do not wish you to go home,' said Clemenceau, 'but I intend to do so myself,' and left the house.

The following day the French Prime Minister sent Tardieu to Colonel House, who asked Mr. Charles H. Haskins to work out with Tardieu a solution of the Saar problem that would assure the French unhampered control of the coal mines as fair reparation for the damage done to the French mines, but would not transfer a large German population to French sovereignty. The President was slow to agree to the suggestion upon which Haskins, Tardieu, and Headlam-Morley, representing the British, finally settled: that a special administrative and political régime must be applied to the district, so as not to interfere with French operation of the mines.

¹ Cf. the following statement by Dr. Isaiah Bowman, of the American Delegation, in *What Really Happened at Paris*, 464:

'Three of us were asked to call at the President's house, and on the following morning at eleven o'clock we arrived. . . . He remarked: "Gentlemen, I am in trouble and I have sent for you to help me out. The matter is this: the French want the whole left bank of the Rhine. I told M. Clemenceau that I could not consent to such a solution of the problem. He became very much excited and then demanded ownership of the Saar Basin. I told him I could not agree to that either because it would mean giving 300,000 Germans to France. . . . I do not know whether I shall see M. Clemenceau again. I do not know whether he will return to the meeting this afternoon. In fact, I do not know whether the Peace Conference will continue. M. Clemenceau called me a pro-German and abruptly left the room."

'*March 28, 1919:* I asked the President,' wrote House, 'to bring his position on the French [Saar] boundary proposals into harmony with the British. The British and ourselves are practically in agreement, therefore it would be a tactical mistake to have the United States take a stand in which she was not supported by Great Britain. I advised yielding a little in order to secure harmony, so that the accusation could not be made that we were unreasonable. He promised to do this.

'*April 2, 1919:* The President tried to get me to admit that the solution which our experts have proposed and which Clemenceau might be willing to take as to the Saar Valley was inconsistent with the Fourteen Points. I replied that there were many who thought otherwise.'

IV

At the same moment that the problem of the Saar thus seemed to have reached a deadlock, the question of Reparations was again referred to the Council of Four by the experts. Concessions had been made on both sides; the French and British agreed that indirect war costs should be excluded from the Reparations bill; President Wilson agreed to the arguments of General Smuts and approved the inclusion of pensions, which the American experts had opposed. There remained the question of naming a definite lump sum in the Treaty. This the French consistently opposed, with the support of Mr. Lloyd George. The French Minister for Finance, M. Klotz, thus summarized the French position:

'The Germans are obliged and have pledged themselves to repair the damages. We do not know to-day what such reparation will cost. Improvised estimates would be imprudent. The only system is the following: The Reparations Commission will fix the amount — when it has all the facts. Then according to the amount of the debt thus ascertained,

it will settle the figure of the annuities and the length of payment.'¹

Unwillingly, President Wilson yielded again and advised the American experts Mr. Davis, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Baruch, and Mr. McCormick not to insist upon the statement of a definite sum in the Treaty. At this moment the President, worn out physically and nervously, suffered a severe attack of influenza. On the evening of April 3 he was forced to his bedroom, where he was confined during the following four and a half days, not meeting the Prime Ministers again until the afternoon of April 8. He insisted that negotiations should not be delayed, and asked Colonel House to take his place in the Council of Four.

The problem of Reparations came up on the morning of April 5 and the meeting proved to be, as Sir Maurice Hankey prophesied in a note to House, 'a turning-point in the thorny question.' The conference began inauspiciously, for it soon developed that, whereas the American experts believed they had already reached an agreement on principle, the British and French expected more concessions. The Americans understood that, while no definite sum would be named in the Treaty, the sum which the Reparations Commission would be empowered to name after the lapse of two years would not be based upon the total amount of the damage, but rather upon German capacity to pay within a period of thirty years.²

The French refused, however, to permit the Reparations

¹ Tardieu, *The Truth about the Treaty*, 296.

² As Mr. Davis argued at the afternoon meeting, the experts had acted on the principle that Germany could not pay all she owed: 'The basis of their calculations,' he said, 'was, therefore, always the amount that Germany could pay, and the limiting period had generally been taken as from thirty to thirty-five years. After that period the amount became so large that the annual installments were swallowed up in interest.'

Commission to take into account German capacity to pay, when evaluating damages, and insisted that the sum to be paid could by no means be limited to the amount recoverable in thirty years. To the disappointment of the Americans, who had thought themselves in agreement with the British, Mr. Lloyd George also opposed the principle of a thirty-year limitation, although 'if she [Germany] can pay in that time it is better than in forty years.' Long discussion followed, Mr. Davis, supported by Colonel House, insisting that 'you had either to fix for the Commission a limitation of years or a maximum of money to be paid.'

Thus at the moment when in House's words 'agreement appeared imminent,' deadlock once more threatened.

As the afternoon session opened, matters appeared worse rather than better because of the unwillingness of the British to grant the special priority to the Belgians, which the Americans from the first had insisted was due them on account of the illegal invasion, and for which House had been working for more than a month. 'Our experts,' he wrote, 'have been instructed not to argue the question of Belgium, but to put our position to their associates and, if they decline to come to it, to make a minority report which we will give to the Belgians and which we will take occasion to have published.' In the end Belgian priority was secured.

But it was obviously fruitless to continue the fight for giving the Reparations Commission power to name a sum which Germany could pay in thirty years. Clemenceau was definite and final on this point.

'I do not accept,' he said, 'that the Commission should have power to declare the capacity of payment of Germany. I would say this: Germany owes me X for damages to persons and property. The Governments will have the right to reduce that sum in the course of years if they deem it just. But we are not prepared to accept any reduction now. We

shall see what is possible and what is not, we shall take into account the question of accumulated interest (we may have to abandon our claim to interest altogether). We are willing to let the door [remain] open to every liberal solution.

'But I ask, in the name of the French Government, after consultation with my colleagues, that what the enemy owes to us should be declared (if not by means of — sum, at least by determining categories of damages to be compensated for). We shall retain our faculty of allowing time to pay. Let us fix a limit of thirty years, as thought desirable by most of us. If everything has not been paid for during thirty years, then the Commission will have the right to extend the period.'

Recognizing that the French were determined that German capacity to pay should not be allowed to affect the bill rendered, regardless of what was later collected, House determined to crystallize Clemenceau's proposition in a draft article:

'I had his remarks carefully written, then typed, and it is on that basis that our experts will go into the Conference tomorrow and report to us on Monday.'

This draft stated merely that 'the amount of damages, *as set forth in the specific categories annexed hereto* for which compensation is to be made, shall be determined by an Inter-Allied Commission. . . . The findings of this Commission as to the amount of damages shall be concluded and communicated to the Enemy States on or before May 1st, 1921. The schedule of payments to be made by the Enemy States shall be set forth *by this Commission*, taking into account, *in the fixation of the time for payment*, their capacity for payment.'

The result represented a yielding all along the line from

the American view. Colonel House, who kept in continual touch with Wilson, regarded the draft of April 5 as the last concession and seemed inclined to break off negotiations if anything more were asked by the French.

'I went in and out of the President's room at various intervals,' he wrote, 'so as to keep him informed as to the progress we were making.¹ . . . I suggested that in the event there was no agreement by the end of next week [April 12], he draw up a statement of what the United States is willing to sign in the way of a peace treaty, and give the Allies notice that unless they can come near our way of thinking we would go home immediately and let them make whatever peace seems to them best. My suggestion was to do this gently and in the mildest possible tone, but firmly.'

Wilson himself was evidently losing patience, fearing that with each concession on the part of the United States new demands would arise. On Sunday, April 6, he was sufficiently recovered to receive the American Commissioners in his room.

'Went to Versailles to lunch,' wrote House, 'but had hardly gotten there before the President telephoned he would like to see me at four o'clock. He had our fellow Commissioners there and we discussed at great length the best possible means of speeding up the Peace Conference. It was determined that if nothing happened within the next few days, the President would say to the Prime Ministers that unless peace was made according to their promises, which were to conform to the principles of the Fourteen Points, he would either have to go home or he would insist upon having the conferences in the open; in other words, to have

¹ These meetings of the Council of Four were held in the President's house.

Plenary Sessions with the delegates of all the smaller Powers sitting in.'

Colonel House urged, however, that the Reparations draft of April 5 should be accepted, if no more changes were asked. The moment of demanding American amendments to the Covenant of the League was at hand, and if the Americans went home the entire basis of a settlement would be destroyed. Two days before, House had opened the heart of his attitude to Lamont and Davis: 'I told them that in my opinion it was more important to bring about peace quickly than it was to haggle over details; that I would rather see an immediate peace and the world brought to order than I would to see a better peace and delay.' Hence on Sunday he wrote: 'I took up with the President the question of Reparations which the experts have been working on to-day, and got him in agreement with the plan, with slight modifications which they had worked out.'

More delays followed, and the afternoon meeting of April 7 did not complete the draft; although no principles were affected, long consideration of verbal niceties filled the session. House himself lost patience and left the meeting, entrusting the American case to the experts.

'It was the most footless,' he wrote, 'of many footless meetings. We had agreed absolutely upon the terms of reparations. Loucheur, after a draft of the terms had been prepared, told Davis that Clemenceau had read and approved it *in toto*. This was in response to my endeavor to have the draft approved without the crossing of a *t* or the dotting of an *i*. . . . Loucheur told me time and again after we had accepted and voted over a few verbal and unimportant changes, that it was the last, and yet, when the very next sentence was read, suggestions for changes would be made. . . . At six o'clock I left.

'I crossed the street¹ to tell the President about the meeting and he thoroughly approved what I had done. We wasted the entire afternoon, accomplishing nothing, for the text when finished was practically what it was when we went into the meeting. Any drafting committee could have done it better. This is what makes one so impatient at the whole procedure of the Conference. Instead of drawing the picture with big lines, they are drawing it like an etching. If the world was not aflame, this would be permissible, but it is almost suicidal in times like these to try to write a treaty of peace, embracing so many varied and intricate subjects, with such methods. . . .

'The President was thoroughly discouraged when we talked the matter over and wondered what the outcome was to be.'

The extent of Wilson's discouragement may be indicated by the fact that early in the morning of April 7 a cable was sent at his order to determine how soon the *George Washington* could be sent to France:

Admiral Benson to Navy Department

[Cablegram]

April 7, 1919

What is earliest possible date U.S.S. *George Washington* can sail for Brest, France, and what is probable earliest date of arrival Brest? President desires movements this vessel expedited. Carefully conceal fact that any communication on this subject has been received. No distribution for this dispatch except officers actually concerned.

BENSON

The sending of this telegram has been frequently repre-

¹ The meeting was being held in Lloyd George's apartment in the rue Nitot, opposite the President's house.

sented as an effective threat, which immediately reduced the French and British to an attitude of abject submission to American demands, and thus proved to be a turning-point in the Conference.¹ Nothing of the sort is apparent in the records. No further change of importance was made in the Reparations draft, and it was Mr. Wilson and not the French or British who made concessions during the following four days, in the discussions on the Saar and Rhinelands. Wilson himself evidently regarded the cable as an incident of small importance, for although he was in constant personal touch with House and discussed the attitude which the Colonel should take as the President's representative in the Council of Four the next day, House says nothing of the cable in his diary. With these facts in mind, we may assume that the President sent the cable merely as a precautionary measure, so as to be able later to utilize the *George Washington's* presence in Brest as a threat; this is the more likely in that the cable was sent almost immediately after the meeting with the Commissioners Sunday afternoon, where it was decided 'that if nothing happened within the next few days,' Wilson would tell the Prime Ministers that he 'would have to go home' or have the conferences in the open.

As it turned out, the Reparations compromise drafted on

¹ Thus Mr. Baker says (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, II, 61): 'The President's bold gesture had cleared the air, and there was apparent a new effort to get together.' And Mr. Creel (*The War, the World, and Wilson*, 211) says: 'On April 7th the President struggled to his feet and faced the Council in what every one recognized as a final test of strength. . . . An agreement must be reached once for all. If a peace of justice, he would remain; if a peace of greed, then he would leave. . . . The *George Washington* was in Brooklyn. By wireless the President ordered it to come to Brest at once. The gesture was conclusive as far as England and France were concerned. Lloyd George swung over instantly to the President's side.'

It should be noted that the President did not meet the Council at all on April 7, and that the cable for the *George Washington*, so far from swinging Lloyd George 'over instantly to the President's side,' apparently left him unaffected, for in the discussions of April 8 he opposed Wilson and supported the French in the vital matter of the Saar.

April 5, to which Wilson gave his tentative approval on April 6, formed finally the basis of the Reparations clauses; the Reparations Commission was not to have the power to declare Germany's capacity, but merely to determine the amount of damages as set forth in the specific categories. To this Wilson agreed, and one chief element of discord and delay was eliminated.

'April 8, 1919: The President,' wrote House, 'met with the three Prime Ministers in the afternoon and, much to my delight, they came to a tentative settlement of the question of Reparations. The President yielded more than I thought he would, but not more, I think, than the occasion required. We had a long talk over the telephone about it to-night.'

Compromise followed on the other points. On the morning of April 8, Lloyd George suggested to the Four that the Saar Valley should not be annexed to France, but should be formed into a neutral state, 'a kind of Luxemburg. . . . He would make this district bigger than the Saar Valley, enlarging it so as to bring in the industrial section upon which the Saar Valley depended. . . . He would make it an independent state in the customs union of France with its own parliament.'

Colonel House was not greatly taken with this plan, although he agreed that if the suggested state were placed under the protection of the League and not economically united to France it should be considered. In the afternoon, Wilson returned to the Council and refused absolutely any alienation of the Saar from Germany. He would concede the mines to France, and meet the difficulties certain to arise from German ownership of the soil and French ownership of the sub-soil, by the institution of a mixed commission of arbitration.

From this suggestion of a commission sprang the final

solution, upon which Tardieu and Haskins worked busily and to which they finally won the President. On the afternoon of April 9, Wilson suggested to the Council that no mandate of administration should be granted to France, but that German sovereignty should be suspended for fifteen years, during which period an administrative commission under the League should have full rights in the Saar. A plebiscite should be taken at the end of fifteen years to determine the ultimate sovereignty of the Saar. Clemenceau agreed and the project was adopted by the Council on the morning of April 10.

There remained the question of the Rhine, toward the settlement of which progress had been made through informal discussion during the week of the President's illness. He and Lloyd George had earlier agreed that the left bank and the zone of fifty kilometers on the right bank should be demilitarized and that the United States and Great Britain would promise to protect France from any aggression by Germany; they would not, however, consider a political separation of the left bank from Germany even for a limited period and they were slow to approve the occupation of the line of the Rhine by an interallied army. Clemenceau yielded slowly. He had to face the militant disapproval of Foch and a strong political group, including Poincaré himself, which agreed that it would be dangerous to set a date for the evacuation of the occupied territory previous to Germany's fulfillment of all the conditions of the Treaty, including Reparations.¹ By April 14, Clemenceau indicated to House the basis of possible agreement.

'He said,' wrote Colonel House, 'he would agree to the President's terms for the protection of France and the west

¹ See the detailed letters of M. Poincaré in *Le Temps*, September 12, 1921, and after. The French, who had earlier based their demand for occupation upon the plea of security, now asked for it as a gage ensuring payment of Reparations.

bank of the Rhine. It was not what he wanted, but with the guarantee of the United States he thought it sufficient. He would have to fight Foch and his other Marshals, but he was willing to make the fight provided the President would agree to let the French occupy three strata of German territory. The first stratum to include Coblenz, the second, Mainz, and the third would come closer to the French frontier. He said in the Treaty of '71 Germany insisted upon occupying France for five years or until the indemnity was paid. The indemnity was paid sooner, therefore the troops were withdrawn sooner; nevertheless, it set a precedent for his demand.'

House took up the suggested compromise on the following day with President Wilson, who decided that Clemenceau's proposals could be accepted.

'The President made a wry face over some of it,' wrote House, 'particularly the three five-year periods of occupation, but he agreed to it all. . . .

'I went to the Ministry of War to see Clemenceau immediately after the President left. I said to him, "I am the bearer of good news. The President has consented to all that you asked of me yesterday." He grasped both my hands and then embraced me. . . .

'Baker and others of our *entourage* have been after me for several days concerning attacks in the French Press, not only against the President but against the United States. I told Clemenceau about this and said that I cared nothing about it individually, but I did care about the good relations between the United States and France and I hoped he would stop it. He summoned his secretary and told him in French, with much emphasis, that all attacks of every description on President Wilson and the United States must cease; that our relations were of the very best and that there was no

disagreement between our two countries upon the questions before the Peace Conference.'

The effect was magical. All the Parisian papers appeared on the morning of the 16th with the most enthusiastic praise of President Wilson.

The agreement on the Rhine occupation was not formally approved by Lloyd George before April 22, but from the 15th on, it was clear that the crisis had passed and that the Treaty would be ready for the German delegates who had been summoned to appear at Versailles.

Thus on three major problems Wilson made such far-reaching concessions that many, if not most, liberals accused him of surrendering the Fourteen Points. By consenting to alienate the Saar from Germany for at least fifteen years, by approving the occupation of the Rhine and an interallied commission of military control, and by failing to write a definite sum of reparations based upon the pre-Armistice Agreement, the Allied and Associated Powers had certainly given the Germans the opportunity to argue that the Treaty was founded upon the desire to destroy the economic and political strength of Germany, rather than upon the declared war aims of President Wilson.

In one respect the Americans made a concession which was probably unnecessary and which returned to haunt Europe. The American experts originally planned to connect the Reparations clauses directly with the pre-Armistice Agreement, and this purpose was partially fulfilled by the language of Article 232: 'The Allied and Associated Governments, however, require, and Germany undertakes, that she will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers. . . .' This was merely repeating the pre-Armistice Agreement, the same undertaking that Germany had agreed to in November at the time she asked for an armistice. By this clause the

Allies would have been entitled to all that Germany could pay. If there had been nothing else, Germany could not later have contended that there was any connection between reparations and war guilt.

Unfortunately the French insisted upon a clear declaration of German responsibility for all the costs of the war which, they averred, Germany had imposed upon them. Hence Article 231: 'The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.' This seemed to the Germans like a confession, the truth of which they could not admit, extracted from them by force. It also led them to connect reparations with war guilt — a quite unnecessary connection, since in the pre-Armistice Agreement, while still a free agent, Germany promised reparation. The Germans were thus given a basis for the argument that if they could prove their innocence of war guilt they ought to be freed from the responsibility for reparation. This article, more than any other in the Treaty, stimulated sentimental discontent in Germany and the demand for its revision.

But however unfortunate the decisions made by the Council of Four during the month of crisis, it is difficult to see how otherwise agreement could have been reached and the régime of disastrous uncertainty ended.

v

It is impossible to understand the concessions which President Wilson made to the French and the British without keeping in mind his determination that the Covenant of the League should be in the Treaty, and also the necessity, imposed upon him by American opinion, of asking for amendments to the draft Covenant. The generalization that he

traded the League against French and British demands is rather too bald to express the real atmosphere. But it is true that he believed the League to be of supreme importance, the one factor that would mitigate the necessary evils of the territorial and economic settlements. This the Europeans realized and it strengthened their position.

It is also true that Wilson finally secured at Paris the sort of League he hoped for, in the face of strong opposition. The price he paid for it was heavy, and therein lies the tragedy of his later failure to carry the Covenant through the United States Senate. There might have been great moral value in a firm insistence upon the Fourteen Points, even though it had led to a break with our Associates in the war and had ruined the League. But to compromise with the Europeans on the Treaty and then fail to secure the Senate's endorsement of the League, meant not merely disaster for his whole policy, but the bankruptcy of the liberal movement in the United States of which he had been the leader.

Colonel House was ready to compromise with the French and the British (perhaps more ready than the President), but only provided the League were created and the Senate persuaded to approve it, for he regarded American participation as vital. From the moment of Wilson's return to France on March 14, he devoted himself chiefly to the work of revising the Covenant so as to meet American objections. Obviously this could not be successfully carried through without the help of the British and Italians and at least the passive approval of the French. At first Wilson was not inclined to consider seriously Senatorial objections, which were chiefly concentrated upon the need of excluding domestic questions from the purview of the League and a specific recognition of the Monroe Doctrine. House was fortunate in the intimacy of his friendship with Lord Robert Cecil, who was determined to omit no step that might establish the success of the League and who understood the need of meeting Senatorial opposition.

Sir William Wiseman later wrote that during the last twelve weeks of the Peace Conference 'Colonel House's main interest lay in methodical preparation for the setting up of the League. I remember the daily conferences he had with Lord Robert Cecil and Sir Eric Drummond, who had been selected as the first Secretary-General of the League.' House kept in close touch also with the representatives of the neutral powers, who were asked to present their comments on the draft Covenant.

'When I left Balfour,' wrote House on March 16, 'I crossed the street for a conference with the President and Lord Robert Cecil. We were together for an hour and a half, going over the Covenant for the League of Nations and discussing how it should be amended if at all. I am in favor of some amendments and some clarifications. By doing this it will make the Covenant a better instrument and will meet many of the objections of our Senate. The President . . . desires to leave it as it is, saying that any change will be hailed in the United States as yielding to the Senate, and he believes it will lessen rather than increase the chances of ratification. . . .

'*March 18, 1919:* Lord Robert Cecil and I had a long session concerning the amendments which we think the League of Nations might profitably add to the different articles of the Covenant. This meeting was preparatory to the after-dinner conference which we had with the President to-night. David Miller was also present. We dined with the President at the early hour of seven. . . .

'Our meeting was fairly successful. We agreed upon a number of changes. The President was more reasonable than he was the other day as to meeting the wishes of the Senate, but we found it nearly impossible to write what the Senate desires into the Covenant and for reasons which are entirely sufficient. We are perfectly willing to adopt them if the bal-

ance of the world would accept them, and if they do not cause more difficulties than they cure. If a special reservation of the Monroe Doctrine is made, Japan may want a reservation made regarding a sphere of influence in Asia, and other nations will ask for similar concessions, and there is no telling where it would end. If a statement is made that it is not intended to interfere in domestic affairs, this would please our Senators from the Pacific Slope, but it would displease all the Senators of pro-Irish tendencies, for they would declare that it was done at the instance of the English in order to keep the Irish question forever out of the League of Nations.

'We are not trying to act in an arbitrary way, but are sincerely desirous of meeting the views of those Senators who really have serious objections, but who do not understand our difficulties. No one can understand them without being here to formulate a Covenant.

'*March 21, 1919:* There was another meeting of the Neutrals with our Committee for the League of Nations. . . . These meetings have been a great success. The Neutrals seem happy to have had a hearing and we have given them all the time they desired. The amendments they have offered have usually been sensible. . . . There are no "long-distance" talkers among them. They had their papers well prepared and everything has gone expeditiously. Some of the prima donnas from the Great Powers might well take lessons from them.'

Formal revision of the Covenant was undertaken by the Commission at three meetings, on March 22, 24, and 26. The American demand for the exclusion of domestic questions from the control of the League was approved in principle; the Commission also agreed to Wilson's request that a member of the League might withdraw after giving two years' notice. Both of these changes were vital if Senate opposition were to be weakened, and it was noticeable that the

British and the Italians offered the heartiest support. The French, on the other hand, not merely objected to the facilitating of withdrawal, but asked for the creation of a permanent commission of military control under the League, which would almost certainly have ensured the rejection of the Covenant by the Senate. On this point also the British and Italians supported Wilson and the French suggestion was vetoed.

Certain of the more serious amendments were left for informal consideration before being taken up by the Commission, among them the proposal of the Japanese for a sentence in the Preamble declaring the equality of nations, and the American amendment on the Monroe Doctrine. In the mean time a revising committee was appointed to throw the draft articles into final form, and a committee to decide upon the site of the League. House was placed upon both.

'March 27, 1919: To show what a nimble mind the President has,' wrote House, 'it amused those of us near him last night to hear him state that he wanted to appoint "the old drafting committee." When he reached this point in the sentence, I slipped a memorandum under his eye giving a new drafting committee which Cecil and I had just agreed upon and which did not include any of the old committee excepting Cecil. The President just glanced at the memorandum and continued his sentence without a halt, "but I think it would be an imposition to ask them to serve again, therefore I name the following." He then looked down the list and read it as we had prepared it. I wondered how many had seen this little by-play, and I wondered how many saw the inconsistency of his remarks when Lord Robert Cecil was included in the new list, he having been on the old. . . .

'A great many visitors this afternoon, among them Viscount Chinda and Baron Makino. They are having no end of trouble with Hughes of Australia. He will not consent to anything in the way of satisfying Japan's desires. He

threatens if anything is passed by our Committee, he will bring it up at the Plenary Conference.'

The committee upon the site of the League of Nations, of which House was chairman, reached its decision without difficulty. As a matter of sentiment many would have been glad to have it placed in Brussels, as a gesture of reparation for the wanton attack on Belgium and the sufferings that she endured therefrom; a frequently rehearsed fable has made President Wilson solely responsible for the rejection of Brussels in favor of Geneva. Colonel House's papers make it clear that the committee were convinced that the League must have its seat in a neutral country, and that President Wilson exercised no direct influence in reaching a decision, except as his views were expressed by House.

'*March 29, 1919:* I called a meeting of the sub-Committee of the League of Nations which is to select a site for the seat of the League. There was no discussion, for we were all in favor of Geneva. I suggested that General Smuts be appointed to represent us in the negotiations with Switzerland so we may obtain the necessary concessions, and that we should not permit Switzerland to donate the ground desired, but that the League should pay for it. Switzerland was too small and we were too large to require even so small a sacrifice. This was agreed to by all. . . .

'I asked Professor Rappard later in the day to get up a list of the different pieces of ground which he thought might be available. I have in mind a park of about 1000 acres, within easy distance of Geneva by road and lake, and a beautiful water gate which might well be made a memorial to those who fought and died in the great World War. . . .

'There has been considerable difference between the Japanese delegates and Prime Minister Hughes of Australia concerning the resolution which the Japanese desire to have

included in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Hughes insists that nothing shall go in, no matter how mild and inoffensive. If anything is attempted, his purpose is to make a speech at the Plenary Conference and to raise a storm of protest not only in the Dominions but in the western part of the United States. I suggested to Smuts that we talk it out with Makino, who is one of the committee who came this morning to select a site for the League of Nations. Orlando is the other member.

'I told Makino frankly that while we would agree to the pallid formula they desired, yet unless Hughes promised not to make trouble we would be against putting it in. Smuts took the same position. I urged Makino to let the matter drop for the moment. I took this occasion to call his attention to the virulent abuse of the United States in which the Japanese Press were now indulging. The reason for this, he told me, was that they thought we were objecting to the clause in the Covenant which they, the Japanese delegates, had proposed. He promised to let their people know just where the trouble lay.

'April 2, 1919: Dr. Wellington Koo came to find what was being done concerning Kiau Chau. He is afraid that if the Covenant has an article concerning the Monroe Doctrine it might leave a loophole for the Japanese in their contention for a sphere of influence in Asia.'

VI

The chief objection to inserting a recognition or endorsement of the Monroe Doctrine in the Covenant was that it placed the United States in a special position. The French delegates, Bourgeois and Larnaude, contended that such an amendment might prevent action of the League in the Western Hemisphere and, conversely, might relieve the United States from the obligation to participate in the settlement of European affairs decided upon by the League. If

the Monroe Doctrine 'was not inconsistent with the terms of the Covenant,' Larnaude argued, 'it was unnecessary to refer to it. What was unnecessary might be dangerous. Relying on the special mention of the Monroe Doctrine in the Covenant, the United States might some day assert that the Doctrine forbade some act of intervention decided upon by the other members of the League.'

The British seemed thoroughly in favor of the proposed amendment designed to ensure the Monroe Doctrine, especially in view of the general conviction that without it the Senate would refuse to approve the Covenant. They were anxious, however, before endorsing this special demand of the United States, to reach some understanding regarding the future naval policies of Great Britain and the United States.

To the surprise of many and the undoubted relief of the British, President Wilson had not raised the question of the Freedom of the Seas, despite the fact that this formed one of the Fourteen Points and that Lloyd George had written to Colonel House at the time of the Armistice that the British were willing to discuss it. Not a few, including House himself, were convinced that, unless the Conference undertook a codification of maritime law which should endorse the principle of the immunity of private property at sea in time of war, future difficulties between the United States and Great Britain would be certain. The President, however, avoided the issue and thereby escaped what would doubtless have proved a most acrid controversy with the British.¹ Grateful

¹ Wilson himself explained his policy on the ground that under the League there would be no more wars except those conducted by the League against an 'outlaw' state, and therefore no neutrals. Hence the problem of the interference with neutral trade would not arise. The explanation is not entirely satisfactory, for the League could not be an absolute assurance against 'private wars,' and in any such it is certain that the same interference with neutral trade would take place as that against which the United States protested in 1915 and 1916.

for this, Mr. Lloyd George was none the less anxious to receive a more positive endorsement of Great Britain's special maritime position, perhaps a guarantee that the United States would not push naval competition to a point where they would threaten the supremacy of the British on the seas. Evidently the British naval experts were troubled by the prospect of American strength that would result from the programme of 1916. Long conversations took place between the British and American naval experts, which may be regarded as the genesis of the Washington Conference of 1921.

At the request of the President as well as of the British, House kept in close touch with Admiral Benson, who represented the United States in these conversations, and with Secretary Daniels who had come to Paris for a brief visit. He agreed entirely with Benson that it was impossible at this time to promise that the American fleet should always be inferior to the British, and that the United States could not discontinue the programme already under way without reciprocal concessions by the British. On the other hand, as he said to Benson, 'if the League of Nations was to have a chance of life it would not do to start its existence by increasing armaments instead of diminishing them.'

Although these discussions remained entirely unknown to the public, the problem was one of the most serious and delicate of the entire Peace Conference. If the British insisted upon settling the whole question before the League was approved and the Treaty signed, the Conference threatened to be prolonged indefinitely. House suggested that both nations should agree to stop building, after the existing programmes were completed, so that the two navies would retain the same relative strength. He insisted that any specific agreement as to future building programmes must be left until later.

The critical meeting of the League of Nations Committee

came upon April 10, and Cecil and House worked anxiously to reach an understanding so that nothing might interfere with the passing of the American amendment on the Monroe Doctrine. At House's suggestion, Lord Robert drafted a letter setting forth the British position.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

PARIS, April 8, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I have found in exalted quarters that some of the recent utterances by high officials connected with the United States Navy have produced a very unfortunate impression. Very possibly they have been misunderstood, but they have in fact conveyed the idea that the naval policy of America is one of expansion; that the American ambition is to have a navy at least as strong or stronger than that of the British Empire, and so on. It is urged with some force that such an attitude is wholly inconsistent with the conception of the League of Nations, and that if it really represents the settled policy of the United States it could only lead sooner or later to a competition in arms between us and them. To inaugurate the League of Nations by a competition in armaments between its two chief supporters would doom it to complete sterility or worse. I cannot help feeling that there is a great deal of force in this contention, and I do believe that in some way or another the impression I have tried to describe ought to be removed if the League is to have a fair start. The position is undoubtedly complicated by the British sentiment about sea power. It has been now for centuries past an article of faith with every British statesman that the safety of the country depends upon her ability to maintain her sea defence, and like all deep-rooted popular sentiments it is founded in truth. Not only have we dominions scattered over the face of the world, each of which requires protection from the sea, but the teeming population of the islands of the

United Kingdom can only be fed and clothed provided the avenues of sea traffic are safe. We import four-fifths of our cereals, two-thirds of our meat, the whole of our cotton and almost the whole of our wool. If we were blockaded for a month or less we should have to surrender at discretion. That is not true of any other country in the world to the same extent. Least of all is it true of the United States, which could, as far as necessaries of life are concerned, laugh at any blockade.

I think you will believe me when I say that I am passionately desirous of Anglo-American friendship, and a convinced believer in its existence and durability, but I must freely admit that if I were British Minister of the Navy and I saw that British Naval safety was being threatened, even by America, I should have to recommend to my fellow countrymen to spend their last shilling in bringing our fleet up to the point which I was advised was necessary for their safety. I do not of course ask you to accept these views, but I do ask you to recognize their existence. I do not know whether in your country you have any traditional policy around which popular sentiment has crystallized in a similar way, but if you have you will be able to appreciate the kind of British feeling that exists on this point.

You have sometimes been good enough to invite me to speak to you as frankly as I would to one of my countrymen, and in that spirit I venture to ask you whether you could do anything to reassure us on this point. Would it be possible, for instance, for you to say that when the Treaty of Peace containing the League of Nations has been signed you would abandon or modify your new naval programme? I am sure that the British Government would be only too ready to give corresponding assurances. That would be what the French call a 'beau geste' with which to inaugurate the League; and if you could also intimate, however informally, that the two Governments would consult together from

year to year as to their naval programmes, and that the British sentiment on the matter would not be disregarded, I feel confident that the present very genuine anxieties on the point could be completely removed.

Yours very sincerely

ROBERT CECIL

This letter was discussed by the President and House, and it was decided that Wilson should authorize House to reply, agreeing to periodic consultation between the two Governments regarding naval building in the future, but intimating that modification of the naval programme already voted by Congress would not be considered.

Colonel House to the President

DEAR GOVERNOR:

PARIS, April 9, 1919

This is about the kind of letter Cecil wants. He may object because I made clear that we intend carrying out the old programme. Both Gregory and Miller have read the letter and approve it.

Quick action is necessary because of our League of Nations meeting to-morrow night. This letter is of course in lieu of the one I was to send Lloyd George.

[E. M. H.]

Colonel House to Lord Robert Cecil

DEAR LORD ROBERT:

PARIS, April 9, 1919

Thank you for your letter of April eighth with the spirit of which I am in cordial agreement. If the kind of peace is made for which we are working and which will include a League of Nations, it will surely be necessary for us to live up to its intentions, and in order to do this I am sure you will find the United States ready to 'abandon or modify our new naval programme,' by which I understood you to mean our

programme not yet provided for by law, as our naval bill for the next fiscal year has not yet passed. I am also certain that you will find us ready and willing to consult with the British Government from year to year regarding the naval programmes of the two Governments. The President himself has, I think, made our intentions in this matter quite clear in a statement which he made to the *London Times* on December twenty-first in which he said: 'It is essential to the future peace of the world that there should be the frankest possible coöperation, and the most generous understanding between the two English-speaking Democracies. We comprehend and appreciate, I believe, the grave problems which the war has brought to the British people, and fully understand the special international questions which arise from the fact of your peculiar position as an Island Empire.'

I am sending this letter with the President's approval.

I am, my dear Lord Robert,

Yours very sincerely

E. M. HOUSE

On the morning of April 10, Cecil and House discussed this correspondence, which was designed to assure the British that the United States did not plan to enter upon a career of naval competition with Great Britain. Lord Robert at the request of President Wilson drafted a memorandum of this important conversation.

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

PARIS, April 10, 1919

Here is the memorandum. If you approve it and could let me know that you approve by telephone or otherwise I will send it on to the Prime Minister.¹

Yours very truly

ROBERT CECIL

¹ Pencilled note by E. M. H.: 'I read this letter and memo to the President to-night and he approved. April 10/19.'

*Memorandum of Conversation between Colonel House
and Lord Robert Cecil*

April 10, 1919

I saw Colonel House this morning and showed him the draft letter a copy of which is annexed. He said to me that the difficulty was that the programme which the United States Government were now working on was one sanctioned some little time ago, and its execution had been postponed by reason of the diversion of all the energies of the United States authorities towards building the quantities of small craft which they had been constructing for the anti-submarine campaign. But for that it would have been completed, or nearly completed, some time ago. As it was, contracts had been made for the whole of it, and almost all of it was either begun or on the point of being begun. As all this had been done under the authority of Congress, he was himself doubtful whether the President could interfere with it.

I asked him whether it would not be possible for the President to postpone the commencement of those ships which had not been actually begun until after the Treaty of Peace had been signed, so that we might have time to discuss and consider the matter together.

He said he thought that might be possible, and would see what could be done in that direction. At the same time he repeated more than once that there was no idea in the mind of the President of building a fleet in competition with that of Great Britain. That was entirely foreign to his purpose. . . .

We agreed that the point of view of the fighting services made any accommodation between nations very difficult. He then urged that it really would be much better to leave the thing as it was left by his letter to me: that we might fully rely on the intention of the President not to build in competition with us; and that he thought that some arrangement as to the relative strengths of the fleets ought to be

arrived at; and that conversations with that object might well be begun as soon as the Treaty of Peace was signed. But he added that he was very much afraid that if the matter were stirred in public at all now, national spirit on both sides would be aroused and no accommodation would be possible.

I assured him that it was far from our purpose to have any public controversy on the subject, and that all that had passed between us was strictly confidential.

ROBERT CECIL

Lord Robert Cecil to Colonel House

[Draft letter]

PARIS, April 10, 1919

Many thanks for your letter with the spirit of which I am in hearty agreement. Indeed, I have already written to Mr. Lloyd George who had spoken to me on the subject that once the League of Nations was part of the Treaty of Peace it will be necessary for all of us to live up to its spirit and to do this it will be inconsistent to continue to increase armaments either by land or sea. That is as I have ascertained also the view of the President. In the same way it will be part of our duty under the Covenant to interchange information as to our naval programmes and I should hope that in the case of America and England that obligation will be carried out in cordial coöperation. You will not forget in this connection the recognition by the President of Great Britain's special position as to sea power?

VII

It may have been that Mr. Lloyd George was disappointed not to have a more specific promise from the United States to avoid naval competition and especially an agreement that the existing American naval programme would be curtailed. If so, he did not allow his feelings to interfere with Cecil's desire to support Wilson's amendment on the Monroe Doc-

trine, which was brought up at the meeting of the League of Nations Commission on the evening of April 10. The debate was prolonged because of the unwillingness of the French to accept the amendment, and followed lively discussion on the question of the use of French as the sole official language for the Covenant and the League, as well as on the seat of the League. In the first of these questions the French stood out against the British, Italians, and Americans; in the second they supported the eloquent arguments of M. Hymans for placing the League organization at Brussels rather than Geneva. The recommendation of the Committee in favor of Geneva was finally passed, though by a narrow margin.

‘One of the most important meetings of the Committee for the League of Nations was held last night at eight o’clock,’ wrote House on April 11. ‘We heard the women present their claims in a series of admirable short speeches. Five minutes was as much as any one used, but each speech was crowded with a wealth of argument and statement within the time limit. I think the entire Committee was impressed.

✓ ‘Then followed one of the stormiest meetings we have had at all. There was a row with Bourgeois at the beginning over the question of the use of French for the official text of the League. After that, we fought for another hour over the insertion of a clause covering the Monroe Doctrine. Here again, it was the French. Every one else was willing. It seems the irony of fate that France, who has more at stake in the League of Nations than any other country, should have tried to keep us from putting in a clause which will practically make certain the acceptance of the League by the American people and the Senate. . . . The President finally made an impassioned speech on the subject. He did not speak longer than ten minutes, but what he said was full of eloquence and good sense. It convinced everybody but

the French delegates. . . . We finally passed the clause, or thought we had. . . .

'Cecil bears the brunt of explanation and his patience is marvellous.'

The amendment to the Covenant which President Wilson brought forward was evolved after careful study of various formulas, especially of one advised by Mr. Taft who cabled a suggested draft to the President. It avoided putting the United States in the position of asking an especial favor and at the same time it gave indirectly an international sanction to the Monroe Doctrine.¹

¹ Mr. Taft's cable to the President was as follows:

'If you bring back the Treaty with the League of Nations in it make more specific reservations of the Monroe Doctrine, fix a term for the duration of the League, and the limit of armament, require expressly unanimity of action of Executive Council and body of Delegates and add to Article 15 a provision that where the Executive Council of the Body of Delegates finds the difference to grow out of an exclusively domestic policy, it shall recommend no settlement, the ground will be completely cut from under the opponents of the League in the Senate. Addition to Article 15 will answer objection as to Japanese immigration, as well as tariffs under Article 21. Reservation of the Monroe Doctrine might be as follows: "Any American state or states may protect the integrity of American territory and the independence of the Government whose territory it is whether a member of the League or not, and may, in the interests of American peace, object to and prevent the further transfer of American territory or sovereignty to any Power outside the Western Hemisphere."

'Monroe Doctrine reservation alone would probably carry the Treaty, but others would make it certain.

'WILLIAM H. TAFT.'

President Wilson first remodelled Taft's suggested reservation to read: 'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect or deny the right of any American state or states to protect the integrity of American territory and the independence of any American Government whose territory is threatened, whether a member of the League or not, or in the interest of American peace, to object to and prevent the further transfer of American territory or sovereignty to any Power outside the Western Hemisphere.' This reservation attempted to define the Monroe Doctrine without naming it. The British preferred to name it without defining it, and suggested to House the following: 'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect any international engagement or understanding for

'Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine for securing the maintenance of peace.'

To this the French objected, but both Cecil and Orlando offered warm support of the amendment. It 'had been inserted,' said Lord Robert, 'in order to quiet doubts and to calm misunderstandings. It did not make the substance of the Doctrine more or less valid. He understood this amendment to say what he believed to be implicit in the Covenant, what he believed to be true — that there was nothing in the Monroe Doctrine which conflicted with the Covenant, and therefore nothing in the Covenant which interfered with international understandings like the Monroe Doctrine.' When Larnaude argued that it might be interpreted to mean that the obligation on the United States to intervene in Europe was lessened, Orlando replied that the Monroe Doctrine 'had not prevented the United States from intervening in this war. They would be more ready to do so when they had accepted the additional obligations of membership of the League. He could not understand Mr. Larnaude's doubts.'

As the French still objected, President Wilson made his final appeal. What he said was evidently not effectively reported in the *procès-verbal*, for House refers to it as an 'impassioned speech' and Miller as a 'speech of witching eloquence — a speech made after midnight, which left the secretaries gasping with admiration, their pencils in their hands, their duties forgotten, and hardly a word taken down.'¹ The basis of the President's appeal, so far as the abbreviated *procès-verbal* records it, was sentimental:

securing the peace of the world such as treaties of arbitration and the Monroe Doctrine.' The final amendment chosen was obviously closely related to this British draft.

¹ David Hunter Miller, *What Really Happened at Paris*, 416.

'At a time when the world was in the grip of absolutism,' he declared, 'one of the two or three then free States of Europe suggested to the United States that they should take some political step to guard against the spread of absolutism to the American Continent. Among these States was England. Acting upon this suggestion the principles of the Monroe Doctrine were laid down, and from that day to this, they had proved a successful barrier against the entrance of absolutism into North and South America. Now that a document was being drafted which was the logical extension of the Monroe Doctrine to the whole world, was the United States to be penalized for her early adoption of this policy? A hundred years ago the Americans had said that the absolutism of Europe should not come to the American Continent. When there had come a time when the liberty of Europe was threatened by the spectre of a new absolutism, America came gladly to help in the preservation of European liberty. Was this issue going to be debated, was the Commission going to scruple on words at a time when the United States was ready to sign a Covenant which made her for ever part of the movement for liberty? Was this the way in which America's early service to liberty was to be rewarded? The Commission could not afford to deprive America of the privilege of joining in this movement.'

The objections of the French to the amendment were not removed by Wilson's appeal. Larnaude replied 'that he had no doubt that the United States would come again to the help of Europe if it were threatened by absolutism. Future wars might not, however, be wars of liberation. They might be economic in origin. The question was, therefore, whether the United States would come to the help of France should she be engaged in a struggle with a country which happened to be quite as liberal as herself.'

So strongly did they feel that, although on April 10 the

amendment was declared to be adopted, at the final meeting on the following evening they brought the question up again. As Wilson refused all the substitute amendments which they offered, they finally declared that they would have to make a reservation and intimated that the matter would be raised in the Plenary Conference.

The meeting was prolonged by the effort of the Japanese to introduce their amendment to the Preamble, consisting simply of the words 'by the endorsement of the principle of the equality of Nations and the just treatment of their nationals.'

'The President was for accepting it,' wrote House, 'but Cecil, under instructions from his Government, could not; and since I knew that Hughes would fight it and make an inflammatory speech in the Plenary Session, I urged the President to stay with the British, which he did.'

A majority of the Commission actually voted for the Japanese amendment, but as the support was not unanimous, President Wilson, as chairman, declared it not adopted.¹ The meeting did not adjourn until ten minutes of one in the morning, largely upon the insistence of Wilson who realized that the moment when a committee wishes to stop work is the moment to force a decision. 'Long experience in such

¹ The vote was eleven to six in favor of the Japanese amendment, Wilson and House not voting. When the French called Wilson's attention to the fact that a majority had voted in its favor, the President replied that 'decisions of the Commission were not valid unless unanimous. . . . There was only one case where a decision of the majority had prevailed, and that was in the case of determining the Seat of the League. In that case it had been necessary to accept the opinion of the majority inasmuch as no other procedure was possible if the question was to be decided at all.'

If the French had wished to press their opposition to the Monroe Doctrine amendment on this principle, they might have blocked its insertion in the Covenant. Doubtless they did not care so directly to oppose President Wilson without definite instructions from Clemenceau; hence they merely entered reservations.

matters,' wrote House, 'teaches that it is the last quarter of an hour that does the work. Every one practically gave up and we passed matters almost as fast as we could read them during the last fifteen minutes. . . . Around half-past twelve Cecil asked how long the meeting was to continue. I said until daylight or until we had finished.'

Thus the Commission ended its labors, leaving final changes in details to the drafting commission.¹ It left to another committee the duty of preparing resolutions designed to set the League in operation as soon as possible.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, April 26, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

After many conferences between Cecil, Miller, and myself we have thought best, if you approve, that you and the two Prime Ministers should pass at your Monday morning meeting the enclosed resolution so it can be presented at the Plenary Conference on Monday afternoon.

Lloyd George, I understand, agrees to it, so it is only Clemenceau who will have to be considered.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Resolution for the Plenary Conference on the Covenant of the League of Nations

The Conference, having considered and adopted the amended Covenant presented by the Commission on the League of Nations, resolves:

1. That the first Secretary-General of the League shall be Honorable Sir James Eric Drummond, K.C.M.G., C.B.

¹ This drafting committee, 'taking a very liberal view of its powers,' inserted the Red Cross article, which Mr. Miller says was due to Colonel House. (*What Really Happened at Paris*, 421.)

2. That until such time as the Assembly shall have selected the first four Members of the League to be represented on the Council in accordance with Article IV of the Covenant, Representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Greece, and Spain shall be members of the Council.

3. That the Powers to be represented on the Council of the League of Nations are requested to name representatives who shall form a Committee of nine to prepare plans for the organization of the League and for the establishment of the Seat of the League, and to make arrangements and to prepare the agenda for the first meeting of the Assembly. This Committee shall report both to the Council and to the Assembly of the League.¹

Two days later, on April 28, the Peace Conference approved the Covenant as amended without the change of a word. Up to the last moment the fear persisted that Mr. Hughes of Australia would make the anti-League speech in the open Session which he had been threatening during the winter, and that M. Bourgeois or M. Larnaude would publicly voice the demand for an international military organization or the objections to the article on the Monroe Doctrine which they had expressed in the Commission. But Clemenceau allowed nothing to interfere with the prompt ratification of the Covenant, not even the scruples of the French delegates themselves.

'To-day has been eventful,' wrote House. 'The Plenary Session unanimously adopted the draft of the Covenant for the League of Nations which our Committee wrote. It also passed the Resolution which the President offered. It not only names the nations which are to compose the Council of

¹ The Committee as appointed consisted of M. Jacquemyns (Belgium), M. Magelhaes (Brazil), M. Pichon (France), Lord Robert Cecil (Great Britain), M. Venizelos (Greece), Marquis Imperiali (Italy), Viscount Chinda (Japan), M. Quinones de Leon (Spain), Colonel House (U.S.A.).

Nine, but also names the nations which are to compose the Committee on Organization. . . . Clemenceau put the "steam roller" promptly to work as soon as those who wanted to make speeches to go in the *procès-verbal* had finished. Everything was passed almost before the Conference could catch its breath.'

Nothing is more clear than that the revision of the Covenant, which was largely designed to meet the objections of the United States Senate, could never have been carried through, nor the amended Covenant passed, without the hearty support of the other Principal Powers. Orlando stood firmly behind Wilson and House upon every occasion. Cecil brought his personal influence and his debating power to aid in the passing of the Monroe Doctrine amendment. The Japanese yielded their own special amendment at the same time that they supported that of Wilson. The objections of the French delegates, which might have spelled ruin for the American programme, were finally swept aside by the French Prime Minister himself.

It would have been surprising indeed if, after accepting the special American demands as regards the League of Nations, the other Principal Powers had not expected and exacted concessions that touched their own special aspirations.

432 INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

APPENDIX

A Typical Page from the Visitors' Book or 'Log' kept by the Yeomen at the Door of Colonel House's Apartment at the Hôtel de Crillon

March 18, 1919

<i>In</i>		<i>In</i>	
9.15	Mr. Rappard	12.55	Ambassador Willard
9.35	Mr. Frazier	1.45	Colonel Wallace
9.35	Mr. Straus	2.20	Mr. E. T. Williams
9.45	Sir William Wiseman	2.35	Mr. Vance C. McCormick
9.50	Admiral Benson	2.50	Mr. Oulahan
9.50	Mr. Sheldon	2.55	President Wilson
9.50	Mr. Norman Davis	3.00	Mr. Lloyd George
10.10	Mr. Peabody	3.00	Sir Maurice Hankey
10.15	Mr. R. H. Lord	3.00	M. Clemenceau
10.20	Mr. Galavrias	3.00	M. André Tardieu
10.35	Mr. Gregory	3.00	Sir Philip Kerr
10.35	Mr. Desprit	3.30	Mr. Ferguson
10.50	Mr. Melville Stone	3.37	Judge M. B. Parker
10.55	Colonel Shannon	4.10	Mr. Norman Davis
10.55	Mr. Straus		Mr. J. M. Keynes
11.00	Captain Walter G. Davis	4.20	Lord Sumner
11.10	General Churchill	4.35	General Richardson
11.15	Mr. T. W. Lamont	4.55	Mr. H. Wickham Steed
11.40	Mr. James	5.05	The Spanish Ambassador
11.55	Admiral Benson	5.20	M. Paul Hymans
12.05	Commander Allen	5.30	Baron Makino
12.10	Lord Robert Cecil		Count Chinda
12.15	Mr. Rappard	5.30	Mr. Davison
	Mr. Lansing	6.05	10 Newspaper Reporters
	Mr. D. H. Miller	6.50	Mr. McCormick
12.25	Mr. H. Wickham Steed		

CHAPTER XII

FIUME AND SHANTUNG

Every question associated with this settlement wears a new aspect — a new aspect given it by the very victory for right for which Italy has made the supreme sacrifice.

President Wilson's Manifesto, April 23, 1919

I

THE compromises of mid-April made possible the American amendments to the Covenant and its acceptance by the Plenary Conference; they also brought within sight the completion of the Treaty with Germany, and on April 14 the Germans were invited to send delegates to Versailles. But the period of crisis was not ended, for two important questions remained unsettled. The Japanese demanded that German rights in Shantung should be ceded to them, and the Italians threatened to withdraw from participation in the German Treaty unless their claims in the Adriatic were satisfied.

The problem of Italian claims had been shelved during the early months of the Conference, although many informal conversations were carried on by Signor Orlando, President Wilson, and Colonel House. The result of this postponement, in a certain sense, was to make an ultimate solution more difficult of discovery, since it gave time for the development of nationalistic aspirations in Italy. It was natural, also, that the Italians should become more insistent as they observed the concessions which Wilson was obliged to make to the French and the British.

In the spring of 1918, hopes had been high that an amicable arrangement could be made between Italian and Jugo-Slav claims, for Orlando seemed to approve the Pact of Rome. But with the complete collapse of Austria in the

autumn of 1918, the Italians were evidently appalled by the prospect of a strong Jugo-Slav State on the other side of the Adriatic; they spoke of the Croats and Slovenes as enemies, and, not content with the Treaty of London, they set up a claim to Fiume, which, according to the Treaty, had been assigned to Croatia.

At the time of the Armistice, Orlando attempted to make formal reservation to Point IX of the Fourteen Points, so as to give free scope to later claims; this reservation, if it be admitted that it was actually made,¹ was never published and never communicated formally to President Wilson, as in the case of the two reservations on the Freedom of the Seas and Reparations. It thus remained a matter of doubt as to whether Italy was legally bound by the Fourteen Points in the matter of the Austro-Italian frontiers. President Wilson apparently made no attempt to advance the contention that Italy was so bound, despite the strong argument he might have adduced; in fact he later (April 20) admitted to the Council of Four that he did not regard her as bound by the Fourteen Points in making peace with Austria.

President Wilson thus not merely failed to dispose of the Secret Treaties at the start of the Conference by an insistence upon the Fourteen Points, but weakened his position further by yielding his strongest argument; namely, that Italy was bound if not legally, certainly morally by the pre-Armistice Agreement. He made the further mistake, which he himself afterward recognized, of approving Italy's claim to the Brenner frontier, perhaps the least justifiable of the entire Italian

¹ Sonnino read a draft reservation on Point IX on October 30 to the Prime Ministers, but this was never presented to the Supreme War Council. At the meeting of the Supreme War Council on November 1, Orlando referred to this reservation, but when Clemenceau directed attention to other topics he failed to read it to the Council. That he himself did not believe that a satisfactory reservation had been made was indicated by his suggestion to the Prime Ministers on November 3 that Wilson should be informed of the Italian attitude on Point IX. But this information was never officially sent to the President. (See above, Chapter VI.)

case.¹ Some years later, Colonel House discussed this issue with Mr. Frazier, who during the course of the Peace Conference was present at many of the negotiations between the President and the Italians.

'Frazier told me,' wrote House, 'how Wilson promised Orlando to give Italy the Tyrol. He said that Orlando had asked him, Frazier, to interpret for the two of them and that no one else was present excepting Wilson, Orlando, and himself. Orlando made a plea for Fiume and Wilson replied, "I cannot consent for Fiume to go to Italy, but you may count upon me for the Brenner line." This did not satisfy Orlando, but he held Wilson to his promise. . . . I have often wondered just why Wilson consented to this line. Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and I discussed it during the Armistice proceedings and the three of us came to the conclusion that the Tyrol should not be taken from Austria. They were committed by the Secret Treaties, but thought the United States could protest.'²

On the other hand, the position of the Italian delegates was not strong. Hostile political forces in Italy threatened to overthrow the Orlando Ministry. Unlike Clemenceau, who laid down a careful programme of French claims from

¹ Lord Bryce later wrote to Colonel House regarding the cession of this region to Italy: 'I earnestly hope that the 200,000 or more German-speaking Tirolese who inhabit it will not be handed over to Italy. That would be a graver departure from the principle of nationality than any that arose between Italy and the Yugo-Slavs of the Adriatic. Italy never had any rule at all in Central Tirol, and has no shadow of right to annex it. The people are . . . innocent of any guilt for this war, and would bitterly resent being subjected to Italian rule.'

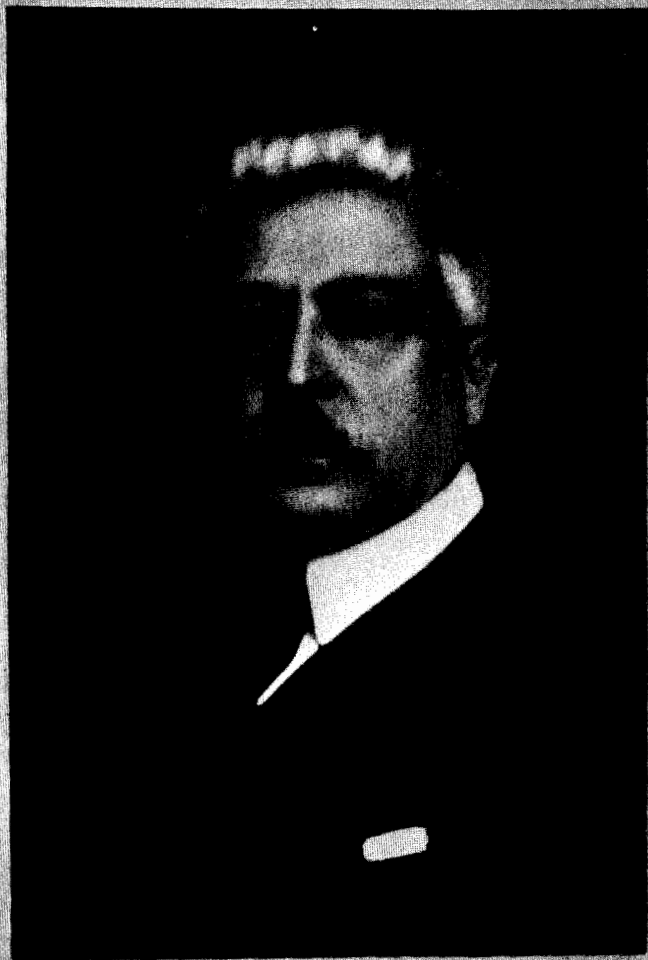
² Colonel House to C. S., May 28, 1928. In May, 1919, President Wilson said to C. S. that his own approval of the Brenner frontier was 'based on insufficient study.' Mr. Baker, who rarely criticizes Mr. Wilson, says (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, II, 146): 'Already the President had, unfortunately, promised the Brenner Pass boundary to Orlando.'

which he might withdraw gradually and safely so as to reach a compromise, and who was willing to fight extremists on his own side, Orlando found himself pushed from demand to demand by the rising flood of Italian enthusiasm. He did not dare yield any claims for fear of political disaster at home. He knew that if the worst came to the worst he could rely upon the French and the British to approve the Treaty of London; but he did not want the Treaty of London because it excluded Fiume, and the British and French made plain their unwillingness to give Fiume to Italy.

The whole problem was thus confused to the point where effective concessions on one side or the other proved impossible. The Italians from the beginning of the Conference had endeavored to stress their lively and sincere sympathy with the ideals of President Wilson. Orlando had given the heartiest support to the President and Cecil in drafting the Covenant. He had completely fallen in with the American policy of non-intervention in Russia, except for the sending in of a relief expedition. The real clash of interests was between the British and French on the one hand and the Italians on the other. Yet the irony of fate brought it about that the open difference which threatened to split the Conference developed between Wilson and Orlando.

For the Italian delegates personally, especially Orlando, Colonel House had the most cordial feelings, which were maintained through numerous conversations. Writing towards the end of the Peace Conference, House recorded:

'I do not know what experiences the President had with Orlando when I was not present, but I do know that when the three of us were together and when Orlando and I worked alone, I found him one of the most satisfactory of colleagues. He was always courteous, even under trying circumstances, and he was generous almost to a fault in yielding to the American view when his own country was not involved. And



Al Colonnello G. House, infaticabile silenzioso grande artefice della
pace nel mondo, - V. E. Orlando dedica la sua ammirazione più
fervida ed un'amicizia più forte di ogni voto.
Parigi 6 aprile '19.

VITTORIO EMANUELE ORLANDO

YIABOU IUTRACIEM

ABPLIATA.IIP

even in negotiations involving Italy, he endeavored to be fair, and when, from our point of view, he was not, it was because of the pressure brought to bear upon him from Rome and from his Italian colleagues. I shall always remember him as an able, upright gentleman who strove to do his best under very difficult conditions.'

Because of his personal regard for Orlando and his conviction that the interests of Italy and the United States at the Peace Conference were closely allied, Colonel House maintained with him an intimacy which is reflected in the memoranda of numerous conferences, beginning immediately after the Armistice.¹ They make plain that House was opposed to the full Italian claims. Thus, on January 9, he said to Orlando that he was 'not in favor of giving territory to Italy which might sow the seeds of future discord and war. . . . If the Italians insisted upon the line drawn by the Pact of London, which included Dalmatia, it would certainly mean war . . . the Czecho-Slovaks would protest more vehemently against the inclusion of Fiume in the Italian realm than the Yugo-Slavs.'

On the other hand, House was more keenly alive than most of the Americans to the sympathy manifested and the services rendered by the Italians in the struggle to establish the League; and he counted upon Italian assistance in the equally difficult task of putting the League into operation. It is possible that Colonel House's anxiety to achieve the successful establishment of the League led him to appreciate more fully than he otherwise would the desirability of com-

¹ These memoranda are more numerous and specific than in the case of Clemenceau or the British, for as Orlando spoke no English, Mr. Frazier acted as interpreter and preserved a careful record of the conversations. D. H. Miller says of Orlando's English: 'I was talking one evening with him and Marshal Joffre, who said to Orlando, in French, "Do you know any English?" To which Orlando replied that he knew very little — "Nothing," he added, "except these words, 'eleven o'clock, I don't agree, good-bye.''" (*Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1921, 274.)

promise with the Italians, just as it had proved necessary to compromise with the French and British. He had always endeavored to make plain to Orlando the importance he placed upon the continuance of cordial Italo-American relations, and Orlando evidently regarded House as one who would present Italian claims to the President in the friendliest light.

President Wilson, also, entertained the kindest personal feelings towards Signor Orlando. Among House's papers is an interesting note from the President, suggesting that House make plain to Orlando that he cannot agree to yield Fiume to Italy: 'Perhaps you will think it best to break this to our friend, of whom I am really fond and whom I long to help.'

It has been alleged that the cordiality of House's attitude toward Orlando, at a moment when most of the Americans were believed by the Italians to be unfriendly, and his anxiety to discover a workable compromise, actually lessened the chances of a compromise; the Italians, it is stated, believed that the American Delegation was divided against itself, and this impression rendered them more unyielding in their demands than they would otherwise have been. Whether or not Colonel House's attitude led the Italians to believe that the President would ultimately make larger concessions than he actually intended, it is true that the American Delegation was not agreed upon the advice it gave Wilson.

The specialists responsible for the study of the Adriatic problem were all convinced that any arrangement that deprived the Jugo-Slavs of either northern Dalmatia or Fiume would be vicious and unwise; they felt that if Italy secured 'even nominal sovereignty over Fiume as the price of supporting the League,' the League would become 'a coalition to maintain an unjust settlement.' This opinion was carried to the President by letter, and personally by Pro-

fessor Douglas Johnson, Chief of the Division of Boundary Geography, whose judgment Wilson regarded as authoritative. Other members of the American Delegation, such as David Hunter Miller, George Louis Beer, and James T. Shotwell, with interests in aspects of the general settlement other than the Italian, 'felt that attention had been concentrated too narrowly . . . upon local questions of demography. The issue was of large significance solely because it involved matters of general policy; and should be approached from that angle.'¹ This group sought by conversations with the Italians to discover some compromise, and Colonel House encouraged them to investigate every opportunity.

II

The Adriatic question became acute in the first week of April, precisely at the moment of crisis over Reparations, the Saar, and the Rhine frontier. On April 2, at the end of a long conversation that covered the entire range of disputed topics, President Wilson asked House to explain to the Italians the American proposals, which, while granting them the Treaty of London line in the Tyrol, assigned eastern Istria, Fiume, and Dalmatia to the Jugo-Slavs.

'He wished me to outline to Orlando the boundary and other terms for Italy,' wrote House in his diary. 'I do not relish the job, but I promised to do it. I shall see Orlando on Friday and tell him just where we wish the northern and eastern boundaries of Italy to be.'

As it turned out, the conference with Orlando came on Thursday instead of Friday, for on Thursday morning Lloyd George suddenly raised the question of the Adriatic in the

¹ J. T. Shotwell, *George Louis Beer*, 110. See also David Hunter Miller, 'The Adriatic Negotiations at Paris,' in *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1921.

Council of Four and suggested calling in the Jugo-Slav representatives. Orlando decided to absent himself from the afternoon meeting, and so informed the President.

‘As for the very delicate matter,’ Orlando wrote Wilson, ‘of giving a further hearing to the representatives of the Slovenes and Croats — against whom Italy has been at war for four years — I would not insist against it, just as I would not exclude the advisability of giving a hearing to the representatives of any other enemy people on whom it is a question of imposing conditions. But, on the other hand, as no such debate has yet been granted, I insist in thinking it advisable to abstain from taking part in a meeting which, as things stand, must necessarily give rise to debate.

‘I realize, with keen regret, that my absence may give rise to an impression, which I should be the first to wish to avoid, that a misunderstanding has arisen between the Italian Government and the Allied and Associated Governments. I think however that such an impression will not be given, as the meeting this afternoon is not the meeting of the representatives of the four Powers, but a conversation between the President of the United States and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France with those gentlemen.

‘I earnestly hope, Mr. President, that in this way the reason for my absence will be seen in its true light, i.e., not as an evidence of disagreement, but as an act of consideration towards colleagues, whose wish it is to obtain all the data available in order to form their own opinion on the grave matters under consideration.’

Instead of going to the Council of Four, Orlando came to the Crillon to see Colonel House. But neither then nor at later conferences could either suggest a workable compromise.

'The most important business of the afternoon,' wrote House on April 3, 'was my interview with Orlando. He is disturbed over the turn affairs took this morning at the meeting of the Council of Four. Lloyd George . . . precipitated something akin to a panic by suggesting that the Adriatic question be taken up. It developed that no one but Orlando was in favor of Fiume going to Italy. Lloyd George then suggested, and the President and Clemenceau agreed, that the Jugo-Slavs present their case this afternoon. This put the finishing touches to Orlando, and while he was invited to take part in the Italian funeral he declined to do so. . . . He looks upon Jugo-Slavs much as the French look upon Germans, and he is as indignant as Clemenceau would be if the Germans were asked to give their views upon the left bank of the Rhine.'¹

'I had all the maps out and Orlando and I went over the lines. He was not happy when he saw that the line ran west of Fiume. He declared Italy could never accept such a settlement. We would have little difficulty if it were not for Fiume. If the peace settlement had been made just after the Armistice, all these questions could have been settled without difficulty, for Fiume would never have been injected into the terms by the Italians, nor the Sarre Basin and Rhenish Republic by the French.

'April 7, 1919: Orlando came at noon to present a new plan for the settlement of the Adriatic question. . . . He desired to make a free city to the west of Fiume. . . . I promised to take it up with the President, which I did, and he turned it down as quickly as I did myself.

'April 15, 1919: Orlando asked to come around this morning at ten and he was with me for a half-hour. . . . I begged him not to be discouraged about the settlement of their frontier. The questions between France on the one

¹ A very clear example of the atmosphere in Paris which made it impossible to present adequately the contentions of any 'ex-enemy.'

side and the United States and England on the other, were much more difficult and had seemed insoluble. However, we have been working upon them for several months with Clemenceau on the one hand, and Lloyd George on the other, and now they were being settled to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. The Italian questions could also be settled provided there was a disposition to yield a little by all parties, and if there was a continuous discussion of them, which must necessarily bring out new ideas and some compromises. . . . Fiume was the main difficulty. If we could get over that hurdle, the rest would be settled in a canter.'

As a compromise possibility, Colonel House put forward the plan of making Fiume a free city under the administration of the League of Nations, thus guaranteeing the autonomy of the 25,000 Italians there and also the protection of the economic needs of the Slav hinterland. The American specialists were not convinced that the plan would protect the rights of the Jugo-Slavs and so advised the President.¹ Wilson sympathized with the specialists, but recognized the need of making some compromise: 'I am ready to fight for the line you gentlemen have given me,' he said to Douglas Johnson, 'with one possible exception: It may seem best to make Fiume an independent port.'²

¹ Thus Douglas Johnson wrote to D. H. Miller on April 19, sending a copy to Colonel House: 'In presenting to our higher authorities the draft articles on Fiume will you, in order to avoid possible misunderstanding, kindly make clear that, in common with all our territorial specialists who have studied this problem, I am most strongly opposed to the proposed compromise solution on the grounds that in principle it is fundamentally unjust to a small and weak nation, in practice unworkable, and from the standpoint of the future fraught with gravest danger to the prestige and even to the ultimate success of a League of Nations which can afford to guarantee only those arrangements which are inherently righteous.'

See also letter of five specialists to President Wilson, printed in Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 266.

² From notes made at the time by Douglas Johnson, cited in Baker, *op. cit.*, II, 146.

But this suggestion by no means satisfied Signor Orlando, who realized that failure to bring Fiume under the Italian flag meant the overthrow of his Ministry. On April 13, he protested against calling in the Germans to receive the Treaty; on the following day he had a long conversation with Wilson, during the course of which the President handed him a memorandum embodying his proposed compromise making Fiume an international port which 'should enjoy a very considerable degree of genuine autonomy,' although he also proposed that it be included within the customs system of the new Jugo-Slav State.

The interview was painful; the personal feeling of each toward the other was cordial, Wilson offered all that his conscience permitted, Orlando was definite in declaring it was insufficient; unless some agreement could be reached, a break seemed unavoidable.

'April 15, 1919: The President said,' wrote House the next day, 'that only once before had he experienced such an unhappy time as with Orlando yesterday. Once when he was President of Princeton it was necessary to expel a student. His mother, a delicate woman, called and pleaded with him for an hour and a half, urging that she was about to undergo a capital operation and if the boy was expelled she would die and her death would be due to him. His reply was that his responsibility to the College was greater than his responsibility for her health, and he declined to grant her request. She had the operation, but recovered.'¹

In the existing temper of the principals, effective compromise was a forlorn hope. 'So long as the Italian demands included Fiume,' writes Miller, 'any successful result of negotiations between President Wilson and the Italian re-

¹ Cf. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters*, II, 152 (Doubleday, Page & Co., 1927).

presentatives was impossible. So-called "compromise proposals" could mean only that one side or the other should give way.¹

Colonel House himself, after four days' intensive search for a formula of compromise, began to despair.

'The President and I discussed the question of Fiume,' he wrote on April 18, 'and I urged him to settle it one way or the other. I have about come to the conclusion that since we cannot please the Italians by compromise, we might as well do what seems best in the judgment of our experts, and that is to give it directly to the Jugo-Slavs, safeguarding the rights of all those contributory to the port. This solution appealed to the President. I urged him to take it up with Lloyd George and Clemenceau and commit them in order to present a united front.'

But the French and the British were unwilling to declare flatly that they would not approve giving Fiume to Italy, since Orlando would then demand the Treaty of London line, to which they were pledged; they would then be out of line with Wilson, who insisted that eastern Istria and northern Dalmatia should go to the Jugo-Slavs, although the Treaty of London assigned them to Italy.

House tried a final compromise. He would yield eastern Istria to Italy and place Fiume and northern Dalmatia under the League of Nations' administration for a number of years, their ultimate sovereignty to be determined by the League. This would put Fiume under somewhat the same régime as the Saar, a solution which Lloyd George had advanced in the Council of Four on the morning of April 8. House raised this solution with Clemenceau on April 15. 'I suggested that he might tell Orlando that the only way he

¹ D. H. Miller, 'The Adriatic Negotiations at Paris,' *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1921, p. 273.

could see out of their difficulty was for the League of Nations to take over the disputed territory for a given time.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, April 19, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

This is what I would suggest saying to the Italians at your meeting to-morrow:

(1) We will give you the line agreed upon in the Pact of London as far as it touches the old Austro-Hungarian boundaries.¹

(2) Fiume and all the territory in dispute south of Fiume to be held in trust by the Five Powers as trustees for the League of Nations, the actual disposition to be made at some time in the future when in the judgment of the League of Nations it is wise to do so.

This will give the Italians a chance to educate their public to what they must know will be the final decision.

I proposed this to the other Commissioners after you left and they all agreed. At White's suggestion, it was decided to draw this up in the form of a letter for us all to sign. I asked Lansing to prepare it, but since I cannot lay hands on him for the moment, I am sending this in advance.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

This proposal was put to Orlando on April 20, not by

¹ House evidently means as far south as the Gulf of Quarnero. The next paragraph and his diary make plain his intention of putting Dalmatia under the League. The proposal as described in the diary is: 'Accept the line of the Pact of London as far as it touches the boundaries of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Everything south of that, including Fiume and Dalmatia, to be taken over by the Five Powers as trustees under the League of Nations. The fate of the territory to be determined later when passions cool.' Nothing is said about the islands in the letter, but House was evidently prepared to yield to Italy all the islands regarded by them as essential to their strategic security.

Wilson who thought that it yielded too much, but by Lloyd George. Wilson finally told House that if George and Clemenceau would 'put it up' as a recommendation of their own, he would consider it. But Orlando refused it definitely. So strongly had feeling in Italy been aroused that he did not dare confess failure by yielding or even postponing the claim to the Italian right of sovereignty over Fiume. He was impressed by the fact that Wilson had made broad concessions to France; why not also to Italy? Wilson, on the other hand, because he had just yielded to France, was so much the less inclined to yield to Italy.¹ For three days the Council of Four debated fruitlessly, and Wilson meditated the possibility of issuing a public statement of the American position. He asked the advice of the Commissioners.

'April 21, 1919: The President came to the Crillon this morning,' wrote House, 'for a conference with the Commission. He read us a statement of the Italian situation which it is his purpose to give out. He was not certain whether to do it immediately or wait until a break actually occurred. I suggested discussing the matter with George and Clemenceau and being governed by their advice.'

'April 22, 1919: A busy day with all sorts of plans and suggestions for the settlement of the Italian question, which has grown acute. Orlando has ceased to attend the meetings of the Council of Four and relations are very strained. The whole world is speculating as to whether the Italians are "bluffing" or whether they really intend going home and not signing the Peace unless they have Fiume. It is not unlike a game of poker.'

'April 23, 1919: The Italian situation is almost the sole

¹ Cf. Mr. Baker's remark: 'He approached the Italian problems no doubt with all the more passion and determination because in the French crisis just passed he had had to make painful concessions in order to keep the Allies together, preserve world order, and arrive at any peace at all.' (*Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, II, 159.)

topic of conversation. This morning I suggested to the President that he put out his statement, but advised him to confer with Clemenceau and Lloyd George before doing so.'

Exactly what passed between Wilson and the French and British Prime Ministers on the morning of April 23 is not clear. They talked of Wilson's statement and they were so far in agreement with its contents that they discussed presenting to Orlando a memorandum written by Balfour, which emphasized even more effectively than Wilson's the objections to Italy's sovereignty over Fiume.¹ But although they were told by the President that 'it was his intention to publish his memorandum . . . this evening,' they took no definite steps either to dissuade him from his purpose or to approve it. The publication of Wilson's manifesto by itself thus isolated him, and when the storm of Italian fury broke it was upon the President's head.

The basis of Wilson's manifesto was the change that had come in the Adriatic problem, as well as in the spirit of Europe, since the signing of the Treaty of London. Austria-Hungary had disappeared, its place to be taken by smaller states who would enter the League of Nations with Italy; the principles of the Fourteen Points accepted as applicable

¹ The vital paragraph in the Balfour memorandum is as follows:

'It is for Italy, and not for the other signatories of the Pact of London, to say whether she will gain more in power, wealth and honour by strictly adhering to that part of the Pact of London which is in her favour, than by accepting modifications in it which would bring it into closer harmony with the principles which are governing the territorial decisions of the Allies in other parts of Europe. But so far as Fiume is concerned the position is different. Here, as we have already pointed out, the Pact of 1915 is against the Italian contention; and so also, it seems to us, are justice and policy. After the most prolonged and anxious reflection, we cannot bring ourselves to believe that it is either in the interests of Jugoslavia, in the interests of Italy herself, or in the interests of future peace — which is the concern of all the world — that this port should be severed from the territories to which economically, geographically and ethnologically it naturally belongs.'

to Germany should be applied also to the Peace as a whole. 'Every question associated with this settlement wears a new aspect — a new aspect given it by the very victory for right for which Italy has made the supreme sacrifice of blood and treasure.' He concluded with an appeal to the people of Italy: 'America is Italy's friend . . . she is linked in blood as well as in affection with the Italian people. . . . Interest is not now in question, but the rights of peoples, of states new and old, of liberated peoples and peoples whose rulers have never accounted them worthy of right; above all, the right of the world to peace and to such settlements of interest as shall make peace secure. These, and these only, are the principles for which America has fought . . . only upon these principles, she hopes and believes, will the people of Italy ask her to make peace.'

It was the form of the manifesto as much as its matter that angered the Italians. To the majority in Italy it seemed like an appeal by Wilson over the head of Orlando to the Italian people, and it permitted the inference that the Prime Minister did not represent his people. Orlando declared that he must return to Rome and say, 'Choose between Wilson and me.' In reality he could not have been altogether surprised by the publication of the manifesto, since it had been discussed by the Council of Four in his presence. It furnished him, none the less, with an opportunity for a spectacular departure, which he had been meditating before its publication, and provoked a tremendous popular sympathy for him in France and at home. At the same time he could make plain that the break was not definite; he would have technical experts at Paris during the period he was in consultation with the Italian parliament. If he had left Paris simply because the Four were not able to agree upon the Italian settlement, he would have been accused of pique and the onus for the break would have been on his shoulders; as it was, the responsibility was generally placed upon Wilson.

Notwithstanding the sensation caused by the publication of Wilson's memorandum and the departure of Orlando and Sonnino, the inner circle of the Peace Conference was not seriously disturbed. If the Italians stayed away and refused to sign the German Treaty, the French and the British would at least escape from the dilemma in which Italian insistence upon the Treaty of London would place them. After all, it would be the League of Nations and hence Wilsonian policy that would chiefly suffer from a permanent break between Italy and the other Powers. House was optimistic. He had confidence in the common sense of both Orlando and Sonnino, and did not believe that either would wish to separate Italy from the other Great Powers or from the very material benefits conferred upon the signatories of the German Treaty.

'The Italian crisis,' he wrote on April 24, 'has absorbed for the moment every thought. It looks to-night as if the situation might work itself clear again, although Orlando is going back to Italy. He leaves some of the Delegation here and perhaps is going to inform and consult his colleagues in Rome.'

'April 26, 1919: Prince di Scordia, Orlando's Secretary, surprised me by calling to-day in order to express Orlando's regret that he left Paris without having an opportunity to bid me good-bye. Di Scordia said that Orlando still has a warm feeling of friendship.'

III

At the very moment when the Italian crisis was passing through its most acute stage, the Council of Four was compelled to meet what might have proved an even more dangerous crisis resulting from Japanese claims. It was not entirely due to Oriental strategy that the most insistent of their demands was pressed at the period when the Peace

Conference was threatened by disruption because of the Italian withdrawal. The Japanese had put forward their claims quietly but without relaxation from the beginning of the Conference. The summons to the German delegates brought them to a head; like the Italians the Japanese feared that the Treaty would be presented without definite satisfaction for their especial aspirations.

The Japanese claim to administer as mandatory the islands in the Pacific north of the Equator was apparently approved without great difficulty by President Wilson, who made, however, a reservation in the case of the island of Yap. He recognized that the Allies were bound by treaties, 'although,' as he said, 'perhaps he might be entitled to question whether Great Britain and Japan had been justified in handing round the islands in the Pacific. This, however, was a private opinion. . . .'¹ But Japanese demands for the insertion of an article in the Covenant of the League, recognizing the principle of racial equality, had been denied them.² They were the more insistent that the third item in their claims, succession to German rights in Shantung, should be approved. The Japanese were willing to hand back the Shantung Peninsula in full sovereignty to China, retaining only the economic privileges granted to Germany, but they were adamant in demanding that Germany's renunciation be in favor of Japan in the first place. It was clearly a question of prestige and one upon which Japan would not yield. On April 24, Orlando left for Rome and the same day the Japanese presented a request for 'a definite settlement of this question . . . with the least possible delay.' Two days

¹ Council of Four, April 22.

² This failure aroused warm feeling in Japan, where it was attributed to the unfriendly influence of President Wilson, who was charged by the Osaki *Mainichi* with having a 'female demon within him.' The Japanese delegates at Paris recognized that the failure resulted from the protests of the British Dominion Premiers; the British were therefore the more anxious to satisfy Japan's Shantung claims.

before, Viscount Chinda had told the Four that unless their claim was satisfied the Japanese would not be allowed to sign the Treaty.

Wilson was evidently certain that they were not bluffing, and House agreed with him. The latter had seen much of the Japanese, who during the course of the debates on the Covenant had come regularly to his rooms in the Crillon. He was fully aware of the aid they had brought to Wilson during these debates, and he appreciated the fact that, at the moment of disappointment consequent upon the failure to insert their own amendment to the Covenant, they had made no opposition to the President's amendment on the Monroe Doctrine. He was convinced that following the withdrawal of Italy, the refusal of Japan to sign the Treaty must ruin the prestige of the Conference if it did not break it up, and would place an intolerable handicap upon the League. After compromising with the French it would be impossible, he felt, to hold out against the Japanese, whose promise of later restitution to China he trusted implicitly. Two days after the departure of Orlando, Wilson realized that a decision must be reached.

'April 26, 1919: The President came to the Crillon at two o'clock,' wrote House, 'for a meeting of the Commissioners. He wanted our opinion as to what action had best be taken in the differences between Japan and China. Both he and Lansing lean toward China, while in this instance my sympathies are about evenly divided, with a feeling that it would be a mistake to take such action against Japan as might lead to her withdrawal from the Conference. I argued the matter at some length with the President.

'April 28, 1919: [Following the Plenary Session of the Peace Conference.] Lloyd George afterward took me aside and asked if I would not get the President in a more amenable frame of mind. He thought the President was unfair to

Japan and so does Balfour. . . . The concession the Germans obtained from China in the first place, and which the Japanese have taken over as a part of their spoils of war, is bad enough; but it is no worse than the doubtful transactions that have gone on among the Allies themselves and, indeed, that are going on now. They are dividing up the Turkish Empire just as the Japanese are trying to secure a sphere of influence in China, but with this difference: The Allies intend to hold what they take in Asia Minor, while the Japanese have promised to return the concessions to China provided the Allies permit Japan to save her face by first taking them over.'

On the previous day, April 27, Mr. Balfour had drafted and presented to the Three a memorandum of his conversations with the Japanese, in which the latter promised definitely to return Shantung to the Chinese; on April 28, he informed Baron Makino that in all essential aspects the Council of Three were ready to approve the Japanese claim.

Balfour Memorandum

'The result of my conversations with the Japanese may, I think, be summarized somewhat as follows:

'In the first place, the Japanese strenuously deny either that they intended to modify in their own favour the conditions which the Germans had imposed upon the Chinese in connection with the Shantung Peninsula, or that, in fact, their treaties with China would have had that effect.

'They say, on the contrary, that they propose surrendering all military control over the Peninsula, including the 50-kilometre zone around Kiaochow within which German troops were allowed but not Chinese, and all interference with the civil administration of the territory. Their inten-

tion is fully to restore Chinese sovereignty within the leased territory. . . .'¹

After conference with the Three, Balfour wrote to Makino a letter of which the essential passage runs as follows:

Mr. Balfour to Baron Makino

April 28, 1919

DEAR BARON MAKINO:

. . . I went over to President Wilson's house, and again explained that you thought it due to you to have the Shantung question settled one way or the other before the discussion of the League of Nations came on this afternoon at the Plenary Conference. It was unfortunately then much too late to ask you to discuss the matter with your colleagues from America, France, and England. But after hearing what I had to say in supplement of the paper which I read to you yesterday, I was authorized to tell you that if — which they did not doubt — the view which I represented to them as being yours was held by you, they were quite satisfied as regards the permanent arrangements come to between Japan and China on the question of Shantung. The essence of these arrangements, as I repeated to them, is that after German rights have been ceded to Japan, Japan will hand back to China the whole of the leased territory in complete sovereignty; that the only rights which Japan will retain are the economic rights enumerated in my memorandum;² and that

¹ The complete memorandum, as well as Balfour's letter to Makino, is printed in *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, III, 311 ff.

² Those rights as enumerated by Balfour were as follows:

1. A right to claim a concession at Tsingtau, which, however, does not exclude, and was not intended to exclude, the right also for other countries to organize an international concession, if that is desired.

2. The German rights in the railways already built, and the mines associated with them. The railways are built on land which is in full Chinese sovereignty, and subject to Chinese law.

3. Concessions granted to the Germans for building two other rail-

Japan proposes to take every precaution to prevent undue discrimination in matters of railway rates, or port and harbour dues, or other cognate matters between nation and nation; in fact, that the policy of the open door should be fully carried out in the spirit as in the letter. . . .'

Yours, &c,

A. J. B.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, April 29, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Both George and Balfour spoke to me yesterday about the Japanese settlement. They hoped you would accept the assurance which Makino gave Balfour and of which he has made a record.

My feeling is that while it is all bad, it is no worse than the things we are doing in many of the settlements in which the Western Powers are interested. I feel too that we had best clean up a lot of old rubbish with the least friction, and let the League of Nations and the new era do the rest.

England, France, and Japan ought to get out of China, and perhaps they will later if enough pressure is brought through public opinion as expressed in the League of Nations.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Wilson evidently felt, as did House, that to hold out against the Japanese would not help China and might result in the failure of the League. He still fought for a clear agreement that the Japanese would not use the economic concessions. These railways are to be built with Japanese capital, and the Japanese capitalists are at this moment negotiating with the Chinese Government as to the terms on which the necessary money will be provided. The Chinese Government will be able to secure the same position in regard to these railways as it has over other railways constructed by foreign capital.

sions to retain virtual control of Shantung, but he finally acceded to their demand that the renunciation of German rights in the Treaty should be made to Japan. 'The only hope,' he said to Mr. Baker, 'was to keep the world together, get the League of Nations with Japan in it and then try to secure justice for the Chinese not only as regarding Japan but England, France, Russia, all of whom had concessions in China.'¹ On the morning of April 30, the Japanese made formal declaration of their intention to hand Shantung back to China.²

IV

The atmosphere of suspense and uncertainty which hung over the Peace Conference was not entirely removed by the Shantung settlement. The Belgians were discouraged by the delay of the Council to approve definitely their claim to priority in reparations, and complained, not unnaturally, at their exclusion from the inner council during the discussions on the German Treaty in which they were vitally interested. The Council was also unsympathetic towards their request for a rectification of the Belgian-Dutch frontier, which would involve cession of territory by Holland, a neutral power. During the first week of May the Belgians discussed seriously a withdrawal from the Conference.

The attitude of the Italians also left the Conference in something of a quandary. The Council did not know

¹ Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, II, 266.

² The Japanese declaration made to the Council of Three was as follows:

'The policy of Japan is to hand back the Shantung Peninsula in full sovereignty to China retaining only the economic privileges granted to Germany and the right to establish a settlement under the usual conditions at Tsingtau.

'The owners of the railway will use special Police only to ensure security for traffic. They will be used for no other purpose.

'The Police Force will be composed of Chinese and such Japanese instructors as the Directors of the Railway may select [and] will be appointed by the Chinese Government.'

whether, in presenting the Treaty to the Germans, the name of Italy should be included or not. There was talk of sending them an ultimatum which would give them forty-eight hours to return to Paris or to face the consequences of exclusion from the German Treaty. The attitude of the Three was rather one of indifference, too much so, as Colonel House thought. The disadvantages of not having the Italians sign the Treaty were apparent, but the Council of Three feared that if they returned they would insist upon the Treaty of London, to which Clemenceau and Lloyd George regarded themselves as bound, and thereby bring about an impossible situation between France and Great Britain on the one side and the United States on the other.

Uncertainty was ended by the decision of the Italians to return without conditions and participate in the ceremony of handing the Treaty to the Germans. At the same time the Belgians, securing a guarantee of a practical priority in reparations, agreed, although reluctantly, to sign. On May 6, a Plenary Session was held at the Foreign Office, at which Tardieu read an abstract of the Treaty, which was at this time unknown to the majority of the delegates. Protests were raised, of which the most stirring was that of Marshal Foch who inveighed against the failure to assure France security against Germany.¹ The protests were recorded, but the Treaty was approved. The following day the Conference met at Versailles, where the German delegates, led by Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, received the bulky document.

'It is strange,' wrote House, 'that the presentation of the Treaty to the Germans should occur on the anniversary of the sinking of the *Lusitania*. This was not by design, but by chance, for we hoped to present it last week and again on Monday or Tuesday of this week.'

¹ Other protests were made for various reasons by the Portuguese, the Chinese, and the Belgians.



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AFTER PRESENTING THE TREATY TO THE GERMANS AT VERSAILLES
President Wilson, Colonel House, General Bliss, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. White, and others

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'I started for Versailles shortly after two o'clock. We drove very rapidly and made what is usually a forty to forty-five minute trip in a half-hour. Clemenceau and a few others were already there. Balfour soon followed with the other members of the British Delegation. Orlando and Sonnino came in shortly after. . . .

'After we were seated, the Germans were notified and were brought in by Colonel Henry. We all arose when they entered, an action I was glad to see. Clemenceau made a speech of a few minutes. He did it in his usual composed though energetic fashion. . . . Much to our surprise, Brockdorff-Rantzau began to read a long reply. Clemenceau stood when he delivered his address, but Rantzau remained seated. White and I wondered whether it was not because he was too nervous to stand steadily upon his feet. When White went last Thursday to see their credentials, he said he never saw a greater exhibition of nervousness in a diplomat; that his knees literally knocked together, and White thought that he might at any moment faint.

'The speech he made in reply to Clemenceau's was an able one, but it seemed to me out of place. If I had been in his position I should have said: "Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Congress: War is a great gamble; we have lost and are willing to submit to any reasonable terms."

'After Brockdorff-Rantzau had delivered his speech, Clemenceau asked if there was anything else to say: Rantzau replied in the negative, and Clemenceau then declared the Congress adjourned. The Germans went out in advance, and the balance broke up into groups to discuss the occasion together. I congratulated both Lloyd George and Clemenceau, particularly Clemenceau, and told him that it was a great hour not only for France but for him. He showed some emotion. . . .'

The restraint of House's reference to Brockdorff-Rantzau

was not generally echoed by the delegates or the press, who regarded as a studied insult the fact that the German remained seated. Nor did they enjoy the vigor of his denunciation of the clause in the Treaty according to which Germany must admit her responsibility for the war.

'It is demanded of us,' said Brockdorff-Rantzau, 'that we shall confess ourselves to be the only ones guilty of the war. Such a confession in my mouth will be a lie. We are far from declining any responsibility that this great war of the world has come to pass. But we deny that Germany and its people were alone guilty.'

'Count Brockdorff-Rantzau was speaking with extreme bitterness of tone,' wrote Mr. C. T. Thompson, 'and his phrase "it would be a lie" was fairly hissed. He sat stolidly all the time, looking straight ahead through his large horn-rimmed spectacles. President Wilson leaned forward on the desk before him and gazed intently at Rantzau as he spoke.'¹

¹ Thompson, *The Peace Conference Day by Day*, 362.

CHAPTER XIII

VERSAILLES

Empires cannot be shattered and new states raised upon their ruins without disturbance. To create new boundaries is always to create new troubles. . . . I should have preferred a different peace, I doubt whether it could have been made.

Colonel House's Diary, June 29, 1919

I

WITH the delivery of the Treaty to the Germans on May 7, opportunity was given to the Peace Conference to concentrate upon the unfinished aspects of the Austrian and Hungarian Treaties. Public interest, however, was centered upon whether the Germans would sign. The first word from Germany was not encouraging and it foreshadowed the attitude which all Germany soon assumed towards President Wilson.

'The unbelievable has happened,' declared the President of the National Assembly at Weimar. 'The enemy presents us a treaty surpassing the most pessimistic forecasts. It means the annihilation of the German people. It is incomprehensible that a man who had promised the world a peace of justice, upon which a society of nations would be founded, has been able to assist in framing this project dictated by hate.'

On May 10, the first German notes of protest were delivered, and thereafter for some three weeks the written negotiations continued between Germany and the Allies. During this period Colonel House busied himself particularly with work on the organization of the League, which was now his main interest, and with the renewed attempts to discover a compromise solution of the Adriatic problem. As always

during the Conference, his office was filled with petitioners of one sort or another, who counted upon his influence with the President; long hours were filled in discussion of the German objections to the Treaty and of what changes ought to be made. Selections from his papers illustrate House's activities during this final phase of the Conference.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, April 30, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am sending you some letters for your signature which I hope you will approve.

Cecil, Drummond, and I think that it is necessary to call this League of Nations Organization Committee together as soon as possible. There are many things that Drummond says he must know immediately, such as financial arrangements, etc.

Please return the letters to me here for proper distribution. Some of them will have to be delivered with explanations.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

*The President to Mr. Lloyd George*¹

PARIS, April 30, 1919

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER:

The Plenary Conference on the 27th instant under the presidency of M. Clemenceau decided that a Committee of nine should be appointed to prepare plans for the organization of the League of Nations and for other purposes. I am to request that your Government, as one of the Powers designated to be represented on the Committee, will be good enough to nominate a member of the Committee. The first

¹ Identical letters were sent to Pessoa (Brazil), Hymans (Belgium), Clemenceau (France), Venizelos (Greece), Bonin (Italy), Saionji (Japan), Quinones de Leon (Spain).

meeting of the Committee will be held at the Hôtel Crillon on Monday, the fifth of May, at four o'clock.

I am, my dear Prime Minister

Faithfully yours

WOODROW WILSON

'*May 5, 1919: The meeting of the Organization Committee of the League of Nations,*' wrote House, 'was held in the same room of my apartment where the Covenant was written. It lasted only eight minutes. I called the meeting to order, asked Pichon to take the chair, Drummond to act as Secretary, and moved the attached resolutions, which were adopted without argument and without change, with the slight explanations noted in Article 2 and Article 4. One of my secretaries came out of the meeting and was asked how matters were going. His reply was, "It is finished and they have already gone." There were no speeches, no arguments, and nothing done to retard business.

'We did not have the correspondents in at the League of Nations meeting as I had planned, for the reason that Miller and Gordon thought this meeting and subsequent meetings prior to the ratification of the Treaty should not be emphasized, lest our Senate feel that we were disregarding them and perhaps putting the League into being with or without their consent.'

Resolutions

1. That the Acting Secretary General be instructed to prepare plans of organization of the League and submit them to the Committee.

2. That a credit of £100,000 shall be opened immediately on the joint and several guarantee of such of the States represented on the Committee, subject to any approval necessary by law.

2 (b). That the Acting Secretary General or such persons

as he may designate in writing shall be entitled to draw on this credit.

3. That the Acting Secretary General be authorized to engage a temporary staff and offices and incur such other expenditures as he considers necessary for carrying out the instructions of the Committee.

4. That the Acting Secretary General's salary shall be at the rate of £4000 a year with an allowance for *frais de représentation* of £6000 a year. A house shall be provided for the Secretary General at the permanent Seat of the League.

5. That the meeting be adjourned *sine die*, the Acting Secretary General being instructed to call the next meeting at such time and place as he shall think most suitable, having regard to the business to be done and the convenience of the members of the Committee.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, May 8, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Sonnino came to see me this afternoon to ask that I say to you that he and Orlando were exceedingly sorry because of the intemperate things that had been said in Italy both in public speeches and in the press. He said they did their best to curb it and that they would like you to know that they in no way sympathized with it. He spoke in a very conciliatory tone and hoped that a way out would be found. He had nothing to suggest.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'May 12, 1919: To-day has been busy. It might well be called Italian Day. Sonnino and di Cellere¹ lunched with us, Orlando called immediately after lunch, and the President

¹ Italian Ambassador to the United States.

arrived around six o'clock to discuss the Italian question. . . . Sonnino had just left when Orlando arrived. . . . We exchanged terms of friendship and admiration. He asked if he might come to-morrow at 9.30 for a real conference. I am looking forward to seeing him, always hoping that we may strike a successful formula.

'I have asked David Miller to see di Cellere to-night. . . .

'The President's visit to the Crillon was wholly devoted to Italy. Henry White was also present and sustained me. . . . The solution proposed was the placing of Fiume and Dalmatia wholly under the League of Nations for such a period as was deemed necessary to allow good sense and calm judgment to prevail. . . . I told him of Orlando's visit to-day and of his proposed visit to-morrow, in which he was deeply interested.

'*May 13, 1919:* Orlando was my most important caller. He arrived at 9.30 and remained until 10. We discussed the Adriatic question from every angle. I advised that the disputed territory be turned over to the League of Nations for a period until calmer judgment prevailed. It was decided that David Miller go to his apartment and that they together discuss the legal means by which a settlement could be brought about through the League of Nations or otherwise. Orlando named 11.30 for the appointment with Miller.

'Miller was with him for an hour and a half. They did not reach an agreement, but made some progress. They are to meet again to-morrow at nine. I advised the President of what we were doing and he expressed alarm for fear Orlando would take what I was saying as a direct offer from him, because of our close relations. I assured him that Orlando understood just how matters were. How could a settlement ever be reached if we did not discuss it in some such way?'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, May 14, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

This morning, in a conversation with David Miller, Signor Orlando has suggested the possibility of an agreement being reached between Italy and the Jugo-Slavs on the whole Adriatic question, including Fiume.

The two questions which Orlando asks are these: First, would the President approve an agreement freely reached between the Italian and Jugo-Slav Governments, assuming that they reached a solution different from that which he would lay down; second, if the President's answer to the first question is favorable, would the President be willing that conversations between the Italian and Jugo-Slav Governments be carried on through the friendly medium of a representative of the American Government.

Will you please advise me? ¹

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

'May 15, 1919: The better part of to-day, as also previous days, has been taken up with the Adriatic question. Trumbitch ² was with me a large part of the morning. Thomas Nelson Page followed, and Orlando came in the afternoon. . . .

'There is no need to go into the arguments used by me or by them, but the situation is different from what it formerly was. The Italians are now talking sense. . . .

'May 16, 1919: It has been the Adriatic settlement again to-day.³ Trumbitch came in the morning and it was with

¹ President Wilson returned this letter, underlining the words 'freely reached' and with a pencil endorsement, 'Yes to both questions.'

² Minister for Foreign Affairs for the Jugo-Slavs.

³ Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, II, 333:

'Colonel House told me that Orlando would be ready to make an

difficulty I obtained his consent to a discussion with the Italians, with me acting as intermediary. This was finally accomplished and I had Trumbitch in the large reception room, Orlando and Count di Cellere in the salon, with my study between. Miller and Beer I placed with the Italians, and Frazier and Johnson with Trumbitch. . . .

'We got them so nearly to an agreement that it was a matter of deep regret that we could not bring them all the way.

'The Italians agreed that Fiume should be a free city. They agreed to give the Jugo-Slavs all of Dalmatia if certain islands could be Italian and if the cities of Zara and Sebenico might become free cities under Italian sovereignty.

agreement with the Southern Slavs along the whole line within twenty-four hours and to accept him as intermediary provided that Trumbitch would also accept. House therefore wished me to secure from Trumbitch a written declaration that the Southern Slav delegation would be ready to negotiate a settlement with the Italians and to accept House as intermediary.

'When I made this suggestion to Trumbitch I found him and the other Yugoslavs in a recalcitrant mood. The Austrian delegation had been summoned to Saint-Germain for the negotiation of peace, and a marked disposition to be very tender towards Austria had become noticeable among the "Big Three." The Southern Slavs began to fear that, while the Italians were driving a hard bargain with them in the Adriatic, the other Allies would support the Austrians in driving a hard bargain with them in the delimitation of the Slovene frontier in Carinthia. Consequently, Trumbitch declined to make offhand the declaration which House wanted and insisted that, even should he be forced on the morrow to negotiate with the Italians, he must be assured of fair terms from the Allies in Carinthia. Colonel House thought that there was some justification for this demand and asked me to hammer out that night a compromise line between the Austrian and the Southern Slav claims in Carinthia. Next day, House took matters into his own hands and summoned Orlando and Trumbitch to the Hôtel Crillon where, for four hours, a conference went on in watertight compartments. Trumbitch, tied down by definite instructions from his delegation, sat in one room; Orlando and an Italian diplomatist sat in another, while Colonel House, Frazier, and Major Douglas Johnson acted as intermediaries between them. The result was a total deadlock, although Orlando pressed for a final solution before midnight with an insistence which the Americans could not understand. I discovered, however, that Orlando was fearful lest his rival, Signor Nitti, should turn Italian public opinion against him, and wished to save himself by announcing an Adriatic settlement.'

'The Jugo-Slavs practically agreed that Italy should receive (1) the Sexten Valley, (2) Tarvis District. It was agreed by both that (1) Fiume, including Susak, was to be an independent city and a free port under the protection of the League of Nations; (2) Dalmatia to be neutralized under Jugo-Slav sovereignty; (3) Pago to go to the mainland.

'The Jugo-Slavs agreed that Lussin and Pelagosa should go to Italy, but they dissented as to Lissa, although they said they would accept it if we insisted.

'The Italians wanted the eastern part of Istria to be included in their boundaries. To this the Jugo-Slavs objected. I think, however, we could have reached a compromise upon this.¹ The Italians wanted Zara and Sebenico to be free cities under Italian sovereignty. The Jugo-Slavs would not agree. Italy wanted the remaining islands within the line of the Treaty of London. To this also the Jugo-Slavs objected. . . .

'We started the conference a little after five o'clock and did not break up until nine at night. The Italians regarded it as a last effort to come to a direct agreement, but they are returning here to-morrow at 9.30 to see whether they cannot reach an understanding with me.

'I saw the President in the afternoon and told him what I was doing in the matter of the Adriatic settlement. He thanked me, but showed no inclination to be conciliatory to the Italians.

'General Smuts called in the morning to tell me that he and Botha had almost decided not to sign the Treaty if the Entente refused to make such changes in it as the Germans suggested, and which the liberal world would approve.²

¹ As it turned out, this proved to be the unsurmountable barrier, upon which the Jugo-Slavs refused to yield until the direct negotiations that culminated in the Treaty of Rapallo.

² Smuts wrote to both Lloyd George and Wilson to this effect. He finally signed the Treaty, but issued a public statement in which he insisted upon continuous revision of the Treaty in a liberal sense under the ægis of the League of Nations.

He thought the Germans would win a decided diplomatic victory by pointing out the many injustices which the Treaty contained. He also thought in the event the Entente refused these just demands, and should then undertake to blockade Germany and starve her people into submission, it would cause world-wide revolution. We agreed that while public opinion did sustain the Entente in its blockade of Germany when they were fighting for their lives, it would not sustain them when they were starving women and children for the purpose of trying to force the signing of a treaty.

'I sincerely trust that this ordeal will not have to be faced. I shall not be in favor of starving the people of Germany. At one time I thought perhaps this would be the only way out in the event Germany did not sign, but at that stage I did not know the real conditions in Germany and how much suffering there was. I have never been in favor of the blockade, and tried my best at the beginning, before we entered the war, to have some understanding reached by which food could go into Germany through neutral ports without question. . . .

'The Secretary of State for India, E. S. Montagu, was another caller. He came to point out the danger of breaking up the Turkish Empire. He said the entire Mohammedan population of India and the East was in a highly nervous state in regard to it, and that he personally believed if this was done it would eventually lead to Great Britain having to abandon her Asiatic possessions. . . .

'Pichon was my first caller this morning. He wished to know whether we would agree to the publication of those parts of the Treaty which had already been published in Germany and which are now coming into France in German papers. The President at first agreed. Later he thought it was best not to do so while Lloyd George was absent. . . . The President himself is not in favor of any publication. . . .

'I urged the contrary policy, and that the entire Treaty should be given to the public.

'*May 17, 1919:* Orlando and di Cellere were my first visitors. We worked on the Adriatic problem from half-past nine o'clock until eleven, but further than "whittling" down the Italian claims, arrived at no definite results. I discussed the subject with the President before they came, but he was inflexible in his determination to yield nothing.

'The Italians feel they have been mistreated. Self-determination is to be applied, according to them, only when the Italians desire something. When anything is to be given, however, to France, England, Poland, or other states, then it is overlooked. They are beginning to be bitter not only against us, but against France and England.'

II

'*May 20, 1919:* Dr. King came to-day about the Syrian Commission, and I told the President it was something of a scandal that this commission had not already gone to Syria as promised the Arabs. The honor of Great Britain, France, and the United States was at stake, and I hoped he would insist that the commission leave at once. The President assured me that he had done everything he could in the direction indicated. I then suggested that he set Monday as the time when our commission would start, regardless of the French and English. He adopted the suggestion and said he would tell Clemenceau and Lloyd George to-morrow.

'I took occasion to express the hope that the President would not agree to blockade Germany in the event the Germans refused to sign the Treaty. I spoke with considerable feeling and said that the world, outside of France and perhaps a part of England, would not tolerate such a procedure for the purpose of enforcing a treaty. The President was sympathetic to this view.

'*May 21, 1919:* General Pershing was in and remained for

a half-hour. We discussed the return of our troops to America. Three hundred and twelve thousand will be sent this month. The record last month was 300,000. At this rate all our troops will be in the United States by August 15. Pershing is not enthusiastic over any of our troops remaining for occupation purposes.

'*May 22, 1919*: Makino and Chinda came to ask advice about sitting in at the Council of Four. They say it is becoming embarrassing to inform their Government about the happenings of the Conference through newspaper reports. They never know what is going on until they see it printed, and that of course is merely a small part of the proceedings. I suggested that they address a letter to Clemenceau, stating that since Japan was expected to guarantee the Treaty and its provisions, they would expect from now to sit in the Council of Four; I also suggested that they state their embarrassment at having to give their Government information concerning the Conference which they had gained from newspapers. . . . Makino and Chinda almost always come together.¹

'Wellington Koo also wished advice. His trouble was that his people are demanding that their delegates at Paris should not sign the Peace Treaty because of the Shantung decision. He knew this would embarrass the other signatories of the Treaty and he wished counsel about what to do. They have been considering signing with a reservation, and he wondered if that could be done without offence. I advised him to see the President and to say to him that he had noticed in the American Press that Mr. Elihu Root had advised the American Commissioners when they signed the Treaty to make a reservation in regard to the Monroe Doctrine, and that the Chinese delegates had decided to accept the same kind of advice as to themselves; that they therefore intended to

¹ The Japanese were shortly invited to sit with the representatives of the other Principal Powers.

sign the Treaty with a reservation because of the Shantung decision.¹

'May 24, 1919: I began to sit this morning for a portrait Sir William Orpen is painting for the British Government. . . . Yesterday I sat for a Frenchman who is painting a picture of the public reception given the President at the Hôtel de Ville for the Municipality of Paris; strangely enough, for I was not present at this reception and have not been to any such functions. They evidently thought I should have been there and intend putting me in the picture whether or no.

'Alexander Kerensky came by appointment in the afternoon to tell again of Russia. Felix Frankfurter called to talk of the Jews in Palestine.

'May 25, 1919: Tardieu was my most interesting caller. He came from Clemenceau to tell me that Orlando had just been to the War Office to notify him that the Italians intended at to-morrow's meeting to demand from the French and British the Treaty of London. Tardieu was in a great state of mind and wished me to communicate with the President, which I did over the private telephone. I had just left the President at the "Paris White House," but at that time neither of us knew of this latest *dénouement* in the Adriatic situation.

'The President was disturbed, but not "panicky." He thought a way out would be found.

'May 28, 1919: Tardieu was again my most important caller. He was up last night until one o'clock with the Italians. He came at 9.30 to tell how far they had gotten in their discussion. I got in touch with the President over the telephone and afterward went up to see him. Lloyd George was already there. After some discussion, George and I went over to his apartment in rue Nitot and had a conference with Orlando. We then went back to the President. By that

¹ The Chinese, upon express instructions, finally refused to sign the German Treaty.

time Clemenceau was with the President, and the four of us conferred over Italian matters and the Austrian Treaty.

'Clemenceau did not like the Austrians calling themselves "The German Austrian Republic." Lloyd George insisted that this was the proper designation. The President sustained him. I took Clemenceau's part and suggested that they be advised to use the name "The New Austrian Republic." This was tentatively accepted. It was agreed, however, that Jules Cambon should see the Czecho-Slovaks and Jugo-Slavs and ask them whether there was any objection to this procedure.

'We have the Adriatic question whittled down to the vanishing point. The President . . . wishes to leave the matter to the Jugo-Slavs. Both George and I objected to this and thought the Jugo-Slavs should be told that we consider the proposal a fair one and recommend it to them for acceptance. We explained to the President that there were several nations concerned in the Jugo-Slav side of the controversy, and that it was impossible for them to accept any settlement that was not recommended by the Allies. He finally yielded.

'*May 30, 1919*: The Archbishop of Carinthia with several delegates from that country came to expound the cause of the Slovenes. They were delighted to have the news that their wishes have been met. I told them that their demands had exceeded their prudence, with the result that more territory had been allotted to them than they could probably hold by a plebiscite. They did not deny this.¹

'Harris, of the London *Daily News*, was in. So also was Pessoa of Brazil. He came for advice regarding an offer which France had made for the thirty German ships leased to her by Brazil. I advised accepting the offer, because I believed the price of tonnage now was greater than it would

¹ The plebiscite later held in the Klagenfurt Basin gave the territory to Austria.

be within another year, and that the type of ships would improve.

'I did not go to the Suresnes Cemetery to hear the President. The speech was a masterpiece of its kind. I have written the President what I thought of it. I am quite sincere in believing that the President will rank with the great orators of all time.

'*May 31, 1919:* I did not go to the Plenary Conference. I thoroughly disapprove of the manner in which they are conducted. The treaties are made practically behind closed doors, and the small countries directly concerned in them know practically nothing of the conditions until they are read at these Plenary Sessions. . . .

'In my opinion, the procedure followed should be the same as that adopted in the framing of the Armistice. Clemenceau, George, Orlando, and I met practically every morning alone and discussed what was to be presented to the full session at Versailles in the afternoon. If this plan had been followed with the Treaties, the Council of Four could have met in the same way to outline the problems and reach conclusions, and they could have been presented the same day or the next to the Plenary Conference. If this had been done, all the delegates would have had a hand in the making of the Treaties and there would have been no heart-burnings or recriminations as now. These Plenary Sessions should have been in the open and the peoples of all countries could have followed the proceedings day by day. I can see the inconvenience of such procedure, and yet the good outweighs it all.

'The Germans are giving us an example of open diplomacy. They print the Treaty as soon as it is given them, and we are getting in Paris the German edition. It is being sold in Germany and Holland and near-by countries at a ridiculously low price, something like fifty cents a copy. Nevertheless, be it remembered, the United States Senate has never seen the Treaty as a whole.

'We had a conference with the Jugo-Slavs. They brought a refusal to our proposals of yesterday. They called their reply "a concession," but as far as any of us could see, it meant that within three years the whole of the Dalmatian Coast, Istria, and the islands, would go to Jugo-Slavia. They had worked out a careful plan by which after three years and a plebiscite it would be certain to go to them. They did not leave a single loophole for the Italians to win. When I told the President this, he declared they were right. . . .'

III

The failure of the Italian-Jugo-Slav negotiations was overshadowed by the question as to whether the German Treaty should be changed in view of the objections raised by the German delegates and, if so, to what extent. The German protests crystallized the sentiments of a number of the more liberal delegates that the Treaty was unfair; some of the experts actually resigned. They also convinced Lloyd George that there was serious danger of the Germans refusing to sign the Treaty and leaving the Allies face to face with a disorganized Europe. House found the British Prime Minister anxious to reconsider many points, especially as regards the period of occupation of the Rhine, the eastern frontier of Germany, and the admission of Germany into the League. He was supported by members of the British Delegation, notably General Smuts, who reiterated his disinclination to signing the Treaty as it had been drafted. In a conversation with Sir William Wiseman, Mr. Lloyd George stated clearly that the time had come to decide whether to have a 'hell-peace' or a 'heaven-peace.'

But Clemenceau was adamant. When he heard the suggestion of reducing the period of fifteen years' occupation, he declared he would not make it fourteen years, three hundred and sixty-four days. Nor would he consider the immediate admission of Germany into the League. Again he pointed

out that every concession suggested by Lloyd George was at the expense of France.

Colonel House was naturally sympathetic with all efforts to liberalize the Peace terms and had frequently expressed his dissatisfaction at many of the compromises which it had been necessary to make. He especially disliked the economic aspects of the Treaty. But House feared that if a wholesale revision of the Treaty were begun, complete agreement between the Powers at Paris could never again be achieved.

'*May 30, 1919: Clemenceau declared,*' wrote House after a talk with him, 'that he intended to stand firm against any substantial reduction in the terms of the Treaty, no matter what the consequences. In my opinion, if he does this he will win. I am not sure that his policy is best. The Treaty is not a good one, it is too severe. . . . However, the time to have the Treaty right was when it was being formed and not now. It is a question if one commenced to unravel what has already been done, whether it could be stopped. It is also a question as to the effect upon the Germans. We desired from the beginning a fair peace, and one well within the Fourteen Points, and one which could stand the scrutiny of the neutral world and of all time. It is not such a peace, but since the Treaty has been written, I question whether it would be well to seriously modify it.'

At a meeting of the American Commissioners held on June 3, with the entire American Delegation, President Wilson expressed substantially the same views. The American experts voiced their dissatisfaction with the clauses which left the total of Reparations undecided, with the long period of occupation of German territory by French armies, and with the assignment of German coal districts in Silesia to Poland. It was agreed that the experts should urge changes if the other Powers could be persuaded to accept

them; but it was also the sense of the meeting that to press for anything that might threaten the unanimity of the Allied Powers would be unwise and dangerous. The President was firm in his insistence that he would not be frightened into concessions by the German threat of a refusal to sign the Treaty.

‘The great problem of the moment,’ Wilson said, ‘is the problem of agreement, because the most fatal thing that could happen, I should say, in the world, would be that sharp lines of division should be drawn among the Allied and Associated Powers. They ought to be held together, if it can reasonably be done, and that makes a problem like the problem of occupation look almost insoluble, because the British are at one extreme, and the French refusal to move is at the opposite extreme. . . .

‘What is necessary is to get out of this atmosphere of war, get out of the present exaggerated feelings and exaggerated appearances, and I believe that if we can once get out of them into the calmer airs it would be easier to come to satisfactory solutions. . . .

‘I don’t want to seem to be unreasonable, but my feeling is this: that we ought not, with the object of getting it signed, make changes in the Treaty, if we think that it embodies what we were contending for; that the time to consider all these questions was when we were writing the Treaty, and it makes me a little tired for people to come and say now that they are afraid the Germans won’t sign, and their fear is based upon things that they insisted upon at the time of the writing of the Treaty. . . .

‘And that is the thing that happened. These people that overrode our judgment and wrote things into the Treaty that are now the stumbling-blocks, are falling over themselves to remove these stumbling-blocks. Now, if they ought not to have been there I say, remove them, but I say

do not remove them merely for the fact of having the Treaty signed. . . .

'Though we did not keep them from putting irrational things in the Treaty, we got very serious modifications out of them. If we had written the Treaty the way they wanted it, the Germans would have gone home the minute they read it.

'Well, the Lord be with us.'¹

The French remained firm in their stand against any important change in the settlement and pointed out that during the construction of the Treaty, German arguments had always been known and considered. They refused any shortening in the period of occupation; and the British, when it came to a final issue, would not agree to a definite sum of Reparations being set forth in the Treaty.

M. André Tardieu to Colonel House

PARIS, June 10, 1919

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Very grave mistakes have been made during the past week: there is only just time to repair them.

For more than five months the heads of Governments and their experts have studied the terms of the Peace to be imposed on Germany. They have reached an agreement and they have communicated to the Germans a text which, if it does not yet bind Count Brockdorff — in any case unquestionably binds the Allies.

Could the Allies suppose that this text would be satisfactory to Germany? Of course not. However, they adopted it. Germany protests, as it was certain she would. Immediately a modification of the text is undertaken. I say this is a confession of weakness and a confession of lack of seri-

¹ Stenographic report of meeting of June 3.

ousness, for which all the Allied Governments will pay dearly in terms of public opinion! Is it an impossible Treaty? Is it an unjust Treaty? Count Brockdorff believes it is. If we change it, we admit that we think as he does. What a condemnation of the work we have done during the past sixteen weeks!

Mr. Lloyd George has said, 'But they will not sign and we shall have a thousand difficulties.' It is the argument we heard so often during the war — after the battle of the Marne, after Verdun, after the German offensive in the spring of 1918, people said in all of our countries, 'Let us make peace to avoid difficulties.' We did not listen to them and we did well. We went on with the war and we won it. Shall we have less heart for peace than we had for war?

I add that these public discussions between Allies over a Treaty drawn up between Allies weaken us more every day in the eyes of an adversary who respects only firmness (see the reports from Versailles which arrived to-day).

Thus on the general principle my opinion is this: a week ago, we ought to have answered the Germans, 'We will change nothing.' If we had only made this answer, the Treaty would be signed to-day. We did not do it. What ought we to do now?

As regards the special principles about which amendments are being considered, what is the position?

Reparations? The British who made the first suggestion of amendment are with us to-day against any modification and it is your delegation which proposes (along with other changes which France cannot possibly accept) a total figure of 125 thousand million francs, which would barely cover as far as France is concerned the two-thirds of the specific damages, reparation for which is imposed on Germany by the text of May 7. We will not accept it.

League of Nations? We have laid down after four months

of study the conditions in which Germany may enter the League. Are we going to change them? Are we going to confess that our decision falls before the observations of Count Brockdorff? How after that could we defend the Treaty before our respective Parliaments?

All these vacillations, which were repeated in the matters of the Sarre and of the left bank of the Rhine, were the results of the initial mistake. But let me add another word.

No one has the right to ask France to accept such terms. France has an unique experience of Germany. No one has suffered as she has. It is useless to think of persuading France to accept such close cohabitation with Germany in the near future in violation of the text of the Covenant, first of all because France will not accept it and then because it is not just.

When the question arose of Japan's status in the League of Nations, every one gave way to the American objections.¹ When dealing with Germany, it is France that must be heard.

But above all I would not have the moral position of the Allies sacrificed to the Brockdorff memorandum. I would not have them subjected to the unjustifiable humiliation of admitting that the peace built up by them after more than four months of incessant labour is, as Germany asserts, an unjust and impossible peace, for this is contrary to the truth.

ANDRÉ TARDIEU

The result was that the last-minute changes in the Treaty were of comparatively slight importance, except for the decision to hold a plebiscite in Upper Silesia, the outright cession of which to Poland had especially irritated the Germans. The reply of the Allies was drafted in a formal statement which was handed over on June 16. It accepted the

¹ M. Tardieu expresses here the general view, not sustained by the papers of Colonel House, which attribute the chief objection to Japanese claims to the Australian Prime Minister.

contention that the Treaty ought to be based upon the pre-Armistice Agreement, but maintained that the Germans were in error in arguing that the Treaty and the pre-Armistice Agreement were not in accord. The Treaty was therefore left substantially intact for Germany to take or leave.

Whether the Germans would actually sign remained in doubt until June 23, and Marshal Foch made all necessary preparations for a movement of troops across the Rhine. The German Ministry resigned and it was only with difficulty that delegates could be found who would put their signatures to the document.

Colonel House remained in Paris until June 11, his time largely engaged with preparations for the organization of the League of Nations. After a week in England, he returned for final conferences with the President and to take part in the ceremony of signing at Versailles.

'June 10, 1919: Went to-day to see Sir William Orpen's portrait of the President. He has not given him a third sitting. Orpen was in despair because the President told him he would not be able to sit again. He did not tell him this until after the sitting yesterday, therefore Orpen said he had not done some of the things he would have done had he known it was to be the last. I told him not to worry, because I was sure we could get the President to sit for a third time as agreed. I like the portrait, although it shows up some of the President's prominent features. . . . It is an entirely different looking gentleman from Sargent's æsthetic scholar and has more of the "rough and tumble" look. I have seen him look as Sargent sees him one time in twenty, but I have seen him nineteen times out of twenty look as Orpen sees him. I think I never knew a man whose general appearance changed so much from hour to hour. . . .

'It is not the President's face alone that changes. He is one of the most difficult and complex characters I have ever

known. He is so contradictory that it is hard to pass judgment upon him. . . . When one gets access to him, there is no more charming man in all the world than Woodrow Wilson. I have never seen any one who did not leave his presence impressed. He could use this charm to enormous personal and public advantage if he would. . . .

'There is little left for me to do in Paris. The answer to the Germans is practically ready, and it is not intended that I should remain in Paris with Lansing, White, and Bliss to button up the matters that will be left over after Germany signs. I have been away from home for eight strenuous months, and while I do not feel at all tired, yet I would like to shift the scene. In a way I realize that in breaking up here it means the end of an epoch in my life, for after the Peace Conference is wound up I feel that I shall do other things than those I have been doing for so many years.'

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, June 11, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Will you please read the enclosed draft of a letter which Drummond proposes to send to an American jurist among others, and let me know whether you approve of it?

I told Drummond that after consulting you I would suggest a distinguished American lawyer to whom this invitation might be sent. My own judgment would be Root, Chief Justice White, or Taft, in the order named. I think we need Taft in the United States this summer. The Chief Justice might not be willing to undertake this work, unconnected as it is with the work of the Supreme Court. Root's selection would be a happy one not only from the standpoint of international law but also politically.¹

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

¹ The letter of Sir Eric Drummond, of which a draft was here submitted

'June 11, 1919: I have had a stirring day,' wrote House in his diary, 'preparatory to leaving for England to-morrow. The Brazilian delegate and a delegation of Georgians and the President himself were my most important visitors.

'The Georgians came to present their claims in person, although they had already given them to me in writing. I listened to their story with sympathy and promised to do what I could.

'The Brazilian delegate wished to see me first about the League of Nations and their representative upon the Secretariat which we had already encompassed. He wished to know when another meeting of the League would be held and where, but above all he wanted advice concerning the German ships interned by Brazil during the war. The French have offered to buy them, but they desire to pay for them in merchandise, or at best, they desire to give Brazil credit in France for the amount without arranging for them to get this money out of France. I advised that they stand firm for the moment.

'My interview with the President was in the nature of a farewell. The main thing we talked about was the appointment of an international lawyer of great standing to sit in London during the summer in the formation of the International Court as required by Article 14 of the Covenant. After we had talked the matter over, he too thought Root would be the best selection, because of the prominent part he has taken in urging an international court. Then too, the fact that he is a Republican will add something to the strength of his appointment.

'We discussed the Adriatic question, Germany's entrance into the League of Nations, Reparations, and a number of other matters. He asked me to suggest names for the differ-

to the President, inviting an American jurist to form part of the committee to draw up plans for the establishment of the Permanent Court of International Justice, was later sent to Mr. Root.

ent commissions on which the United States would have representatives in the event the Treaty was signed.

'I was disappointed to hear him say that he had agreed to have a plebiscite in Silesia. I am afraid it cannot be honestly carried out.'

IV

'*June 20, 1919*: Returned to Paris last night at seven o'clock, after a week of rest at Greenwood Gate, Sussex. . . .

'The President returned from Belgium this morning and had a meeting with all the Commissioners at eleven o'clock. . . . We first discussed the attitude we should take about the League of Nations. I thought we should take no part officially, but should advise unofficially until our Senate ratified the Treaty. This view met the approval of the President and the others. . . . I have made it clear to all the newspaper correspondents that no appointments will be made on any of the commissions of the League of Nations until after the Treaty has been ratified.

'*June 21, 1919*: Branting, Swedish ex-Prime Minister and Socialist, was an afternoon caller. He came to discuss the Aaland Island controversy with Finland and to ask my good offices in getting a just and immediate settlement.¹

'After lunch I gave Sir William Orpen a final sitting. The President was there when I arrived. I talked to him for the last fifteen minutes of his sitting. Orpen has got a good portrait of him, though not a flattering one. His hair is seldom as ruffled as Orpen has it. . . . Orpen thanked me for having persuaded the President to sit for him.

'*June 22, 1919*: The Archbishop of Albania was an afternoon caller. He was a gorgeous spectacle with his heavy gold necklace, enormous gold cross, wide red sash, and red piping running down the front of his robe. I asked him to send me a memorandum in writing so I could more efficiently meet his desires.'

¹ The dispute was ultimately settled by the League.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, June 23, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

The morning after the Peace Treaty with Germany has been signed, the *Daily Mail* wishes to publish comments on the Treaty by President Poincaré, M. Clemenceau, and yourself, and they have asked me to ask you if you will be good enough to give them a short statement.

I have drafted the enclosed, which seems to me to be appropriate. I suggest that you authorize me to give this to them. Generally speaking they have supported you during the Conference, and I believe that your giving them this would be a graceful acknowledgment of this support.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Statement for Daily Mail

By the terms of the Treaty of Peace, the greatest possible measure of compensation has been provided for those people whose homes and lives were wrecked by the storm of war, and security has been given them that this storm shall never rise again. In so far as we came together to ensure these things, the work of the Conference is finished.

But in a larger sense, its work begins to-day. In answer to an unmistakable appeal, a League of Nations has been constituted and a Covenant has been drawn which shows the way to international understanding and to peace. We stand at the crossroads, however, and the way is only pointed out. Those who saw through the travail of war the vision of a world made secure for mankind must consecrate their lives to its realization.

*Mr. Gilbert Close*¹ to Colonel House

PARIS, June 24, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

The President asks me to return to you the enclosed statement for the *Daily Mail* and he would be obliged if you would give it out to the *Daily Mail* as from the President.

Sincerely yours

GILBERT F. CLOSE

'June 23, 1919: This has been a red-letter day. The Germans have notified us that they will sign the Treaty. I went to the Ministry of War to embrace Clemenceau and to be embraced in turn. When I congratulated him . . . he blessed all American men, women and children, and the House family individually and in general. He looked fatigued and he told me he was having great trouble not only with the Chamber but also with his Cabinet, and that he intended to resign within the next six weeks. I urged him to do so.

'We discussed the signing of the Treaty and whether it could be done before Friday. He thought not. I was rather insistent that it be hurried. The guns are being fired, rockets are going up, and crowds are parading the streets. It would seem better to wait until the actual signature had taken place. The Germans are not unlikely to refuse at the last moment or to do something to delay the signing.

'The sinking of the German fleet at Scapa Flow, and their signified intention of sending only one unimportant and unknown representative here to sign the Peace, is indicative of temper and unreliability. . . .

'The French are indignant and blame the British for not being more careful. Lloyd George has asked each of the Allied Governments to give an opinion whether the British exercised due care. . . .

'Clemenceau is angry with the Germans, first, about the

¹ Confidential Secretary to the President.

sinking of the German battle fleet at Scapa Flow; second, because of the burning of the French flags which Germany under the Treaty would be compelled to return to France. What he wishes to do is to send a note to the Germans immediately protesting against these acts, and then after the Treaty is signed move Allied troops into Essen as a punitive measure.

'General Bliss and I took the lead against such action. My advice was to not even send a protest, much less consent to the occupation of Essen. The great thing was to have the Treaty signed. After that was done, if it was thought wise, a protest might be sent Germany concerning the two incidents mentioned, preferably, though, laying the blame on the old Government and expressing a hope that the new Government would carry out in good faith the terms of the Treaty. My opinion was there would be lawless acts of this nature for some months, but after that Germany would get down to a real understanding of the situation and try to fulfill her obligations so far as she was able. . . .

'*June 25, 1919:* The British are trying to lay the blame for the sinking of the German ships upon us. They claim they wished to have the ships "surrendered" instead of "interned," but that we insisted upon internment. As a matter of fact, the British Navy did want them surrendered. Benson advocated internment and George, Clemenceau, Orlando, Foch, and I thought it might imperil the chances for the Armistice if we demanded surrender, and we therefore thought it wise to intern them.

'At the Armistice proceedings Foch made the remark that he would not give one French soldier's life for all the German ships afloat, and that to demand surrender might mean a continuance of the war and the loss of many lives.

'The reason the point is being raised is that the British Navy claim if the ships had been surrendered, they would

have put their own crews on board; but since they were interned, it was necessary under the terms of the Armistice to leave the Germans in charge — hence the sinking.¹

‘Our Navy people, with whom I have talked, do not agree with this view.

‘*June 26, 1919:* Vesnitch came to discuss the League of Nations and the disappointment felt by the Slavic people because none of them were placed upon the Council of the League. He pointed out that there were Belgium, France, Spain, Italy and Brazil, five Latin peoples, and out of more than two hundred million Slavic peoples there was not one [representative in the Council]. This was a stupid blunder for which I am largely responsible. The oversight comes from not having planned in advance.

‘*June 28, 1919:* This is the great day. I did very little in the morning. Beer went to the meeting of the Commission on Mandates and represented me. The next meeting will be in London ten days from now. . . .

‘I was successful in getting practically all my secretariat still in Paris to Versailles to witness the ceremonies.

‘I did not leave the Crillon until about 2.15 and reached my seat about ten minutes before the Germans arrived. . . . The approach to Versailles was an imposing sight, as indeed was the entrance to the Palace. Thousands of people lined the roadway from Paris to Versailles, increasing in number as we drew near the Palace. There was a great display of cavalry with pennants flying, and upon the Grand Stairway, which witnessed the last stand of the bodyguards during the French Revolution, chasseurs in gorgeous uniforms lined both sides up to the very entrance of the Salle des Glaces, where the signing took place.

‘Balfour and I went in together, and presently were joined by Lloyd George and Sonnino. I lingered behind in order not to get into the crowd that was pressing through the

¹ See above, Chapter V.

only door at which entrance was possible. The ceremonies lasted nearly an hour. . . .

'When the Germans had signed and the great Allied Powers had done so, the cannons began to boom. I had a feeling of sympathy for the Germans who sat there quite stoically. It was not unlike what was done in olden times, when the conqueror dragged the conquered at his chariot wheels. To my mind, it is out of keeping with the new era which we profess an ardent desire to promote. I wish it could have been more simple and that there might have been an element of chivalry, which was wholly lacking. The affair was elaborately staged and made as humiliating to the enemy as it well could be.

'After the signing we went to the terrace to see the fountains, which were playing for the first time since the war began. Aeroplanes were in the air, guns were being fired, and the thousands surrounding Versailles made a brilliant and memorable scene.

'We went to the station to see the President and his party off. There was a large crowd of notables. . . . I compared it to the last leave-taking, very much to the credit of this one. There was more enthusiasm, there were more people, and the whole affair was more brilliant and successful.

'*June 29, 1919:* My last conversation with the President yesterday was not reassuring. I urged him to meet the Senate in a conciliatory spirit; if he treated them with the same consideration he had used with his foreign colleagues here, all would be well. In reply he said, "House, I have found one can never get anything in this life that is worth while without fighting for it." I combated this, and reminded him that Anglo-Saxon civilization was built up on compromise. . . .'

v

'*June 29, 1919:* I am leaving Paris, after eight fateful months, with conflicting emotions. Looking at the Con-

ference in retrospect there is much to approve and much to regret. It is easy to say what should have been done, but more difficult to have found a way for doing it.

'The bitterness engendered by the war, the hopes raised high in many quarters because of victory, the character of the men having the dominant voices in the making of the Treaty, all had their influence for good or for evil, and were to be reckoned with. There seemed to be no full realization of the conditions which had to be met. An effort was made to enact a peace upon the usual lines. This should never have been attempted. The greater part of civilization had been shattered and history could guide us but little in the making of this peace.

'How splendid it would have been had we blazed a new and better trail! However, it is to be doubted whether this could have been done, even if those in authority had so decreed, for the peoples back of them had to be reckoned with. It may be that Wilson might have had the power and influence if he had remained in Washington and kept clear of the Conference. When he stepped from his lofty pedestal and wrangled with representatives of other states upon equal terms, he became as common clay.

'I wonder what motives actuated Clemenceau when he receded from his first position and chose to welcome the President into the arena where the debates concerning peace were to proceed day by day. I doubt whether he saw that its effect would be to lessen Wilson's commanding influence, and bring it nearer a level with that of Lloyd George and his own. It is more likely that he was content to accept my assurance that the President would readily acquiesce in having him, Clemenceau, preside over the Congress, and it may well be that he considered that France would fare better if Wilson could sit in conference and obtain an intimate knowledge of France's claims against the Central Powers.

'To those who are saying that the Treaty is bad and should



COLONEL AND MRS. HOUSE AT VERSAILLES
AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY

YHABBU IUTNACREB

APR. 1964

never have been made and that it will involve Europe in infinite difficulties in its enforcement, I feel like admitting it. But I would also say in reply that empires cannot be shattered and new states raised upon their ruins without disturbance. To create new boundaries is always to create new troubles. The one follows the other. While I should have preferred a different peace, I doubt whether it could have been made, for the ingredients for such a peace as I would have had were lacking at Paris. And even if those of us like Smuts, Botha, and Cecil could have had our will, as much trouble might have followed a peace of our making as seems certain to follow this.

‘The same forces that have been at work in the making of this peace would be at work to hinder the enforcement of a different kind of peace, and no one can say with certitude that anything better than has been done could be done at this time. We have had to deal with a situation pregnant with difficulties and one which could be met only by an unselfish and idealistic spirit, which was almost wholly absent and which was too much to expect of men come together at such a time and for such a purpose.

‘And yet I wish we had taken the other road, even if it were less smooth, both now and afterward, than the one we took. We would at least have gone in the right direction and if those who follow us had made it impossible to go the full length of the journey planned, the responsibility would have rested with them and not with us.’

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

A great many people, Democrats, Progressives, and Republicans, have talked with me about ratification of the Treaty and they are all pretty much of one mind regarding the necessity for its passage with or without reservations. To the ordinary man, the distance between the Treaty and the reservations is slight. . . . To-day there are millions of helpless people throughout the world who look to you and you only. . . .

Colonel House to President Wilson, November 24, 1919.

I

ON the day following the signing of the Versailles Treaty, President Wilson embarked upon the *George Washington* at Brest. His nerves were worn and his physique shaken, but his spirits were high. If he guessed anything of the struggle that lay before him in the United States, he concealed the suspicion. The feeling of those that accompanied him on the boat was that the Senate must and would ratify the Treaty; that the country would enter enthusiastically upon the venture of the League of Nations.

It was for the purpose of hastening the practical development of the League that the President asked Colonel House to proceed to London, where, during the ensuing six weeks, he met with the commission appointed by the Peace Conference to draft definite conditions for the operation of Mandates. House had early been convinced that the Mandates offered the foundation of a new and most desirable development in international affairs; as early as 1914 he had advocated a system of international supervision of colonial areas.¹ Not gladly but willingly, therefore, he buried himself in a mass of technical details, the sort of task for which ordinarily he had little taste; fortunately he had as adviser George Louis Beer, who had been recognized as one of the

¹ See *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, 1, 264-67.

two or three chiefly responsible for the projected colonial system. 'A new trail was blazed,' wrote Colonel House, 'and he [Beer] was one of the foremost axemen.'¹

House's keenest interest was directed towards the more general aspects of the establishment of the League of Nations as an operating organization, and to the elimination of the political factors in Europe that might hinder its success. During the Peace Conference the League had been generally regarded as primarily the protégé of President Wilson; but as the summer of 1919 progressed, there were signs that the European statesmen saw in the League an opportunity both for the execution of the Treaties and for the handling of problems left unsolved at Paris. Evidently it was taken for granted that the Covenant would be ratified by the Senate and that the United States would assume as leading a rôle in the inauguration of the League as it had in the drafting of the Covenant.

Colonel House to the President

[Cablegram]

LONDON, September 12, 1919

I have received the following letter [dated September 4] from Clemenceau. It indicates a growing enthusiasm for the League. I think there is now general agreement that the meeting of the Assembly should be held in Washington just as soon after the Senate ratifies the Treaty as possible. I think, too, that only a mere *pro forma* meeting of the Council to put in effect that clause of the Treaty relating to the Saar Valley should be held over here. The real meeting of the Council should be held in Washington. . . .

EDWARD HOUSE

¹ *George Louis Beer* (Macmillan Co., 1924), 5-6. When the Secretariat of the League of Nations was organized, Mr. Beer was selected as head of the Mandates Commission. His untimely death robbed the League of one of its ablest supporters.

M. Clemenceau to Colonel House

PARIS, September 4, 1919

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I hope that I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you in Paris before your departure for America. But as our friend Tardieu tells me that the date is not certain, it seems to me advisable to communicate to you immediately the reflections which are suggested to me by the possibility of decisions to be made with reference to the League of Nations.

It seems to me, first of all, that there will be urgent need for convening the First Assembly of the League as soon as possible in Washington, to be presided over by your President. In view of the hopes to which the League has given rise and in order to facilitate the solution of the international problems with which all the nations are now grappling, I would suggest that this meeting should take place during November. I would at the same time propose to invite the greatest possible number of statesmen whose names have been associated with the creation of the League of Nations.

Doubtless in November there will be only a small amount of current business to transact, but the programme will have at least the capital advantage of setting the League in motion, whereas it as yet exists only on paper.

That seems to me of prime importance, whether in the execution of the Peace Treaty or for the settling of the problems which the Treaty does not solve and which nevertheless result from the war. It will then be clear to every one that the League exists in its full moral force.

It is true that the execution of the Treaty is entrusted to a certain number of commissions or experts who will necessarily be led to consult their Governments. But there are many articles of the Treaty which involve the Council of the League of Nations itself, and in this connection all nations ought to have the impression that this Council is ready to function as soon as it is called upon.

On the other hand, I am sure that you agree with me that in these matters neither the action of the Governments nor even that of the League of Nations can be effective unless preceded by a moral preparation of the people, which will furnish both the condition and the sanction of the necessary results.

Moreover, in the midst of the thousand difficulties which are appearing or have already appeared to all the Governments, it is necessary, in my opinion, that the League of Nations, endowed with a recognized personality, should be able to recommend and enforce all solutions of 'fair play' in the current order of life. In case of a crisis, it is important that it should make itself heard with a firm voice.

Finally, do you not think that there would be a great advantage if the rightful members of the League were put in a position to exchange their ideas upon the general direction of action to be taken? No man is better qualified than President Wilson to recall to the nations, upon the opening of the First Assembly, that the League of Nations will have prestige and influence during peace-time only if it succeeds in maintaining and developing the feeling of international solidarity of which it was born during the war upon the call of the President. For my part I should be happy to second him in this task.

Believe me, my dear friend,

Affectionately

CLEMENCEAU

P.S. I am sending a similar letter to Mr. Lloyd George.

II

Partly because House believed that Anglo-American friendship was essential to the success of the League of Nations, partly because of the personal interest that he had always taken in the problem, he studied assiduously all of the factors that might disturb the relations of the British

Empire and the United States.¹ The war had left the two Powers apparently the strongest in the world; a cordial understanding between them would help to guarantee the tranquillity of the new international system, just as disagreement or misunderstanding would threaten it.

The Lloyd George Government in Great Britain appreciated fully the desirability of settling all outstanding questions with the United States; with rare insight they decided that no one was so well fitted as Lord Grey to undertake this delicate task of vital importance, for there was no Englishman in whose integrity of purpose the average thoughtful American had so much confidence. House was impressed by both the dangers and the opportunities of the situation and wrote to Wilson regarding them at some length. He had already discovered the germs of the feeling which seven years later was to transform the cognomen 'Uncle Sam' into 'Uncle Shylock.'

Colonel House to the President

LONDON, July 30, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

Almost as soon as I arrived in England, I sensed an antagonism to the United States. The English are quite as cordial and hospitable to the individual American as ever, but they dislike us collectively. . . . While the British Empire vastly exceeds the United States in area and population and while their aggregate wealth is perhaps greater than

¹ An article by Eugenia B. Frothingham throws some light upon the attitude of English statesmen toward Colonel House's endeavors for peace. In the *Boston Transcript*, February 25, 1928, she recounts a conversation with the Earl of Oxford and Asquith shortly before his death: ' . . . I asked him if the statesmen of Europe struggling for breath and life during the World War did not ultimately tire of Colonel House and his various peace plans, and ask themselves why this small unofficial person should keep thrusting himself into their affairs. At this Asquith struck the terrace with his cane and said there would have been more of breath and life if the plans of Colonel House had been acted upon. . . .'

ours, yet our position is much more favorable. It is because of this that the relations between the two countries are beginning to assume the same character as that of England and Germany before the war.

By her industry and organization Germany was forging ahead as the first Power in the world, but she lost everything by her arrogance and lack of statesmanship. Will it be Great Britain or the United States who will next commit this colossal blunder? If we are far-sighted we will conduct ourselves so as to merit the friendship of all nations, for it is to me conceivable that there may come a time when we will need it. . . .

Haldane, Grey, and I dined together on Sunday. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the Government's request to Grey to become Ambassador at Washington. Curzon, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, at Lloyd George's instance, asked Haldane to use his good offices with Grey, and Haldane, in turn, asked me to help. Haldane told Grey and me that the three matters that the Government had in mind to settle¹ with the United States were, first, the naval building programme, second, the Irish question, and third, the League of Nations. Grey said that in no circumstances would he become Ambassador, but he would consider going out on a special mission for the purpose of discussing these questions, provided the Government agreed with him about them. He thought there would be no difficulty in regard to the League of Nations or the naval programme, but he was insistent that they should outline their Irish policy and that it should be one with which he could agree. I suggested that Lloyd George and Curzon be told that it was impossible to discuss an abstract question and that he, Grey, wanted to know . . . their Irish programme before even considering the

¹ Later, Colonel House, who showed a copy of this letter to Lord Grey and Lord Haldane, wrote that he should have used the word 'discuss' instead of 'settle.' (E. M. H. to C. S., July 4, 1928.)

question of accepting their offer. This would place the burden on the Government rather than upon Grey.

As to the naval building programme, Grey told Haldane that he would write him a memorandum which he could hand to the Government. This memorandum would outline his, Grey's, views which are as follows:

That in no circumstances would Great Britain build against the United States no matter how many keels we laid. However, England would hold herself free to build against any European Power in any quantity that seemed to her best. On the other hand, the United States could exercise her own judgment about building. . . .

Grey told me in this conversation and in another I had with him some two weeks ago that the British Government's policy during the time he was in office was to disregard the naval programme of the United States. In the first place, they thought war between the two nations was inconceivable, and in the second, that in a rivalry it was admitted that the United States could outbuild Great Britain. In discussing this matter further with Grey, he admitted that this was the Liberal point of view and not the Conservative or the one held in naval circles. . . .

You may be surprised that I am not taking into account the League of Nations as a preventive, not only for trouble with Great Britain but also as a deterrent in naval armaments. I consider the League as the great hope of a peaceful solution of all these vexatious international jealousies, but we must admit that it is a long cry from to-day to the time when the League shall have proved itself such an instrument as we all hope it may be. The fact that this Government wishes an Ambassador of Grey's standing to go to America to discuss the question of naval armaments indicates that they do not expect it to be reached through the League of Nations.

You will have noticed that the British have been very insistent upon reduction of standing armies, but they never

protest against naval armaments. One of the necessary things to be done in my opinion is the creation of an international code of laws covering both land and sea. It is your belief that in the next war there will be no neutrals, therefore there is no necessity for a revision of the laws of the sea. I do not agree with this position. It is quite conceivable that war might come between say France and England in which no other nations would be involved. However, the lack of sea laws would almost inevitably bring us into the conflict. If, on the other hand, we had a charter which all nations had accepted, then any two belligerents would of necessity have to conform to it or bring the world in arms upon themselves. This question of the Freedom of the Seas is the one thing above all others that brought us into the war, and yet it is no nearer solution to-day than it was before Germany collapsed. . . .

I do not know that I would advise doing anything more at present than to call attention to the fact that it was your purpose to ask consideration of the question some time within the near future. In the mean time, there might be a Government here sympathetic to the view that a general international understanding upon this subject should be reached.

It is my judgment that we should go ahead as rapidly as possible with the organization of the League of Nations, and at the first meeting of the Assembly bring up the question of a reduction of armaments and seek an agreement. Do you not think also that our people should be warned not to expect complete payment of loans to the Entente? Should they not be asked to consider a large share of these loans as a part of our necessary war expenditures, and should not an adjustment be suggested by us and not by our debtors? If this is done, then it would be well to do it with a *beau geste*. For instance, I notice we have sold our one billion of war material in France to the French Government for three

hundred millions. Would it not have been better to have made this a gift in name as, indeed, it is in fact? . . .

If I were you I should take some early occasion to invoke the sober attention of our people to these dangers. The world is in a belligerent mood, and the next ten years will be the most dangerous to its peace. If we can get over this period safely and get the League in satisfactory operation, war may conceivably become almost obsolete. Could you serve mankind better at the moment than to caution all to sit steady in the boat, and do what is possible to bring things back to the normal? At present, the world is a long way from being safe, and another upheaval now may completely wreck civilization.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

A week later, on August 8, Colonel House cabled to the President that he had continued his conferences with Lord Grey and Lord Haldane, regarding the conditions under which Lord Grey would undertake the mission to Washington. 'There would be no difficulty regarding the League of Nations,' he wrote, for the British Government like President Wilson was determined to support it actively. 'As to the naval programme there must be no rivalry. Great Britain should not undertake to build against us no matter how many keels we laid down. . . . Great Britain was to be free to build whatever she thought necessary for her protection against any European Power.' As to Ireland, the British Government was evidently determined to arrange for such a revision of home rule that this problem would cease to operate as a cause of friction between Great Britain and the United States. The British could hardly admit the possibility of their Irish policy being influenced by any consideration other than its intrinsic merits. But no thoughtful person in either Great Britain or the United States could fail

to realize the happy effect upon the relations of the two countries that would result from a permanent settlement of the Irish problem. Both President Wilson and Colonel House were keenly alive to its importance.

The programme outlined by Lord Grey and Lord Haldane was apparently acceptable to the Lloyd George Ministry. 'An announcement may be made immediately,' cabled House. 'If Grey goes under these conditions the most vexatious subjects between the two countries will be in a fair way for settlement. The Prime Minister insists that this shall be entirely confidential until publication.'¹

The Grey Mission afforded the strongest possible basis for close Anglo-American coöperation in world affairs. President Wilson wrote to House of his great interest in the possible appointment of Grey: I am delighted to believe that his health permits him to accept this appointment and shall look forward with great pleasure to being associated with him.

Lord Grey sailed in September, accompanied by Sir William Tyrrell. But the hopes centered in the Mission were destroyed by the illness of President Wilson. Confined to a sick-room during all the period of Lord Grey's stay in the United States, he was never able to receive the Ambassador; and there was no one to take the President's place in the expected discussions of how best to promote coöperation between Great Britain and America. Nine years later Lord Grey commented on the situation as follows:²

'My own views are according to my recollection correctly stated by Colonel House.

'I was strongly in favour of the League of Nations and was therefore most anxious that the United States should decide to join it. But the question became one of internal

¹ House to Wilson, August 8, 1919.

² Lord Grey to C. S., July 4, 1928.

political controversy in the United States, from which an Ambassador was bound to abstain.

'I remain of opinion that Britain should not build in competition with the United States Navy. This view was expressed by me in a letter to the *Times* after the failure of the Three Power Naval Conference at Geneva: it was the view held before the war and would naturally be the one expressed to Colonel House in 1919.

'I had no part in the settlement eventually made with Ireland, but the view expressed by me to Colonel House agrees with what the British Government subsequently did.

'Before I landed in America, President Wilson was struck down by illness. This was a tragedy fraught with grave consequences for the United States and for Europe. The fact that my sojourn in Washington was rendered abortive was an inevitable but only a very minor detail in what amounted to a political catastrophe.

'There was much in my visit to the United States that I found very interesting, much that was exceedingly pleasant and that I remember with very sincere gratitude; but circumstances made it impossible for this mission to have practical political importance, and all that is said of it now can have but academic interest.'

Apart from the settlement, on a sure basis, of Anglo-American relations, House believed that the most important of issues affecting the coöperation of the United States and Europe was the problem of interallied debts. This he raised again in a letter to President Wilson just before he sailed for the United States.

Colonel House to the President

PARIS, September 30, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

There are several things that I want to suggest to you when I reach home, but the most urgent one is that of the readjustment of the finances of the Allied countries. It is a question which England, France, and the United States have evaded up to the present, but there will soon come a time when this can no longer be done. The British and French have merely makeshift plans. I was particularly struck by the English Chancellor of the Exchequer's lack of anything further than palliative measures. . . .

I have talked to Lloyd George and Bonar Law in a tentative way and also with Clemenceau and Tardieu. They all appreciate the necessity for action, and England and France will undertake some sort of relief from the intolerable burden even if we decline to join them.

The plan I have in mind . . . is:

(1) The shifting of the burden of debt from one country to another and leaving the Central Powers to go bankrupt if any one indeed is to go.

(2) The United States and Great Britain should fund the interest on the Allied debts for a period of from three to five years, and agree to defer capital payments for at least five years.

(3) Great Britain to accept from France obligations of the Governments of Serbia, Roumania, Greece, etc., held by France; the United States to accept from Great Britain and France the obligations of nations indebted to them, and all in accordance with a well-worked-out formula which will make for an equitable adjustment.

(4) The United States and possibly Great Britain to accept some portion of the Reparation bonds received from Germany in settlement of a certain percentage of the Allied

debts remaining after the transfers have been made as suggested in paragraph 2.

(5) When the Reparations debts of the Central Powers are defined by the Reparations Commission for a practicable amount, then there should be a scaling of the German obligations between all the Allied and Associated nations.

(6) The plan should contemplate some adjustment whereby foreign exchange should be stabilized.

The benefits to the United States in such a plan would be:

(a) It would reduce or eliminate duplication of debt.

(b) It would give the United States a financial interest in Reparations payments by the Central Powers.

(c) It would place the United States in a position where, as a matter of right, it could deal with Reparations payments as one of the creditors.

(d) It would relieve our foreign relations of their most dangerous and difficult elements.

(e) It would stabilize the finances of the world and we would thereby be the chief beneficiary.

(f) It would make secure a large part of our foreign loans which otherwise will be worthless. . . .

Both England and France understand that they cannot possibly collect from the debtor nations the full amounts due them. If they undertake to do so, it will not only disturb existing good relations, but it will throw such countries into bankruptcy, and the effect upon the creditor nations will be but little less harmful than that suffered by the debtor nations.

I believe our people will be willing to charge a part of our foreign loans to war expenditures — particularly if they find England and France doing likewise. England has loaned Russia nearly three billion dollars and she has loaned France and Italy together nearly four billions of dollars. She did not do this because she loved either Russia, France, or Italy to any such extent; she did it merely as a part of her own war

expenditures. The purpose was to defeat Germany and she could do it best by sustaining her allies.

We were actuated by the same motives and we should be willing to take this view. If some such settlement as I have outlined is not made, it is certain we will not be able to collect our debts in full, and it is also certain that we will incur the everlasting ill will of those to whom we have advanced loans.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

P.S. If this or some plan like it is adopted, it would be necessary to insist that an adequate system of taxation should be put in force in those Continental countries whose debts England and the United States were refunding.

III

While House was working in London and Paris to further the fortunes of the League and lessen the forces of international distrust, President Wilson was fighting for the League in his tour through the Western States. He set forth from Washington on September 3 and delivered more than thirty speeches. What might have been the result if his physical powers had proved capable of bearing the strain after the long struggle in Paris, no one can assert. But on September 25, he collapsed and was hurried back to the Capital. The forces battling for the Covenant lost their leader.

By a curious coincidence and mischance, Colonel House also fell ill at the moment when he took ship for the United States. Warned by cable of the President's breakdown, he planned to return to Washington, where he hoped to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in its hearings on the Treaty. He now realized as he had not realized before, the imminent danger that the Senate would refuse to ratify the Treaty, including the Covenant, unless extensive reservations were introduced. But his condition became

worse during the voyage, and he left the ship in a state of almost complete collapse. At the moment when the cause to which each had devoted his main interest was weighed in the scales of fortune, Wilson and House lay ill, the one in Washington, the other in New York. Quite helpless, House still promised himself that if he could accomplish anything for the Covenant he would go to the Capital and offer his testimony.

Colonel House to Senator Lodge

NEW YORK, October 13, 1919

MY DEAR SENATOR LODGE:

As soon as I had finished the work in Europe with which I had been entrusted, I came home. Unfortunately I fell ill the day I left Paris and have been confined to my bed since.

I am asking Commander McLean who attended me on shipboard to explain to you my condition and when I would likely be able to come to Washington in the event your Committee think I may give any information which may be useful.

Sincerely yours

E. M. HOUSE

Senator Lodge to Colonel House

WASHINGTON, October 18, 1919

MY DEAR COLONEL HOUSE:

I received your letter yesterday through the kindness of Commander McLean, and much regretted to hear from him how ill you had been and how much you had suffered. If you will let me know when you feel entirely able to come before the Committee, I will lay the matter before the Committee with great pleasure and let you know their views in regard to it. Our hearings, of course, were ended some time ago and

final action on the Treaty is drawing very near, but when I hear from you I shall be very glad to ask the Committee whether they desire to put you to the trouble of coming before them.

Very truly yours

H. C. LODGE

Colonel Stephen Bonsal's Memorandum for Colonel House

WASHINGTON, November 1, 1919

I saw Senator Lodge last evening just as he was leaving for Boston and gave him your message to the effect that you were unreservedly at the disposal of the Foreign Relations Committee from Wednesday next, and, further, that in the circumstances it would be convenient for you to know if the Committee proposed calling you, and, if so, approximately when.

Senator Lodge answered: 'Write, or telegraph Colonel House from me that I have, and I believe all members of the Committee have, full appreciation of his ready willingness to appear, and to assist us. We have had enough of the other thing to appreciate his attitude. . . .

'Unfortunately, perhaps, before Colonel House reached America, the formal hearings of the Committee had ended, and I do not think they will be reopened. The advisability of calling Colonel House has been twice before the Committee recently, and every member understands that Colonel House has placed himself unreservedly at our disposal. I have on two occasions made a statement to this effect to the Press representatives who follow our hearings, and should the question be raised, or should it seem advisable to raise it, I would consider it my duty to testify on the floor of the Senate to the Colonel's frank and straightforward attitude toward our Committee.

'The question of reopening the hearings is so uncertain

that I think Colonel House should have no other thought but as to what is best for his health. I suggest that when he reaches his daughter's home, or wherever his doctor desires him to go, he might drop me a line telling me of his whereabouts, and the state of his health. Then, if the hearings are reopened, I would bring the letter before the Committee. In any case let Colonel House rest assured that we appreciate his helpful attitude, and that, should he be called, we will not hurry him, but have a proper appreciation of his convenience and his need of rest.'

This may be regarded as the end of the Senator's official statement as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for transmission to Colonel House. He added, however, the following opinions:

'Personally, Bonsal, I do not think there is one chance in a hundred of Colonel House being summoned. The record is made up. We think we know all the facts, and it looks as if every one has made up his mind how he will vote. Later on, rather than now, I think Colonel House's presence here in Washington would prove helpful, and this is another reason why I think he should for the moment do what is best for his health, and certainly not wait around in New York on the off chance that he might be summoned.'

STEPHEN BONSAI

In the mean time the struggle in the Senate over the ratification of the Treaty was approaching. President Wilson's complete breakdown isolated him in the White House; none of his political advisers were allowed to enter the sick-room. The Democratic forces fighting for ratification were deprived of effective leadership. There was no one to guide the fortunes of the Covenant; no one to negotiate a compromise with the Republicans in the Senate. The President himself was naturally unable to judge from the isolation of his room of the necessity of compromise, if the Treaty and

the Covenant were not to be defeated; he refused to accept the Lodge Resolution which included strong reservations. 'In my opinion,' wrote the President, 'the resolution in that form does not provide for ratification but rather for nullification of the Treaty. I sincerely hope that the friends and supporters of the Treaty will vote against the Lodge Resolution.' Thus urged, the Democrats voted with the 'bitter-enders,' defeating ratification on November 19 by a vote of 55 to 39. Had the Democrats disregarded the President's wishes and voted for ratification including the Lodge Reservations, the Treaty would have been ratified by a vote of 81 to 13.¹

Colonel House, ill and away from Washington, had taken no part in the struggle. In his own heart he believed that compromise was necessary and wise, but, because of the President's illness, he had refused to urge him to this course, despite the many appeals from friends of the League, who feared for the fate of the Covenant.²

¹ When the Treaty was reintroduced in the Senate in the following spring with the Lodge Reservations, ratification was again defeated, lacking the necessary two-thirds by 7 votes. The final vote was 49 for ratification, 35 against. In a letter to Senator Hitchcock, President Wilson reaffirmed his determined unwillingness to accept the reservations, especially any changes in Article X of the Covenant. Had the Democrats who voted against ratification (23 in number) voted for it, the Treaty would have been ratified by a vote of 72 to 12.

² Compromise was urged upon the President by leading advocates of the League of Nations during the winter and following spring. The following appeal from the League of Free Nations Association is typical:

'The undersigned, who believe in those principles of international relations which you have enunciated and in support of which you are justly regarded as the leader of the world's thought, submit to you their earnest hope that you will accept such reservations to the Treaty of Versailles as may be necessary to obtain the consent of the Senate to its ratification and thus permit the immediate association of the United States in the League of Nations. . . .

'You have performed your duty of honor in endeavoring to obtain the ratification of the Treaty as you signed it at Paris. The responsibility for the reservations and their defects rests with their authors and not with the author of the Covenant.

'But even with the reservations the Covenant with the moral force of

After the defeat of the Lodge Resolution for ratification, with its reservations, and an equally decisive defeat of Underwood's Resolution for unconditional ratification, House felt that only one course remained which might save the Covenant. The effort for unconditional ratification had failed. Wilson believed that he could not desert his Paris colleagues by negotiating reservations that would alter the sense of the Treaty, or give the United States a preferred position in the League. But the President might now give the Senate a free hand and agree to present to the Allies any resolutions formulated by the majority, permitting the Allies to decide whether they preferred to accept them or to see the United States stay out of the League.

The personal character of the struggle over reservations, which at times seemed like a conflict between Wilson and Lodge, would thus be eliminated. House, after long talks with Lord Grey, was also convinced that the Allies would accept the Lodge Reservations, if through them alone the United States could be brought into the League. After all, the success of the League of Nations would not depend upon this phrase or that, nor upon the acceptance or refusal of a reservation, but upon the spirit of the nations that composed the League. For the maintenance of future peace it was of vital importance that the United States should not stand aside. If it returned to the traditional path of isolation, the entire Wilsonian policy would be threatened with bankruptcy. All this House wrote to the President in two long letters.

the United States under your leadership behind it is of such value to humanity at this moment that we look to you to carry it now into effect and to lead the world's opinion in its operation.'

Among the signers of this appeal were Ray Stannard Baker, Isaiah Bowman, Stephen P. Duggan, Edward A. Filene, Cardinal Gibbons, Norman Hapgood, Hamilton Holt, David Hunter Miller, Ellery Sedgwick, Ida Tarbell.

Colonel House to the President

NEW YORK, November 24, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I hesitate to intrude my views upon you at such a time, but I feel that I would be doing less than my duty if I did not do so, since so much depends upon your decision in regard to the Treaty. Its failure would be a disaster not less to civilization than to you.

My suggestion is this: Do not mention the Treaty in your message to Congress, but return it to the Senate as soon as it convenes. In the mean time, send for Senator Hitchcock and tell him that you feel that you have done your duty and have fulfilled your every obligation to your colleagues in Paris by rejecting all offers to alter the document which was formulated there, and you now turn the Treaty over to the Senate for such action as it may deem wise to take.

I would advise him to ask the Democratic Senators to vote for the Treaty with such reservations as the majority may formulate, and let the matter then rest with the other signatories of the Treaty. I would say to Senator Hitchcock that if the Allied and Associated Powers are willing to accept the reservations which the Senate see fit to make, you will abide by the result being conscious of having done your full duty.

The Allies may not take the Treaty with the Lodge Reservations as they now stand, and this will be your vindication. But even if they should take them with slight modifications, your conscience will be clear. After agreement is reached, it can easily be shown that the Covenant in its practical workings in the future will not be seriously hampered and that time will give us a workable machine.

A great many people, Democrats, Progressives, and Republicans, have talked with me about ratification of the Treaty and they are all pretty much of one mind regarding the necessity for its passage with or without reservations.

To the ordinary man, the distance between the Treaty and the reservations is slight.

Of course, the arguments are all with the position you have taken and against that of the Senate, but, unfortunately, no amount of logic can alter the situation; therefore my advice would be to make no further argument, but return the Treaty to the Senate without comment and let Senator Hitchcock know that you expect it to be ratified in some form, and then let the other signatories decide for themselves whether they will accept it.

The supreme place which history will give you will be largely because you personify in yourself the great idealistic conception of a league of nations. If this conception fails, it will be your failure. To-day there are millions of helpless people throughout the world who look to you and you only to make this conception a realization.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

NEW YORK, *November 27, 1919*

DEAR GOVERNOR:

I am wondering if I made myself clear to you in my letter of the other day.

I wish to emphasize the fact that I do not counsel surrender. The action advised will in my opinion make your position consistent and impregnable. Any other way out that now seems possible of success would be something of a surrender.

Practically every one who is in close touch with the situation admits that the Treaty cannot be ratified without substantial reservations. You must not be a party to those reservations. You stood for the Treaty as it was made in Paris, but if the Senate refuses to ratify without reservations, under the circumstances, I would let the Allies determine whether or not they will accept them.

This does not mean that no effort will be made by those Senators and others who favor the Treaty as it is to make the reservations as innocuous as possible. Neither does it mean that the Allies will accept the Treaty as the Senate majority have desired it.

If you take the stand indicated, it will aid rather than hinder those working for mild reservations. It will absolutely ensure the passage of the Treaty and probably in a form acceptable to both you and the Allies.

I did not make the suggestion until I had checked it up with some of your friends in whom I felt you had confidence, for the matter is of such incalculable importance that I did not dare rely solely upon my own judgment.

In conclusion, let me suggest that Senator Hitchcock be warned not to make any public statement regarding your views. When the Treaty is ratified, then I hope you will make a statement letting your position become known.

I feel as certain as I ever did of anything that your attitude would receive universal approval. On the one hand your loyalty to our Allies will be commended, and, on the other, your willingness to accept reservations rather than have the Treaty killed will be regarded as the act of a great man.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

Neither of these letters was answered.

IV

Historians will naturally ask whether the advice given by House might not have been followed, with the probability that the United States would have entered the League with the Lodge Reservations, if the personal relations of the President and House had not been interrupted. At the time of the Senate discussions on the Treaty each lay upon a sick-bed, and when House had regained sufficient strength to

make the journey to Washington the President was still denied visitors by orders of his doctor.

It is also true that the relations of Wilson and House had undergone a certain change during the course of the Peace Conference, so it is possible that, apart from the physical separation enforced by illness, House's advice might not have been followed so closely as in times previous. The exact nature of this change and the reasons for it have never received adequate explanation. Much that has been printed is certainly incorrect. It is said that the President was informed that House had betrayed Wilson's policies during the latter's absence from Paris in February, and that thereafter he withheld his trust.¹ But it is a demonstrable fact that when the President fell ill very shortly afterwards, he chose House to take his place in the Council of Four and endorsed all the steps taken by House to achieve a compromise. All during the delicate negotiations of April with the British and the French, Mr. Wilson used Colonel House as intermediary. He asked him to explain to Clemenceau the American position on controversial issues. He gave him his own comments on French proposals to carry to Tardieu, asking him to warn the French that he could not yield.² He sent him numerous documents with the request: Won't you be kind enough to give your opinion? . . . Affectionately yours.³ . . . Let me have your comments. . . . Affectionately.⁴ Or again: I would like a suggestion from you. . . . Affectionately yours.⁵ What do you suggest? . . . Affectionately.⁶ Please thank Mr. — for me. . . . Affectionately yours.⁷ President

¹ R. S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*, chapters xvi, xvii. See above, Chapter x, for a discussion of the lack of foundation for the attack on House and Balfour.

² Wilson to House, April 12, 1919.

³ Wilson to House, March 18, 1919

⁴ Wilson to House, March 20, 1919

⁵ Wilson to House, April 19, 1919.

⁶ Wilson to House, May 13, 1919.

⁷ Wilson to House, June 7, 1919.

Wilson accepted Colonel House's final statement as to the work of the Peace Conference, and authorized its publication over his own name.¹ He chose House as his representative in the discussions with Lord Robert Cecil that led to the setting-up of the League of Nations, the project nearest his heart; and sent him to London to work out a system of Mandates. All this would hardly have been possible if he had lost confidence in him.

It is also said that the President was irritated because on one occasion he called upon House at the Crillon, only to have his visit interrupted by announcement, in a continued series, of Clemenceau and other distinguished visitors. Neither the diary of Colonel House nor his visitors-book or 'log,' kept by the naval yeomen who gave admission to his apartment, indicates any basis for this story. When it later was brought to House's attention, he gave as his recollection the following: 'The President called first. In a few minutes we were interrupted by the announcement of Clemenceau. I excused myself and talked with Clemenceau for a few minutes, then together we joined Wilson who was waiting in my study. Meanwhile Cecil and one or two others sent in their cards. These I allowed to wait until after Clemenceau and Wilson had departed. No importance was attached by me to the incident.'²

It should be remembered that the Peace Conference was the first occasion upon which Colonel House worked with Wilson in an official capacity. Here for the first time close observers noted or thought that they noted, something of a break in the perfect confidence that had always existed between the two men. It is equally true that there is no scrap of evidence in all of House's papers indicating any specific reason for a rift in their relations during the course of the Peace Conference. Then, as always, they agreed absolutely

¹ See above, p. 484.

² Colonel House to C. S., June 17, 1928.

upon principles. When, as in days past, they disagreed as to methods or details, there was no hint of friction. Thus, in the negotiations with Orlando regarding Fiume, the President wrote to House: You are doing such fine, patient work to help smooth out difficulties that it is very hard not to go the full length with you in concessions. . . . I cannot in conscience concur. . . . Affectionately yours. From first to last, during the Paris days, the tone of the President's notes was the same. There is no date at which a change can be observed. He signed himself invariably, 'Affectionately yours,' or simply, 'Aff'y.'¹

The same is true of the summer following the Conference, after the two parted at Paris on June 28, never to meet again. The cables exchanged while House was reporting on his work at London are cast in exactly the same tone as their earlier correspondence. The President writes: I am glad your letters have begun to come. . . . I am very well satisfied with the mandates you have sent me. . . . I am very glad indeed. . . . I am delighted. . . . Thank you for sending me. . . . I am heartily glad you liked the address. . . .² He signs himself 'affectionately' and he adds a personal message: I hope that you and the family keep well. We are going through a tremendous storm of all sorts of difficulties here, but the ship is steady and the officers not dismayed. We unite in the warmest messages.³ This last is written on August 15, 1919, and certainly indicates no breach in the President's affection.

At the end of August the newspapers published the story of a personal break between Wilson and House. Their relations were such that, as good friends will, they referred to it frankly. House wrote as follows to the President and later cabled a reference to it.

¹ Wilson to House, May 13, May 14, May 19, May 24, June 5, June 7, June 27, 1919.

² Wilson to House, July 3, July 9, July 18, August 23, August 29, 1919.

³ Wilson to House, August 15, 1919.

Colonel House to President Wilson

LONDON, August 26, 1919

DEAR GOVERNOR:

... Our annual falling out seems to have occurred. The Foreign Office received a cable the other day saying that we were no longer on good terms and asking that the Prime Minister and Balfour be informed. The Press representatives also told me that they had the same news. I am wondering where this particular story originated and why they wanted the Prime Minister and Balfour to be informed. Tyrrell said it came from one of their men in New York and not from Washington.

Affectionately yours

E. M. HOUSE

President Wilson cabled to Colonel House on August 29, through the American Embassy, a message of which the following is the paraphrase:

Am deeply distressed by malicious story about break between us and thank you for the whole message about it. The best way to treat it is with silent contempt.¹

It happened that Sir William Wiseman had an informal conversation with the President at this time. The record which he made furnishes interesting evidence of Mr. Wilson's feeling toward House and also of his physical and nervous condition at the moment he started on his Western trip:²

'I lunched at the White House a few days before Wilson started on his ill-fated tour. The President was cordial as ever. I was, however, shocked by his appearance. He was

¹ Wilson to House, August 29, 1919.

² Sir William Wiseman to C. S., July 3, 1928.

obviously a sick man. His face was drawn and of a grey color, and frequently twitching in a pitiful effort to control nerves which had broken down under the burden of the world's distress. I had come to tell of the progress of League affairs in Europe, and how much Grey and Tyrrell were looking forward to seeing him in Washington. . . .

'In my notes of the conversation, I find this remark of Wilson's: "I ask nothing better than to lay my case before the American people." We naturally talked a lot about Colonel House, and the President spoke of him most affectionately, and I find this recorded: "Colonel House," I remarked, "is trusted by all the statesmen in Europe." "And rightly," said the President, "for he is trustworthy."

'The President retired directly after lunch, and bade me good-bye most kindly. I never saw him again. The doctors were urging him to abandon his speaking tour, and had warned him of the danger, the almost certainty of a breakdown, but he was convinced that it was his duty to lay his case before the American people, and nothing would deter him.'

Four days after sending his last cable to House, President Wilson left on the Western tour which ended in his collapse. He was travelling every day, speaking every night; there was no opportunity for him to write the Colonel.

During the month of October both men were ill. But the question arises why, after House regained his health, was he not called down to the sick man in Washington? House's papers show that he expected such a call. They also show that he realized how ill the President was and felt that in view of his condition he could not go down without a special summons. But there is nothing to show why the call never came.

What is certain is that there was never anything approaching a quarrel between the two. On three occasions after the

TO American Embassy, London.
FROM Department of State, signed 'LANSING'.
DATED August 29, 3 p.m.
RECEIVED August 30, 5:21 a.m.
NUMBER 5896

Your 2914, August 29, 11 a.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT TO COLONEL HOUSE:

"Am deeply distressed by malicious story about break between us and thank you for the whole message about it.

The best way to treat it is with silent contempt."

MERCANTILE LIBRARY
PHILADELPHIA

MR. MARTEN.

Copy sent to Colonel House.

WILSON'S CABLE OF AUGUST 29, 1919

YASRI LINDA

APR 1974

defeat of the Treaty, Colonel House received notes from President Wilson, in answer to those in which the Colonel sent him good wishes and hopes for restoration of his health: on March 11, 1920, June 10, 1920, November 1, 1920. In each of these the President's tone was friendly: Thank you for your letter. . . . I am hoping that you and Mrs. House and all of yours are well. . . .¹ I am glad you are going to have the refreshment of a trip across the water . . . hope you will find every sort of satisfaction . . . with best wishes. . . .² I appreciate your thought of me. . . .³ But the letters were signed 'faithfully yours' or 'sincerely yours,' and not 'affectionately.'

Thus the friendship lapsed. It was not broken. The dramatic quality of the extraordinary partnership which had carried the two men through so many historic crises together is heightened rather than lessened because its close cannot be adequately explained. 'The world will go on guessing,' wrote Sir Horace Plunkett, 'but the nobler hypothesis will stand. Through the "mystery" House bequeaths to posterity, one certainty will gleam. That a friendship which had stood so many, so varied, and so trying tests, should have failed through a weakening on either side to bring forth its final fruit is unthinkable. It was born late, but lived the fullest life. When stricken by sickness it could not function; but it did not die.'

V

'There were many doors,' wrote House on April 20, 1928,⁴ 'in the temples that men of old reared to their gods, to the sun, to the moon, to the mythical deities, Isis, Jupiter, Mars. Behind the innermost door dwelt the mysteries.'

¹ Wilson to House, March 11, 1920.

² Wilson to House, June 10, 1920.

³ Wilson to House, November 1, 1920.

⁴ Sir Horace Plunkett to C. S., July 6, 1928.

⁵ In a letter to C. S.

'And now you, who have had access to my most intimate papers, ask me to unlock the innermost door, a door to which I have no key. My separation from Woodrow Wilson was and is to me a tragic mystery, a mystery that now can never be dispelled, for its explanation lies buried with him. Theories I have, and theories they must remain. These you know.

'Never, during the years we worked together, was there an unkind or impatient word, written or spoken, and this, to me, is an abiding consolation.

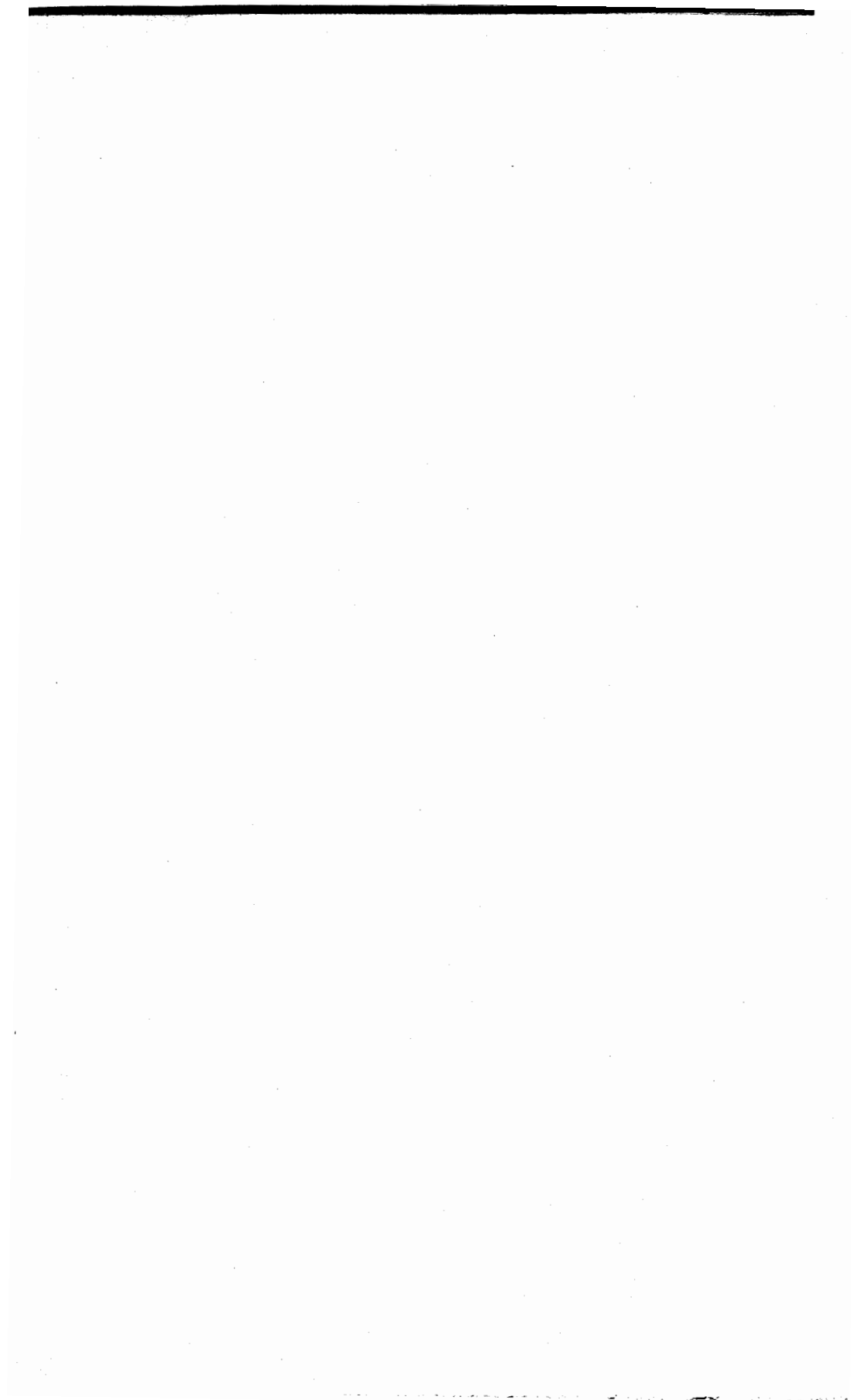
'While our friendship was not of long duration it was as close as human friendships grow to be. To this his letters, and mine, bear silent testimony. Until a shadow fell between us I never had a more considerate friend, and my devotion to his memory remains and will remain unchanged.'

YASSEL EITMACHEN

AMERICAN

THE END

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