

## PROMPT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN IN PERSIA CASE

U. S. Using Every Means to Obtain Cold Facts in Regard to Newest Phase of the Submarine Crisis.

PRESIDENT STUDYING DISPATCHES RECEIVED

Cabinet Meeting Cancelled in Absence of Detailed Information on Which to Base the Government's Next Step.

Washington, Jan. 4.—It was officially announced today that the United States government would act in the newest phase of the submarine crisis, brought on by the sinking of the British steamship Persia. The announcement was issued from the white house.

Secretary Tumulty made the following statement for the president:

"President Wilson and the secretary of state are taking every means possible to obtain the cold facts in this grave matter and will act as soon as the necessary information is obtained."

In the absence of detailed and specific information on which to base the next step of this government President Wilson cancelled the cabinet meeting which was to have been held today, but he conferred with Chairman Stone and some other members of the senate foreign relations committee.

Senator Stone told the president that there were intimations that some of the senators were prepared to make speeches on the subject embracing the sinking of ships with loss of American lives. Pres. Wilson is understood to have simply replied that the administration was doing all it could to protect American rights.

The president instructed Secretary Lansing to bring to the white house any new information on the matter which came today and meanwhile busied himself reading the dispatches so far received and getting in touch generally with the situation.

The administration is depending largely for information on the inquiry which Ambassador Penfield has been instructed to make at Vienna and on what American consuls gather elsewhere to establish nationality of the submarine which sunk the Persia and to develop the facts in the case generally.

Consul General Skinner at London advised the state department that the telegraphed list of survivors sent from Alexandria, Egypt, does not in-

clude the name of Robert Ney McNeely, American consul on his way to Aden, Arabia.

Eleven survivors, including Lord Montague, have been landed at Malta, according to the state department from Consul Kiblinger. The dispatch said that seven Indians of the Persia's crew were found clinging to a damaged open boat by the steamship Ching-Chow. All the men said the Persia had been torpedoed without warning.

Senator Stone told the president that when the foreign relations committee met tomorrow he wanted to be prepared to meet any situation which might arise. President Wilson said after his talk with President Stone that the government could do nothing in regard to the Persia incident until all the facts were obtained.

"Any nation which outrages the United States will be dealt with severely," said Senator Stone.

Later Chairman Flood of the house foreign relations committee called at the white house and conferred with the president. Afterward he said that the house and senate would be informed of all important information which developed in the foreign situation, probably through conferences between the president and senate and house leaders, though if any drastic action was necessary, the president might send a message to congress.

There were no indications today of what the prospects were for formally acquitting Bulgaria and Turkey of the position of the United States on submarine warfare. It was proposed that this should be done so that the central powers be left in a plea of lack of official information as Austria did at first in the Ancona case. The course of the United States in this regard will be developed definitely later. It was disclosed today, however, that sometime ago the complete submarine correspondence with Germany, showing the contentions of the United States and the extent to which Germany had acquiesced, had been sent to the American diplomatic representatives in Turkey and Bulgaria and that copies were also delivered to the diplomatic representatives of the two countries in Washington.

### LEIGH, YASAKA VICTIM NOT AMERICAN CITIZEN

Washington, Jan. 4.—Secretary Lansing indicated yesterday that the United States probably will take no step in the case of the Japanese liner Yasaka Maru, torpedoed in the Mediterranean, because W. J. Leigh, the only lost passenger who was supposed to have been an American, never established his American citizenship. Leigh was born of American parents in China.

### EUROPE IS SWEEPED BY SEVERE STORMS

New York, Jan. 4.—Trans-Atlantic cable communication has been crippled or delayed by the severe storms which have swept over Ireland, England and the continent. The first intimation of the trouble on the other side came with the announcement of a telegraph company that owing to severe storms telegraphic service had been practically suspended in Ireland, England and the continent as the result of which the company was compelled to suspend cable letters to all points until further advice.

### TO RELEASE GERMANS TAKEN OFF U. S. SHIP

Washington, Jan. 4.—The state department has advised that the French government has ordered the release of German subjects recently removed from American ships by the French cruiser Descartes.

## REPORT MADE ON COMMODITY PRICES

Figures for 1914 Are Present Below 1913 and on Same Level as 1912.

Washington, Jan. 4.—Food prices in the United States during 1914 were higher than at any time during the last 37 years with the exception of the years 1882 when they were 4 per cent higher than 1914 prices, 1883 when they were on the same level and in 1912 when they were 1 per cent higher. The bureau of labor statistics in its annual bulletin just issued on wholesale prices of commodities reviewing the years from 1860 to 1914 discloses that in the 55 years food prices were highest in 1864 when they were 76 per cent more than 1914 prices and lowest in 1896 when they were 40 per cent below.

In the years of the civil war and during a dozen years or more afterward prices of all commodities were the highest since 1860 when the first attempt was made at keeping a record of wholesale prices. In 1864 prices of most commodities reached their highest point. Lowest prices were recorded in the years from 1894 to 1898. The effect of the European war on wholesale prices in the United States is not fully disclosed in the report as prices for only the first five months of the war are recorded. Comparison of civil war prices with those prevailing in this country during the European war therefore is not possible. The Spanish-American war apparently had little effect on wholesale prices as they remained on about the same level as they had been in the period immediately preceding it.

Farm products prices in 1914 were higher than they had been in the last 44 years. As with food prices their highest point was reached in 1864 when 55 per cent more than in 1914 and lowest in 1896 when 56 per cent below.

Clothes and clothing were lower in 1914 than during the previous year and were higher than at any time since 1884, when they were on the same level, except in 1907, 1910 and 1912. Their highest prices were in 1864 when 251 per cent more than in 1914 and lowest in 1896 and 1897 when 25 per cent lower.

Fuel and lighting prices were 5 per cent lower in 1914 than in 1913 but were 32 per cent higher than the lowest point reached in 1894, and 120 per cent below the highest point, reached in 1865.

Metals and metal products were lower than they had been since 1905, being 8 per cent below 1913 prices. Their highest point was reached in 1864 when 194 per cent higher than in 1914 and lowest in 1895 when 27 per cent below 1914 prices.

Lumber and building materials were 4 per cent lower in 1914 than in 1913, 22 per cent below their highest prices reached in 1864 and 38 per cent above their lowest point reached in 1897.

Drugs and chemicals were 6 per cent higher than in 1913 and higher than they had been in 30 years. They were 230 per cent below their highest point made in 1864 and 32 per cent higher than their lowest prices in 1895.

House furnishing goods were higher than they had been in 30 years, being 25 per cent higher than in 1913, 22 per cent below their highest prices reached in 1864 and 184 per cent above the highest prices prevailing in 1864.

Prices of all commodities combined were 1 per cent below the prices of 1913 and on the same level as those of 1912. They were lower by 137 per cent than the high prices of 1864 and higher by 33 per cent than the lowest prices prevailing in the years of 1896 and 1897.

### RECTOR'S AID SOCIETY HAS ELECTED OFFICERS

At a meeting of the Rector's Aid Society of Trinity church, held yesterday afternoon, the following officers were elected for 1915: Miss Anne West, president, Mrs. S. Tannahill, vice president, Miss I. E. Davies, second vice president, Mrs. Frederick Cheetham, secretary, Miss Eleanor G. Woody, treasurer.

"The past year has been one of the most successful in the history of this organization, according to reports submitted at yesterday's meeting."

### GASH'S CREEK LADY WILL BE BURIED TODAY

Mrs. Nancy Hughes, aged 85, died at her home in the Gash's creek section yesterday. The funeral services will be held today and the interment will take place at the Gash's creek church.

### CONFERENCE ON CHURCH UNITY IS DISCUSSED

New York, Jan. 3.—Plans for a world conference of churches to consider the question of church unity will be discussed at a meeting of the representatives of Protestant churches of North America, which begins tonight at Garden City, L. I. About 22,000,000 communicants of the Christian churches, including Canada, are represented. It is expected that the conference will be continued until Friday.

## SINGLE CONVICT BETRAYED TRUST

George Royster of Franklin County Only Paroled Prisoner Who Outraged Governor's Kindness.

### OFFICERS CALLED ON TO APPREHEND HIM

Movement to Have Juniors Open Halls for Schools Where School Houses Are Not Available.

By W. T. Bost.

Raleigh, Jan. 4.—Governor Craig has called upon Franklin county officers to recapture George Royster, of that county, the only paroled convict who outraged the Governor's kindness and failed to return.

I had thought once of letting him go and carry this stigma with him, Governor Craig said, "but I have written the sheriff to catch him. He'll wear the brand and serve time too, if caught."

Another Franklin prisoner returned a day later; one took a big drink. But like Runcombe's brace, they came back.

Capt. John Paul Jones, head of his company of the national guard, but leader of a bigger host as field agent of the Junior Order in the moonlight school movement, is in Raleigh visiting both war departments.

Capt. Jones is just now full of a movement among the Juniors to open their halls as schoolhouses where local schoolrooms do not appear to be available and the heating and lighting arrangements will be better for those who attend the schools. He is to put this question before the ruling spirits of his order and will bring his fraternity more deeply into the warfare against illiteracy.

"A most conservative guesser on results is Captain Jones who is a zealot without a limit to his enthusiasm. He is confident that between 5,000 and 10,000 of the 132,000 illiterates of his own race in North Carolina will have learned to read and write before the first year closes. He is anywhere from 8,000 to 10,000 under the more unrestrained enumerators."

"And the people who are to be benefited by this teaching are the ones who are putting up for it," he said. "I have seen a man who cannot be making more than \$1.25 a day offer \$1 a month for teachers and in many places teachers are being hired to do this work. Yet teachers are available in great numbers everywhere. I can find plenty of college graduates who are not regular teachers who are willing to help these illiterates out."

Mr. Jones is planning a school, perhaps a type which will be widely used, of a number of teachers, in which one man will take the classes, then another until the ten teachers have had a hand in the instruction, by which time every illiterate will have had his chance. He brings some interesting stories from his Edgecombe county experience. One of his neighbors is a man of means and keeps large deposits in the bank. Until very recently he signed his name with a cross-mark. He was well above seventy but went to the night school and learned to write his name. The banks would not honor his checks until he went personally and gave them to understand that he knew how to write and understand what he was doing when he put his own name by his own exertions at the bottom of a check.

Captain Jones will discuss national guard matters with the department ward here.

Deaths Somewhat Reduced. The vital statistics department of Raleigh's government finds that 558 persons died in the city during the year of 1915, thus dropping under the 600 mark again since the extension of the city limits and making the lowest figure in years, save one.

The number is admittedly large but in the figures all the state institutions are included. If a man is electrocuted at the penitentiary, he adds in swelling the death list. All patients at the state hospitals and at both colored hospitals which are not in the heart of town are counted, if they die, as residents of the city and Raleigh gets credit for those deaths. Many, of course, are sent here for treatment.

There were 255 of these institutional deaths. These removed, it is claimed by those who feel that Raleigh gets an unfortunately high death rate shows 109 who died under five years of age.

The city is going to analyze its death rate and in the meantime it is highly probable that a census will be taken which will show the true population. A police estimate will be made and if it is found desirable to prosecute the claim of a larger population than has been credited to Raleigh by the state board of health, one of these 250 counts will be made and the government will be responsible for the figures.

Insurance commissioner James R. Young has his deputies investigating a recent fire in Winston-Salem but has not been apprised of the circumstances. (Continued on Page Three).

## AUTO FATALITIES FAST DECREASING

Number of Machines Increased Twice As Fast As Fatalities Caused By Them.

Washington, Jan. 4.—Is the death rate of the automobile increasing or decreasing?

This question seems to be answered in a very conclusive manner by the bureau of the census, in making public some preliminary mortality statistics for the year 1914, which indicate that during the five years from 1909 to 1914 the number of automobiles in use in the United States increased more than twice as rapidly as the number of fatalities caused by them.

At the close of 1909, according to figures compiled by the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, of New York city, from state registration reports, due allowance being made for duplicate registrations, the number of automobiles in use in the United States was approximately 200,000; by the close of 1913 it had risen to 1,270,000; and a year later, at the end of 1914, it was 1,750,000.

In the meantime the number of deaths due to automobile accidents and injuries increased from 632 in the death-registration area in 1909, containing 56 per cent of the population of the United States, to 2,622 in the same area in 1914; and the increase from 1913 to 1914, for the registration area as constituted in 1913, then containing 65 per cent of the population of the country, was from 2,488 to 2,795.

Thus a five year increase of 775 per cent—accepting as reliable the figures compiled by the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce—in number of machines has been accompanied by an increase of 315 per cent in automobile fatalities; and a one year increase of 38 per cent in number of machines has been accompanied by an increase of 12 per cent in fatalities.

Perhaps a more reliable comparison, from the statistician's point of view, can be made between the increase in number of automobiles in use and the increase in the rate per 100,000 population for deaths caused by them. This is because, with a given number of machines in use in a given area, the fatalities due to them will tend to be proportional to the population of that area. When the comparison is made on this basis, it appears that a five year increase of 258 per cent—from 1.2 to 4.3 per 100,000 population—in the death rate from automobile fatalities. Similarly, a one year increase of 98 per cent in number of automobiles has taken place along with an increase of only 10 per cent—from 3.3 to 4.3 per 100,000—in the death rate charged to them.

One cause of this proportional decrease in the destructiveness of the automobile is undoubtedly to be found in a reduction in average annual mileage per machine; but, after due weight is given this factor, and a suitable margin is allowed for possible error resulting from inaccuracy in the estimated portion of the automobile statistics, the figures still appear to furnish ample justification for the conclusion that the automobile of today is being driven with more care and more regard for public safety than it was a few years ago.

## SPRING TERM OF NIGHT SCHOOL ON

Y. M. C. A. School Opened Last Night With Large Enrollment—Three Grades.

The spring term of the Y. M. C. A. night school opened last night at 8 o'clock with an enrollment of new members almost as large as the entire membership during the fall term of the school. There are now 25 students in the school, which is in charge of R. O. Wells of the Asheville high school faculty.

The spring term will continue until April. It is stated that any one desiring to enter the night school and unable to buy books or other equipment, will be furnished these free if application is made to the management of the association. It is the desire of the officials of the association that all men and boys of the city, who can, will attend this school.

The first class consists of the elementary grades, business English, business spelling and business penmanship. Penmanship is taught by F. W. Osteen, shorthand, bookkeeping and typewriting are taught by Mr. Wells, who supervises all teaching and Ruffner Campbell teaches commercial law.

### MRS. N. TOWNSEL DIED AT HAW CREEK

Services over the body of Mrs. Nancy Townsel, aged 65, who died yesterday at her home on Haw Creek, will be held today at the Haw Creek church and the interment will follow there. The deceased had been ill for some time.

## GRAVE MATTERS FACE CONGRESS

FARMER URGED TO GROW DYESTUFFS

Production of Indigo Was Leading Industry in Carolinas in Colonial Days.

It may be of some interest to the people of the state to know that before the revolutionary war the production of indigo was a leading industry in North Carolina and South Carolina. In 1777 over a million pounds were produced in the Carolinas for the purpose of making the dyestuffs that we now get, or fail to get, from Europe.

Economic conditions caused the production of this crop gradually to cease, but the commissioner of agriculture of North Carolina feels that the recently changed economic conditions furnish a very strong argument in favor of reviving this abandoned industry among the farmers, and thus not only render our textile manufacturing industry independent of Europe but place into the hands of our farmers whatever profits might accrue from the production of the plants from which the dyestuffs are made as well as the cotton from which the cloth is made—the salt as well as the pork.

The commissioner, therefore, advises the growth of indigo, in a small way, at least, among the farmers of the state during the coming season. Seeds may be secured from the leading seedmen and instructions for growing the crop may be secured by application to the commissioner of agriculture.

### WEST DURHAM STORES DESTROYED BY FIRE

Durham, Jan. 4.—Fire of unknown origin early this morning totally destroyed a large two-story business building and three mercantile stores in it, in West Durham. The loss is estimated by Fire Chief Christian at \$125,000. The building was occupied by the stores of J. Winnecock, James S. Davis and R. J. Kearny and was owned by E. J. Davis of Henderson. The insurance is said to be about \$60,000.

### HENRY FORD AVOIDS WELCOMING CROWD

Detroit, Jan. 4.—Henry Ford returned to Detroit today but avoided a delegation of his fellow citizens who gathered to welcome him and to present a floral piece for his peace efforts. He remained in his private car and continued to his home at Dearborn. A public meeting had been planned.

### PREPAREDNESS ISSUE IN MISSISSIPPI ELECTION

Meridian, Miss., Jan. 4.—Voters of the fifth congressional district of Mississippi today are balloting in a special election for a successor to the late representative Samuel W. Byrd. There are six active candidates in the field—all democrats. The president's preparedness program is one of the leading issues of the contest.

### MEETING OF BISHOPS HAS BEEN POSTPONED

Information reached Asheville last night that the meeting of the house of bishops of the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States, which was called to assemble in Philadelphia on January 12, has been postponed indefinitely. An insufficient number of bishops, it is said, answered the call.

### NEW YORK STOCKS.

New York, Jan. 4.—The range of prices was generally higher at the opening of the stock market today, though here and there were signs of profit taking and liquidation. California Petroleum was heavy on rumors of a hitch in connection with the proposed merger with Mexican Petroleum, Mexican on the contrary opened strong, with gains in Copper, Mercantile Marine, preferred and New York Air Brake. United States Steel was steady but leading Rafia, including St. Paul, Pennsylvania and Lehigh were higher by fractions to a full point. The strength of Anglo-French fives suggested further investment inquiry.

## 2,829,263 Men Attested Under Lord Derby's Plan

London, Jan. 4.—Lord Derby's recruiting figures for the period between October 23 and December 15 show that 1,150,000 unmarried men and 1,679,263 married men presented themselves for military service. Of the grand total of 2,829,263 married and single men attesting 103,000 single and 112,431 married men enlisted for immediate service.

Houses Re-Assemble After the Holidays With Nation's Foreign Affairs Uppermost in Minds of Congressmen.

### GENERAL FEELING OF UNEASINESS PATENT

Believed Submarine Situation and Great Britain's Tyranny on Seas Will Be Considered Immediately.

Washington, Jan. 4.—The expected attack on the administration's foreign policy and the government's course in the submarine crisis failed to materialize in the senate when that body after being in session for ten minutes adjourned until noon tomorrow.

The reason assigned for the sudden adjournment by leaders on both sides was that several senators who had business to present were not ready to bring it forward.

Washington, Jan. 4.—Congress reassembled today after holiday recess with the nation's foreign affairs uppermost in the minds of the members of the two houses. On all sides the international situation was admitted to be the gravest this government has faced. The situation growing out of the submarine warfare of Germany and Austria and Great Britain's interference with neutral commerce on the high seas figured chiefly in the discussion of senators and representatives. The situation caused a general feeling of uneasiness.

It is believed that the question of national preparedness will be taken up in congress at once. It seems assured also that the senate foreign relations committee will take up promptly by Senator Hoke Smith's resolution providing for investigation of Great Britain's interference with neutral trade and Senator Lodge's amendment calling inquiry into the Lusitania disaster and other submarine disasters resulting in the loss of American lives. Although administration leaders were uniformly inclined to proceed cautiously and to await positive information, there was a general feeling of uneasiness among senators and representatives over the gravity of foreign affairs.

Senator Stone, chairman of the senate foreign relations committee, has conferred with Secretary Lansing at the state department and will seek a conference with President Wilson before a meeting of the committee is held Wednesday to begin consideration of matters pertaining to the diplomatic affairs of the nation. It seems assured that the committee will take up the resolution submitted by Senator Hoke Smith, calling for an inquiry into Great Britain's interferences with neutral commerce and the amendment by Senator Lodge to investigate destruction of American lives.

"Of course we must consider these resolutions," said Senator Stone. "They are on the calendar and must be disposed of. I do not know the sentiment of the committee, but I see no objection to congress having all information called for in the resolution of Senator Smith or the amendment by Senator Lodge."

"I talked with Secretary Lansing about the sinking of the Persia but we can do nothing with that until we get all the facts."

Senator Stone also discussed with Mr. Lansing the long pending Nicaragua and Columbian treaties, concerning which there still is persistent opposition by some senators, including republic members of the foreign relations committee. The Missouri senator wants these treaties disposed of one way or another. If it appears that opposition is overwhelming it is proposed to discover this as soon as possible so that further time may not be wasted in attempting to force their ratification.

Another subject of discussion was the nomination of Henry P. Fletcher to be ambassador to Mexico. Senator Foran a member of the committee, will strenuously oppose Mr. Fletcher's confirmation on the ground that no ambassador to Mexico should be named by the United States until conditions in the southern republic are more settled. Although foreign affairs overshadow everything else in interest for the moment, activity over national preparedness will begin at once.

C. G. Logan of Waynesville is a business visitor here today.

## More Than 200 People Went Down With Persia

London, Jan. 4.—The loss of life in connection with the sinking of the steamer Persia is still a matter of doubt. Latest advice from Cairo and Alexandria indicate that 155 survivors have been landed of whom 59 were passengers.

No further word has been received concerning Robert N. McNeely, American consul at Aden. There seems little doubt that he was drowned.

The safety of Charles Grant of Boston having been established it is thought that McNeely was the only American lost. The passengers, something over 200, and there were between 200 and 300 in the crew, so that it appears that the death list will be largely in excess of 200 people.

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