

THE WEATHER  
Fair Wednesday, preceded by rain on the coast; Thursday, fair.

# WILMINGTON THE MORNING STAR

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## ENGLAND MAY DECLARE BLOCKADE OF GERMAN COAST AT EARLY DATE

Germany's Proposition to Abandon War on Shipping Presented by Page. WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Military Movements of Great Importance Are Taking Place.

## GERMANS CONTINUE THEIR ADVANCE IN EAST.

London, February 16.—In the absence of any striking news from the two European battle fronts, public attention in England today was centered on the threatened blockade of the British Isles by German submarines and mines in retaliation for Great Britain's act in prohibiting the carrying of food to Germany.

Great Britain received today, through Ambassador Page Germany's offer to withdraw her threat of a blockade, if the British navy will permit the free movement of foodstuffs to the civilian population of Germany.

It is not believed here the offer will be accepted. In fact, Great Britain already is preparing to retaliate against Germany by placing under more stringent control ships destined to German ports, and a proclamation momentarily is expected, declaring a blockade of the German coast, or, at any rate, the prohibition of foodstuffs destined for Germany.

The cabinet considered this question today, and it is understood the decision is awaiting formal confirmation by the privy council.

Shipping Moves Freely. In the meantime, British and neutral vessels are moving as freely as usual, except those belonging to a few Dutch lines, which have reduced their number of sailings. Norwegian and Danish insurance companies have given instructions that steamers insured by them shall have their national colors, the names of the ships and the country of their origin printed conspicuously on the sides of all vessels.

## BRITISH AIRMEN ON ANOTHER RAID

Forty Machines Bombard Belgian Towns in German Hands. ALL RETURN SAFELY

Gun Positions, Mine Layers and Sweepers, Supply Trains and Other German Positions Attacked With Bombs from Air.

London, Feb. 16.—The air wing of the British navy today made another massed attack on the German position along the Belgian coast in an effort to destroy or damage the submarine base at Zebrugge, the guns at Ostend and Middelkerke and the Ghisteltes aerodrome.

According to the official report, good results were attained. Forty machines were utilized. While the British airmen were dropping their bombs on the gun positions and trawlers used in mine laying and mine sweeping operations, eight French airmen attacked the Ghisteltes aerodrome preventing the German airmen from making an attempt to cut off the British machines.

The official statement about the raid, said: "The air operations of the naval wing against the Bruges, Ostend and Zebrugge district, were continued this afternoon. Forty aeroplanes and seaplanes bombed Ostend, Middelkerke, Ghisteltes and Zebrugge.

"Bombs were dropped on the heavy batteries on the east and west side of Ostend, on gun position at Middelkerke, on transport wagons on the Ostend Ghisteltes Road, on the mole at Zebrugge, to widen the breach damaged in former attacks, on the locks at Zebrugge, on barges outside Blankenbergh, and on trawlers outside Zebrugge.

"Eight French aeroplanes assisted the naval machines by making vigorous attacks on the Ghisteltes aerodrome effectively preventing German aircraft from cutting off our machines. It is reported that good results were obtained.

"Instructions are always issued to confine attacks to points of military importance and every effort is made by the flying officers to avoid dropping bombs on any residential portions of towns."

## AMERICA QUIETLY AWAITS ANSWERS

No Further Move Made in Diplomatic Controversy. ENGLAND AND GERMANY

Realizing the Gravity of Situation Officials at Washington Refrain from Commenting as to Next Move or Plans.

Washington, Feb. 16.—The United States made no further move today in the diplomatic controversy with Great Britain and Germany over the use of neutral flags, the submarine campaign on merchant men and the shipment of foodstuffs to Germany. Officials awaited formal replies from Great Britain and Germany to the recent American notes on the subject.

Ambassador Page, at London, and Ambassador Geddes, at Berlin, send dispatches to the State Department telling of informal conferences with the high officials of Great Britain and Germany, respectively, but did not indicate that the former intended to alter its policy on shipments of conditional contraband to civilians, or that the latter would recede from its announced intention of warring a submarine war on enemy merchant ships.

Ambassador Gerard reported that German officials were friendly and disposed to take into consideration the embarrassment of the United States arising out of the controversy.

While awaiting answers to the various American communications high officials here, admitting the gravity of the diplomatic situation, were disinclined to discuss future steps or policy.

Many Difficulties. One suggestion of the German government—that American organizations or consular officers supervise the distribution of foodstuffs to civilians—seems to be set with more difficulties than were originally evident. While making it clear such a procedure could be undertaken by the United States only with the acquiescence of all the belligerents.

The situation in Belgium and in Germany proper were in this respect held by State Department officials to be analogous. It was revealed, however, that before Minister Whitlock and American organizations were permitted to supervise food distribution in Belgium the consent of Germany, as well as Great Britain had to be obtained. For a neutral government to assist the civilian population of a belligerent to obtain supplies without the consent of the other belligerents would be unneutral, according to American officials.

## HOUSE EARLY THIS MORNING ADOPTED COMPROMISE BILL

Filibuster by Republican Leader Mann of no Avail—Big Majority.

NOW GOES TO SENATE

Fourteen Hour Struggle Concluded With Vote of Two Hundred and Fifteen to One Hundred and Four in Favor of Bill.

Washington, Feb. 17.—The Government ship purchase bill, as an amendment to the Weeks Naval Auxiliary bill, was passed by the House of Representatives at 1:20 o'clock this morning by a vote of 215 to 104.

The passage of the bill followed a 14 hour parliamentary struggle which, until long after midnight threatened to extend indefinitely because of a determined filibuster directed by Minority Leader Mann who yielded only after administration leaders decided to apply a second special rule to bring the fight to an end.

MUST BE PASSED SOON Leaders in Both Houses Realize That Fight is Coming to a Head. Washington, Feb. 16.—Democratic leaders in both Houses of Congress agreed tonight that the government ship purchase bill either would be before President Wilson for his signature within a few days or dead, so far as this session is concerned.

The House remained in session late tonight to pass the ship purchase bill as amended. The measure is known and tomorrow the administration forces will begin a final effort to get a vote in the Senate on the House amendments.

Majority leaders spoke confidently today of the prospect of victory and President Wilson, after a conference with Senator Kern, tonight called the bill would be passed.

On both sides of the Capitol belief was current that if present plans for prompt action in the Senate fell through the ship bill would be abandoned and all efforts centered upon disposing of appropriation bills to make unnecessary an extra session.

## GOOPER FURNISHES GINGER IN SENATE

Withdraws Note Collection Bill, After Breezy Debate. SCHOOL BILL IS PASSED

But Cannot Get Through House—Bill to Tax Debtors 10 Per Cent for Forced Collections Given Grilling.

Senator Cooper's bill to appoint Cuthbert Martin as one to substitute Cuthbert Martin for J. O. Carr on the New Hanover School board and the other to tax debtors with attorney's percentage on forced collections, furnished the ginger and, indeed, the sensation of the day in the Senate.

The school bill passed as a senatorial courtesy with no possibility of its passing the House and the percentage bill was voted off unmercifully until its author lodged the motion, which carried, that it be tabled.

Senator Cooper's bill to appoint Cuthbert Martin was opposed by Senator Giles, when Senator Ward moved that the bill be held up so that outside recommendations might prevail. The motion was ruled out of order.

The bill passed second reading, and then Senator Giles said he was forced to make a statement, that the matter was threshed out before the Senate committee by Senator Cooper.

Senator Cooper said the petition contains 162 names, was gotten up by a man who fought him in the primaries and who voted against him in the general election and he was informed voted for the Republican candidate.

Senator Giles said Senator Cooper should not make wild statements without knowing the facts. He held up a large roll of signatures. He wanted a chance to state his position, and he was ashamed that a member of the Senate was "afraid" to allow a bill to go before the committee.

When Senator Cooper's bill to provide for collection of attorneys' fees in forced collections came up, it was opposed by Havmore, Republican leader, on the ground that it added the sum of money to the debtors' collection and out of the debtor. He thought it unjust and unconstitutional.

## MORE FRICTION AT MEXICAN CAPITAL

Trouble Still Brewing Between Carranza and Diplomats. MUST GO TO VERA CRUZ

Newspapers at Seat of Carranza's Government Publish Articles Urging Move to Vera Cruz or Leave the Country.

Washington, Feb. 16.—Further indications of friction between Carranza officials and diplomats in Mexico City were contained in official advices today to the State Department. In Vera Cruz, seat of the Carranza government, several newspapers were said to have printed articles intimating that the diplomats should transfer their activities to Vera Cruz or leave the republic.

Secretary Bryan said he did not interpret Carranza's order that all diplomatic intercourse must be transacted with him personally as preventing American consul Silliman and other foreign ministers from remaining in Mexico City and dealing with General Obregon on non-diplomatic business. He said that if business arose that could not be transacted with Carranza's subordinates, Consul Canada at Vera Cruz for the purpose.

## MANY AMERICAN SHIPS AND CARGOES IN DANGER

Two Score Near War Zone—Three From Wilmington.

Twenty-Seven Vessels from Port of New York Will Reach Zone on or After the Eighteenth—Four are American Owned.

New York, Feb. 16.—Twenty-seven steamers from this port, maritime records show, are due to be within the war zone declared by Germany on and after February 18, the day set to establish the zone. Four of these ships are American owned and fly the American flag, and five carry passengers.

The four American ships are the Sunaga, for Gothenburg; the Cushing for Copenhagen; the Kansan for London and the Philadelphia, of the American Line, a passenger-carrying ship, for Liverpool.

## RUSSIANS BADLY DEFEATED.

Losses Sustained Will Reach Fully 50,000 Men, is Report.

Berlin, Feb. 16.—By wireless, London—Reports from the Carpathian mountains to the River Lloyd of Bukovina Hungary, say the Austro-Hungarians were everywhere successful in their offensive movement in Dukla Pass.

The total losses of the Russians in the Dukla Pass battles in the past few days, the reports say, were at least 50,000 men killed or wounded. In a single attack, the retreating Russians left 1,200 dead on the field.

## GERMAN OFFICER GIVES REASON FOR WAR ZONE AROUND BRITISH ISLES

Admiral Behncke Explains Move to Naval Attache of American Legation. WILL END WAR SOONER

If Submarine Operations Against British Commerce Prove Successful Suggests Battleship Convoy for American Vessels

Berlin, Feb. 16. (By wireless to Sayville)—Germany's purpose in declaring a sea war zone around the British Isles is explained at length in a statement made by Admiral Behncke, of the marine department, and transmitted to Lieut. Com. Walter R. Gherard, naval attache of the American embassy. It is given out officially as follows:

"Up to the present time Germany in the war at sea has followed the London Declaration, or the stipulations of the Paris treaty on which the conduct of war on the sea had been based before the London Declaration.

"In waging this commercial warfare, England had in view the subjugation of Germany by starvation. Germany in every way had sought to bring the attention of the neutral powers and all others to the necessity she was under to obtain food for her civilian population which was being cut under the laws of war. No results could be obtained from her efforts.

Since the shutting off of food supplies had now come to a point where Germany no longer had sufficient food to feed her people, it became necessary for her to fight England to terms through force. Germany knows that by the use of the submarine England can be placed in a position where food will be lacking. Her life as a nation and the lives of her people depend on putting this campaign into action, and she must do so.

The difficulties in the way of this campaign have been largely connected with the care which, it is desired to give to neutral ships and to the lives of those on board all commercial ships, whether neutral or belonging to the enemy.

First, in arming her merchant ships with guns for self-defense England adopted a policy against which Germany strongly protest. The United States took the initiative in spite of the fact that British merchant ships cannot approach British merchant ships and make examinations without exposing themselves.

"Second, England has advised the British merchant fleet to fly neutral flags to cover up her ships and to escape the consequences of their nationality. This plan was designed to bring Germany into conflict with other nations.

"Germany does not wish to harm American or other neutral ships or their cargoes unless carrying contraband. She is, however, in a position where her life depends upon her putting into effect the only means she has of saving herself. She must and will use this means.

Commanding officers of submarines have been ordered to make every effort to safeguard the interests of the neutral powers. It was noted that neutral ships through error of attack might be destroyed. For this reason a strong warning was issued.

"In addition, the English coast has been mined by the British themselves for protective reasons, and would be mined by the Germans as an act of offensive warfare. Ships were therefore in danger from the mines.

In spite of the great effect the admiralty staff feel the use of the submarines will have in bringing the war to a rapid close, the admiralty do not wish to open the way for the termination of neutral commerce and the rights of nations on the high seas. They therefore have stated that if Great Britain will abide by the Declaration of London, or by the Treaty of Paris, where food supplies for the civilian population can be freely brought into Germany, the whole matter of a submarine blockade will be dropped by Germany."

Free Passage Desired. Admiral Behncke called Commander Gherard's attention to the fact that when Great Britain closed the North Sea she did not give free passage to American ships bound for the neutral country of Holland, but compelled the ships to pass through certain channels, take an English pilot aboard and undergo a sea ranch for contraband of war at the hands of officers of British warships.

Admiral Behncke then said that Germany was prepared to suggest to the United States an even freer and safer method of passage for American ships bound either through the channel or to English ports—namely, that several American warships should wait in some port on the southwest coast of Ireland, and when the English coast was by wireless by an American merchant man one should proceed to the place indicated and convey the merchantman through that portion of the sea which Germany, following the example of Great Britain, has declared to be dangerous.

Surveys Convoy. "Of course," said the admiral, "ships under convoy, by the rules of international law, are not subject to search, but the country to which they belong is, upon its honor, as it were, to see that they do not carry contraband of war.

"American warships have distinctive masts and either by night or day they (Continued on Page Two.)

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