

ESCAPE OF NICHOLAS ROMANOFF IS REPORTED TO THE BOLSHEVIK HEADQUARTERS; LEADERS DENY IT

Special Train Manned by Sailors Leaves Petrograd in Pursuit of the Ex-Czar

ESCAPE RUMORED BEFORE

It Was Reported to Washington on December 8 by American Consul at Tiflis

LONDON ALSO HEARD IT

Nicholas Reported to Have Been Made Emperor of Siberia

Petrograd, Dec. 15.—Former Emperor Nicholas of Russia has escaped from his confinement at Tobolsk, according to advices received today at the Smolny Institute, the Bolsheviki headquarters. A special train manned by sailors has been dispatched from Petrograd for the pursuit of the former emperor.

Petrograd, Dec. 15.—An official denial was made at the Smolny headquarters this afternoon that Nicholas Romanoff had escaped from Tobolsk.

The American consul at Tiflis, in the Russian Caucasus, recently sent a report which was received in Washington on December 8, stating that a rumor was in circulation that former Emperor Nicholas had escaped. The message made it clear that there was no confirmation and there has been nothing since received confirmatory of the report until the Petrograd advices today.

Shortly after the recent escape of General Korniloff and almost concurrently with the rumor from Tiflis that the former emperor had escaped, one of the Bolsheviki government organs in Petrograd announced that several detachments of sailors had been sent to Tobolsk to guard him.

Many of the rumors that were current at about the time that the Tiflis report was in circulation, reached London by way of Zurich and were to the effect that Nicholas had made his way out of Siberia and had arrived in Japan. The route through Harbin was regarded as the most probable one for him to take. The difficulties in his way, however, were recognized, as Tobolsk is 4,000 miles from the Pacific coast and 1,000 miles from the Chinese border.

On the other hand there were unconfirmed reports in November of a possible overturn in Siberia which had been that vast province a land friendly to the former ruler. The report which came through Finland, said that Siberia had declared its independence and had proclaimed Nicholas its emperor.

ASSOCIATED PRESS SUMMARY OF THE REPORTED ESCAPE OF NICHOLAS ROMANOFF, former emperor of Russia, deposed last March by the revolutionists and for several months in confinement at Tobolsk, Siberia, is reported to have made his escape. The report, unlike the previous rumors to this effect, came through the Bolsheviki headquarters in Petrograd, a few hours later it was officially denied by Bolsheviki leaders that Nicholas had escaped. Previous reports of the escape of Nicholas had him making his way out of Siberia through Harbin, Manchuria. The route to Harbin is a long one, however, and he would have 4,000 miles to travel before reaching the Pacific coast. It is some 1,500 miles east of Moscow. There remains the possibility that he might be a safe asylum for him for the time being, as that vast province was reported last month to have declared its independence and to have named Nicholas as its emperor. The report of the escape upon Bolsheviki plans for the future course of Russia could scarcely be even surmised, so enigmatic in many ways has been the recent course of the Lenin-Trotsky government in Petrograd, which now appears to be getting the upper hand in many parts of the country outside the northern centers, overcoming the opposition of the more conservative elements. Some English correspondents in Petrograd, indeed, have lately come back with the news that the Bolsheviki leaders were planning eventually to put a monarchial form of government in force after they had established their empire by drastic measures, coupled with the hold on the population through the popularity of their land reforms and peace measures.

MARSH EDWARDS ARRANGED.

Raleigh, Dec. 15.—Marcus Edwards, arraigned in the city court today for the charge to death his wife a week ago, without examination and was sent to jail without bail to await trial in the superior court. He is to make an Edwards defense according to his attorney.

Edwards shot his wife three times in the head. The police say he must have fired two of the shots after she had fallen from the effects of the

Russo-German Negotiations For Peace Showing Results

Berlin Announces That a Draft of a "Treaty" Has Been Formulated.—Italian Line Stands Firm in the Face of Continuous Assaults—Local Fighting on the Anglo-French Front

(Associated Press War Summary) The Russo-German peace negotiations are reported proceeding apace. A German official announcement says the conditions and draft of a "treaty" have been formulated, the discussions having been put over from Friday to Saturday, however, as the Russian delegates desired to obtain supplementary instructions from their government. Whether the word "treaty" refers to a formal peace treaty or merely to the armistice agreement that had been pending is not clear from the German announcement.

Italian Line Still Intact. The Italian front remains the only major field of military operations in which there is more than local activity on the part of the infantry. The Italian line, although almost ceaselessly assailed in the mountain regions, is still intact and holding well except for a small recession here and there forced at the cost of extremely heavy casualties on the part of the Austro-German invaders. Berlin

GEN. SCOTT URGES HOOPER REPLIES A REORGANIZATION IN SHARP TERMS

Recommends That War Department be Placed on Sound General Staff Basis

SUBMITS FINAL REPORT OTHERS FEEL SAME WAY

Adoption of Universal Military Service As a National Policy Recommended to Congress by Former Chief of Staff.

Washington, Dec. 15.—Reorganization of the war department on a sound general staff basis and adoption of universal military service as a national policy are recommended in the last annual report of Major General Hugh L. Scott, as chief of staff. The document, made public tonight, is devoted almost wholly to a discussion of the staff question. General Scott asks that congress examine the question of staff control of the army in a spirit "freed from every touch of personal interest or prejudice," and recommends that the chief of staff be made the secretary's one and only organ for command of the army in all that pertains to "discipline, recruiting, instruction, intelligence, training, armament, equipping, mobilization, transportation, education, moving of troops, the appointment, promotion, detail and selection of officers" with authority to secure co-operation of the entire military establishment. Creation of chiefs of cavalry, infantry and field artillery under the chief of staff and staff sections to deal with recruiting, movement of troops and promotion and detailing of officers also is recommended. The annual reports of the adjutant general and inspector general also were made public tonight, but they add little information as to the present military situation, or the condition of the army, as they deal mainly with the period prior to the last June 30.

WAR COUNCIL FORMED BY WAR DEPARTMENT

For Co-ordinating Matters Relating to Supplies

Also Another Purpose is to Co-ordinate Relations Between the Armies in the Field and the War Department.

Washington, Dec. 15.—Organization of a war council of the war department to co-ordinate all matters or supplies for the armies at home and overseas and the military relations between the armies in the field, and the department, was announced tonight by Secretary Baker.

Composing the council are the secretary and assistant secretary of war, the chief of staff and Major General Henry G. Sharpe, quartermaster general; Major General Erasmus M. Weaver, chief of coast artillery; Major General William Crozier, chief of ordnance, and Major General Enoch H. Crowder, provost marshal general. Mr. Baker's announcement said that when General Tasker H. Bliss, chief of staff, who participated in the inter-

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NATION SHIVERS UNDER SHORTAGE OF COAL SUPPLY

Fuel Administration Redoubles Efforts to Have Cars Tied Up on Tracks Moved

MANY PLANTS SHUT DOWN

100,000 Men Idle at Cleveland, Ohio—Thousands of Children Cold in New York

Washington, Dec. 15.—Reports of almost nation-wide suffering due to lack of coal stirred fuel administration officials today to redoubled efforts to release supplies held on tracks by car congestion.

Orders went forth to fuel administration representatives in the middle west to make every attempt to move coal to points in many instances declared to be facing actual coal famine. A. W. Thompson, chairman of the operating committee of eastern railroads, was called into conference by Fuel Administration Garfield for suggestions as to relieving the situation.

After his conference with Dr. Garfield, Mr. Thompson said the situation was serious, but that his committee was making great progress towards relieving congestion in the pending terminal territory. Fuel Administrator Johnson, of Ohio, reported from Cleveland tonight that he had started 60 carsloads of coal into that city, where 100,000 men were idle today because of the shutting down of plants lacking power. Mr. Johnson said he would supply householders first even if it forced industries to close down.

Reports from New York today told of widespread suffering in the city and state. The New York city board of health telegraphed that thousands of children were cold and that an epidemic of pneumonia was feared.

At Quincy, Mass., the Fore River plant of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company is running on short time because there is no coal to be had and the government arsenal at Watertown, Mass., will shut down December 18 if coal is not obtained. In Beaver Valley, Pa., women and children were reported to be housed in churches and schools that they might keep warm.

VIGOROUS EFFORTS MADE TO WARM UP NEW YORK

New York, Dec. 15.—Vigorous efforts were made today to relieve New York's coal shortage but results were not expected to be apparent before Monday night, not much more than 10,000 tons were distributed today, although the normal daily consumption is twice that amount.

Large forces of men were employed to break up the snow and dig out the frozen masses of coal at New Jersey terminals where some estimates place the supply at more than 100,000 tons. With this tonnage at the city's door, not much more than 10,000 tons were distributed today, although the normal daily consumption is twice that amount.

With the temperature far under the freezing point, suffering among the poor increased. In many of the large downtown office buildings heat was shut off at noon.

According to railroad officials, coal is being received at New York in quantities in unprecedented quantities, but lack of labor has hindered its transportation to New York. Wrecking crews were put to work unloading coal today and the task will continue all day Sunday, it was said.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN WILL GET COAL IN FEW DAYS

Announcement That It Would Cut Off Trains Brought Prompt Promise of Fuel Supplies.

(Correspondence of The Star.)

Raleigh, Dec. 15.—Relief seems in sight for the coal shortage of the Norfolk Southern, which was about to make it necessary to discontinue a number of passenger trains and readjust entire passenger service. The corporation commission appealed to the federal fuel administration at Washington for necessary coal application and the following telegram came today from the national fuel administration to the corporation commission:

"Priority order is in course of preparation for fuel requirements of the Norfolk Southern and will doubtless be issued within a few days." This means that the department has actually set in motion the machinery to give rush orders for coal to be delivered to the Norfolk Southern for its present normal requirements. The Raleigh-Charlotte passenger train service was to have been cut off

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Recruiting Offices Unable To Take Care of the Rush Of Recruits On Final Day

More Than 70,000 Men Enlisted in the Regular Army From December 1 to 15—Volunteers Since Declaration of War Total More Than 337,000—First Five Per Cent of the Questionnaires Mailed Out Yesterday.

Washington, Dec. 15.—Inability of many recruiting offices to care for the rush of men to join the regular army before the new draft regulations became effective today was reflected in recruiting figures for yesterday. The day's total was only 9,104, as compared with 14,291 Thursday, when the recruiting system broke down.

Friday's figures with three States, Arizona, New Hampshire and South Carolina missing, swelled the December enlistments to 70,466 men, not taking into account those accepted today up to noon, when enlistment in the regular army was prohibited to men of draft age, under the new rules.

North Carolina Fell Short. Volunteers to the regular army since the declaration of war in April now number 337,247, exceeding by 153,349 the number called for by President Wilson to bring the regulars to war strength. Ten states failed to supply their quota. They included Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

The thousands of men who volunteered in the past few days and were rejected because of the breaking down of the recruiting system will be accepted, Secretary Baker today having ordered that all qualified applicants who presented themselves before noon today be accepted even though their examination and other details could not be completed until later.

THREE HUNDRED RESERVE OFFICES AT CHARLOTTE

Charlotte, Dec. 15.—Nearly 300 newly commissioned reserve officers, graduates of the second series of officers' training camps, arrived at Camp Greene today and were assigned to regular army regiments. The number assigned varied between 20 and 40 to the regiment.

PORTO RICAN SELECTION TO BE TRAINED AT HOME

San Juan, P. R., Dec. 15.—Official advices received from Washington today announced the establishment of a cantonment here for the entire 13,000 men to be drafted into the national army. The date for the cantonment's establishment was not specified.

NITRATE CARGOES TO BIND ALLIES INTO BE BROUGHT HERE AN ECONOMIC UNIT

Government Assures Godwin Distribution Will be Through Port of Wilmington

COWAN'S HAND WAS IN IT O. T. CROSBY PRESIDENT

Industrial Agent of City Urged Importance of Wilmington as Distributing Point for Government Shipments of Nitrate.

By P. R. ANDERSON. Washington, Dec. 15.—Representative Godwin has been assured by the department of agriculture that not only will nitrate of soda soon be furnished the farmers, but that a large amount of it will be moved through the port of Wilmington.

The government will sell it to the farmers at cost, ten million dollars being provided by congress in the food bill for that purpose; and that a large part of the shipments will be made through the port of Wilmington shows plainly that the government has commenced to recognize the importance of North Carolina's chief seaport.

Mr. Cowan's Efforts. Several months ago Mr. J. H. Cowan, industrial agent of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, pressed this matter before the shipping board and other officials, and both Tar Heel senators and Representative Godwin were active in their support, as they recognized that the matter was vital to the

BELIEVES PILOT ON THE IMO BLAMELESS

Thinks Signals to the Mont Blanc Were Not Given by Him

Pilot on Munitions Vessel Which Exploded, Causing the Halifax Disaster, Testifies at Government Inquiry.

Halifax, N. S., Dec. 15.—The signals given by the steamer Imo just before she crashed into the French munitions steamer Mont Blanc, causing an explosion which wrecked the northern section of this city, were not given by Pilot Hayes, in charge of the Belgian relief ship, according to the firm belief of Francis Mackay, pilot on the Mont Blanc, expressed in his testimony at the government inquiry into the disaster today. Hayes, who was killed in the explosion, was a careful and experienced pilot, Mackay said, and could not have given the orders which Mackay claimed sent the Imo crashing into the munitions vessel.

Describing the events leading up to the collision, Mackay said he boarded the Mont Blanc at 7:30 on the morning of December 15.

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AMERICAN MISSION COMPLETED TASK LAID BEFORE IT

"Has Been Successfully and Satisfactorily Done," Colonel House Announces

HE IS BACK FROM EUROPE

Influence of America Paramount in England and France. Morale There is Fine

New York, Dec. 15.—What the American mission was sent to accomplish in the inter-allied war conference in Paris "has been successfully and satisfactorily done," was the message brought to the American people by Col. E. M. House, head of the mission, who returned to the United States today with four of his colleagues. The return of the party was void of ostentation.

After advising the press of the mission's arrival, Colonel House motored to his home where he later received newspaper men and announced that the mission's reports already had been despatched to the state department at Washington. These reports, which included that of Colonel House, will be supplemented by the Colonel's personal report to President Wilson. He said he would go to Washington Monday.

America's Influence Paramount. "In England and France the influence of the United States is paramount," said Colonel House. "In both countries the morale is splendid—the best I have observed on any of my three trips abroad since the beginning of the war."

"You mean the morale of the fighting forces?" Colonel House was asked. "No, I mean the morale of the men in uniform and the people as a whole," he replied. "Their determination to win without thought of the cost is admirable."

Work Quickly Completed. Through the elimination of speech-making and entertainment, both of public and private nature, Colonel House said the inter-allied war conference accomplished its full purpose at three sittings. At the termination, he said, the supreme war council, an outgrowth of these deliberations, completed its work in four weeks' time—two weeks being spent in London and two weeks in Paris.

The prime ministers of Great Britain, France and Italy and Colonel House, together with their military aides, were the only ones participating in the supreme war council.

The others who had taken part in the first conference were assigned to membership on various committees and thus every one had a specific task to accomplish. These committees dealt with food embargo, finance and other subjects.

"The council brought things to a focus—up to that time there was no co-ordination and things were not going on very well," said the Colonel. "Every one worked well, hard and cordially."

No Radically Different Measures. In reply to questions as to what the council decided to do with reference to various military matters, Colonel House said the deliberations were concerned primarily with the economic situation. He declared what had been decided upon with reference to this situation would not mean the introduction of any measures "radically different" from those now operative in the United States.

Colonel House said he did not discuss war aims while abroad. In his estimation, he declared, one person's opinion was as good as another's as to what Russia might be expected to do. Gathering of data in preparation for the eventual peace conference was purely incidental and entirely aside from the main purpose of the mission.

Pershing Doing Admirably. Asked regarding the progress of General Pershing's work, Colonel House said: "His task is really more difficult than the people know, but he is doing admirably. Our men and fighting men and those who have been sent abroad on other missions since our entry into the war—have made a highly favorable impression."

American representation at any further council of an inter-allied nature was entirely a matter for President Wilson's decision, Colonel House stated, and he knew nothing of the president's intentions respecting the return of himself or other delegates to such conferences.

Accompanying Colonel House on his return today were General Tasker H. Bliss, Vance C. McCormick, chairman of the war trade board; Bainbridge Colby, of the United States shipping board, and Thomas N. Perkins, of the priority board. Oscar T. Crosby, assistant secretary of the treasury; Dr. A. E. Taylor, representing the food administration, and Paul D. Cravath remained in London, Colonel House said, primarily to complete some details "respecting priority matters."

Tribute to Fellow Members. Colonel House paid a tribute to his fellow members of the mission in this statement: "It 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 a better and more intelligent team work. There has been no confusion of purpose, no slackening in pursuit of the objects to be obtained and there have been absolutely no personal differences or

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