

## BERLIN DOESN'T TAKE ALLIED REJECTION SERIOUSLY; LONDON APPROVES REPLY OF LLOYD-GEORGE TO GERMAN PROPOSALS

Entente Statesmen Bluffing, Way Teuton Populace Looks at Situation—Roumanian Successes Will Make England, Russia and France Consider Carefully Before Turning Down Offer for Good, Believed—Kaiser Must Throw Off Air of Victor Before Enemies Will Even Talk With Him, London Public's View—Britain Not Dominating Policies of Her Allies—Haven't Slammed Door on the Dove, Either

(By Carl W. Ackerman)

Berlin, Dec. 20.—Germany regards the speeches of the statesmen of England, France and Russia as bluffing to impress Berlin with the Entente's determination, to this extent, their governments cannot do otherwise in view of their past statements, although they are really anxious now for peace. This view is reflected in all walks of life, following Lloyd-George's answer to the German Chancellor.

Berlin is not pessimistic, despite the Allied pronouncements from London, Petrograd and Paris, that the Allies are determined to continue the war until high objects are attained. The general view is that these speeches will not be taken seriously when weighed against Germany's progress in Roumania.

### Germany Must Not Be So Overbearing.

London, Dec. 20.—The Allies have not slammed the door on peace. They have simply said to Germany, "Here are our terms. Take or leave them. It's your move, but don't come again in the role of victor." This was the universal view today. Incidentally, it is remarkable how adroitly Lloyd-George destroyed Germany's illusion of England dominating the policies of the Entente nations. It is recalled that the premier stated at the outset that Russia and France were acting independently, but have reached a conclusion in which England is not acceding.

### German Armies Not Aware Peace Proposals.

(By William Philip Simms)  
With the British Armies in the Field, Dec. 20.—Despite the Kaiser's order of the day to his army, the British believe the bulk of the German troops are still ignorant of their emperor's peace proposals. Several prisoners captured by the British have professed absolute ignorance on the subject. Only one non-commissioned officer admitted he knew of the proposals. In similar fashion it is ascertained that Von Hindenburg is dissatisfied with the way things are going on the western front. Increased German artillery fire and aerial activity during the past week apparently resulted from the order to prevent, if possible, continual fire from the British guns. Seemingly, this continuous bombardment is telling upon the spirit of the German troops.

### America Interested In Permanent Peace.

Washington, Dec. 20.—The United States in common with other neutrals, will be interested in any world peace guarantees or disarmament decision which might follow the present peace proposal situation, it is officially stated. United States officials today informally talked of a world guarantee as essential to any final peace. Whether the "interest" officially revealed by the State Department would be other than passive is not stated. But it is assumed that this government would take an active hand in furthering such ideas if it found them welcomed by the belligerents. The President feels that when the time comes to make any move for peace, the situation will be made clear to the United States, which is not interested in the causes of European the outbreak, but "only in an assurance of permanent peace." The means of establishing this, the President believes, would be vital to this nation because she has, "whether she has willed it or not," been vitally affected by the war.

### Secret Diplomacy Next.

Washington, Dec. 20.—Ultra secret diplomacy will be employed in the next big moves of the peace game, officials believe. England probably will be willing for her official answer to Germany, expected here soon, to be made public, officials believe, but if Germany is to accept implied invitation and state peace terms publicity will have a ruinous effect, it is held. These facts, coupled with the thought that the belligerents are still vastly apart, convinces the administration that at present it is advisable for the United States to keep hands off.

## TROOPS QUARANTINED FOREIGNERS REPORTED FOR SPINAL MENINGITIS DEAD SAFE IN TEXAS

El Paso, Texas, Dec. 19.—Four companies in the Georgia infantry brigade have been quarantined because of the discovery of spinal meningitis among these troops, it was announced at military headquarters here today.

El Paso, Texas, Dec. 19.—Seven foreigners, all of whom at various times had been reported killed by bandits in Mexico, arrived at Eagle Pass, Texas, today, according to a telegram received by officials of a railroad company here.

## TRUSTIES WILL BE FOURTH BANK HERE GIVEN THREE DAYS IS A REALITY; W. D. LARQUE PRESIDENT

Governor Issues Order Releasing Honor Men From Prisons Throughout the State—Example Set By Him Last Year

Governor Craig, following a precedent set by him last year, will give every convict trusty in every prison and road camp in North Carolina a brief vacation for Christmas. He is sending the following to all authorities in the State late Tuesday:

"Greetings—You are hereby authorized and requested to allow each and every prisoner who is and has been a trusty for ten days prior to this date to return to his home or other place chosen by him, and to remain away from the camp or prison, during Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, the 24th, 25th and 26th of December, provided each trusty pledge his honor and satisfy the officer in charge that he will return by 12 o'clock, Wednesday, December 27.

"You are further authorized and requested to give to all of the prisoners in your charge a holiday on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, the 25th, 26th and 27th of December.

"You are furthermore directed and requested to report to me on or before the first day of January your action in accordance herewith and the results, and the name and contact of each prisoner paroled.

"A request and authority similar to this was issued in December, 1915, and was cheerfully obeyed by sheriffs and officers. The prisoners that were paroled best their promise with prompt fidelity and showed that they were worthy of the confidence and trust.

"W. D. LARQUE, Governor."

## DUPLIN BOARD HAS TROUBLE ON BOTH SIDES OF FENCE

The Duplin county commissioners are between two fires on the noted stock law question which has been the bane of their official existence for a long time past. They must come here, it is reported, on December 29 in obedience to a mandamus writ to show cause before Judge W. A. Devin for their failure to erect the fence. On the other hand, an injunction has been served on them restraining them from erecting it. It is returnable before Judge Oliver Allen here on Saturday, it is said. Strong legal talent has been retained by both sides.

## ONE REASON WHY THE LEATHER COST GOES UP

London, Dec. 20.—Kicking the Germans back across their own borders is requiring an enormous quantity of boot leather. As England is supplying the greater portion of all the boots worn by the Allied soldiers, the shoe factories throughout England are swamped with work today. For the winter, the British government will require 9,000,000 feet of upper leather for Cossack boots and 7,000,000 feet of leather for the British soldiers' footwear. The shipments of such tremendous orders must be completed by the time cold weather sets in and has forced the government to take up every piece of leather on the market.

## SLIPPED ON SNOW AND BROKE HIS NECK; DEAD

Asheville, Dec. 19.—That Hemphill, 18 years of age, met death in a most peculiar manner yesterday, falling in the yard of the Hemphill school and breaking his neck. The young man, with some companions, was engaged in a snowball battle and stopped to pick up a mass of fresh snow for a snowball. In some way his foot slipped and he plunger forward, striking his head.

## Caswell Banking & Trust Co. Organized On Tuesday Evening

UP-TO-DATE INSTITUTION Will Have Trust and Savings Departments and May Keep Open Nights—T. W. Heath to Be Cashier—Site Chosen

As foretold in The Free Press, a new State bank for Kinston was organized Tuesday evening. The stockholders met in the Harvey C. Hines building at Gordon and Heritage streets and, failing to elect directors, tentatively named Postmaster W. D. Larque, President; C. R. Dodson, Vice-president and T. W. Heath, Cashier. The stockholders desire that the officers be retained will be communicated to the directors when they are chosen. The Caswell Banking and Trust Co. will be the name of the company owning the institution, which will be Kinston's fourth bank.

The officers are all well-known. Mr. Dodson is a prominent tobacconist. Mr. Heath has long been with the First National Bank, now being employed as teller there. President Larque has large interests in the city. The capital stock will be \$25,000. It was over-subscribed before the organization. Stockholders include scores of merchants, professional men, planters and others. The idea of the promoters was to make it as popular as possible and have many stockholders owning few shares rather than a small number of stock owners.

Features of the institution will be the trust and savings departments. The former will be quite complete and comprise a specialty for which there is a demand in the city. Night hours will be a new departure contemplated.

The bank will be located in the new Hunter building at Monument corner.

## WEAVER BECOMES A REPRESENTATIVE IN FACT; COMMISSION'D

Victory of Tenth District Democrats Complete So Far As State Is Concerned—Britt Has But One Chance Left

Raleigh, Dec. 20.—The Governor today forwarded his commission to Zebulon Vance Weaver, Democrat, as Congressman from the Tenth district, to succeed Britt, Republican. The Supreme Court held that the evidence favored Weaver. Britt is expected to carry his fight to Congress.

The famous Weaver-Britt election controversy in the Tenth Congressional district is over so far as the State is concerned, with Weaver, Democrat, holding the sea. The Raleigh News and Observer Wednesday said:

"Zebulon Weaver, Democrat, will represent the Tenth North Carolina district in the next Congress, succeeding James J. Britt, Republican, unless Mr. Britt, defeated at every turn in a contest that has been doggedly fought before a county board of canvassers, two superior courts and the Supreme Court, carries his fight to the floors of Congress and get a reversal of Mr. Weaver's complete victory.

"The Republican Congressman, whose failure to return gives the Democrats a solid congressional rep-

## BOSTON DECIDES TO STAY IN WET COLUMN WITH BIG MAJORITY

Boston, Mass., Dec. 19.—Boston today voted to continue the licensed sale of liquor after the liveliest campaign on the liquor question that the city has had in years. The vote in favor of license was 53,458 with 29,997 against. Last year the vote for license was 46,115 and 31,677 against.

## BULLETINS

(By the United Press)  
KILLED IN MINE EXPLOSION. Birmingham, Dec. 20.—One man was killed and two injured today in an explosion at the Edgewater mine of the Tennessee Coal & Iron Railway.

## CONGRESS TO RECESS ABOUT LAST OF WEEK

Washington, Dec. 18.—Democratic Leader Kitchin's resolution to provide for a congressional recess over the Christmas holidays from December 22 to January 2, was adopted by the House today by a vote of 141 to 44. A similar resolution will be passed by the Senate.

## HALF MILLION MORE BALES GINNED THAN LAST YEAR SO FAR

(By the United Press)  
Washington, Dec. 20.—Cotton ginned from the 1916 crop prior to December 13, amounted to 10,845,989 bales, against 10,306,309 in 1915, says a census report. Of this total 181,407 round bales were included, against 100,925 last year. Sea Island included amounted to 110,418 bales against 84,110.

## MAINE COUNTY MADE WEALTHIEST BY POTATOES

(By the United Press)  
Houlton, Me., Dec. 20.—Aroostook county today is the richest county in the United States. The northernmost county of Maine snatched the crown from Los Angeles county, California. The humble potato did it. Potatoes that sold for 75 cents a barrel a few years ago now bring \$4.75 and farmers here are holding much of their crop for \$5 a barrel.

## COTTON

The condition of the cotton market is not at all Santa Clausy, compared with the status of things a few weeks ago. The staple here Wednesday brought from 14 3/4 to 16 1/4. Receipts were about 20 bales.

New York futures quotations were:

	Open	2:20
January	16.80	17.05
March	17.07	17.26
May	17.28	17.48
July	17.32	17.52
October	15.71	15.75
December	16.95	17.05

resentation, found himself bankrupt of legal resources in North Carolina yesterday when the Supreme Court affirmed the judgment of Judge Adams denying him a writ of mandamus against the Buncombe county board of canvassers.

"Immediately in Wake county court, Judge Bond, who held in continuance the application for injunction sought by Mr. Britt against the declaration of election by the State board of canvassers, dismissed the action. The State board of canvassers, in compliance with the statute, declared Mr. Weaver elected; the Secretary of State issued certificate, and Governor Craig signed his commission as Congressman from the Tenth district. Thus ended, so far as North Carolina courts are concerned, a two months' determined fight for the control of the tenth district."

## UNDERWOOD PLAN TO SUBMIT REFERENDUM IS LOST IN SENATE

Washington, Dec. 19.—The Senate today rejected the proposal of Senator Underwood for a referendum among citizens of the Capital on the Sheppard bill to prevent manufacture and sale of liquor in the District of Columbia. The vote was a tie, 38 to 38, and the amendment therefore was declared lost.

## CONGRESS POWERLESS HELP PRINT PAPER SITUATION—KITCHIN

(By the United Press)  
Washington, Dec. 18.—Congress is powerless to relieve the news print situation, Majority Leader Kitchin declares. Any action, he said, will have to be taken by the attorney-general.

"If the charges made by newspaper publishers are true," Representative Kitchin said, "the attorney-general ought to act in the case and act at once. Congress could only order an investigation by a government The investigation, apparently is going on."

Members stated that publishers had complained to them that the department of justice had given small encouragement to the situation. Department officials, it was stated, cannot "get" the paper trust, despite evidence that many small publishers are being forced out of business because of their inability to meet paper price advances.

## NOTED NEWSPAPERMAN NEAR DEATH ON BORDER

(By the United Press)  
El Paso, Dec. 20.—It is reported that R. E. Gonzales, sergeant in the South Carolina guard and editorial writer on the Columbia State, died in the base hospital last night of pneumonia. His son is the American minister to Cuba.

The following dispatch is from the Raleigh News and Observer:

Camp Stewart, El Paso, Texas, Dec. 19.—Sergt. Robert E. Gonzales, Second South Carolina Machine Gun Company, is at the point of death here tonight from pneumonia. He is famous throughout the South as the clever paragrapher of the Columbia State. His recovery is not expected.

## CONTRACTS FOR FOUR THOUSAND QUICK-FIRES

Washington, Dec. 19.—In accordance with the original recommendation of the special machine gun board, the War Department today let contracts for 4,000 Vickers' machine guns and accessories at a cost of \$5,500,000 and announced that additional contracts soon would be let which would bring the sum to be expended on such weapons for the regular army and the national guard up to about \$9,500,000.

## TWELVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL COMPLAINS AGAINST OLD MAN

Sadie Cameron, colored, 12 years of age, has been the victim of several attempts at criminal assault by Ed. Harper, apparently 45 or 50 years of age, she told Sergeant Foscue at the police station Wednesday morning. A warrant for Harper was issued at the order of Chief Skinner.

According to the police, who have Harper's number, he has been dwelling out of the law with the girl's mother on Shine street for several years. He works on a farm. He has not been apprehended yet. They say the Cameron woman upheld Harper, and attempted to dissuade the girl from her antipathy to him. Sadie Cameron, frightened by the man's actions, left the house on several occasions. She told Sergeant Foscue that he had repeatedly offered her money.

## MINCHER TO LEARN WHAT'S TO BE DONE WITH HIM SHORTLY

Judge Bond to Give Governor His Opinion in a Few Days

## HUMAN INTEREST SIDE

Mincher Not So Much to Be Considered, But Little Minchers Come Into Case—Commissioners Would Take Blame

If E. W. Mincher, former road boss, goes to jail, what will become of his four babies and their small, hard-worked mother? That is a phase of the Mincher case, now famous in Lenoir county, which is beginning to cause concern to persons intimate with the Minchers' domestic status. Maybe Wincher deserves no consideration, maybe he does; but whether Mincher does or does not, his family might be in a sad plight if the big fellow has to serve a sentence of a year imposed upon him by Judge W. M. Bond in Superior Court here sometime ago.

Mrs. Mincher and the little ones are at the Lenoir county convict camp, according to county officials. Should Mincher be taken from them, there would be no home for them away from there. The oldest baby is six years old, still lisping; the youngest is two-months-old and just beginning to "notice things" and to smile baby fashion. Little Mrs. Mincher, whose flock allow her no time to accumulate surplus flesh, is busy with one baby after another most all the time. If Mrs. Mincher goes out to find food for her brood the six-year-old will have to care for the others, it is assumed, and that will not do at all. At least, Mrs. Mincher wouldn't like to risk it, probably. Mrs. Mincher is a most excellent woman, according to everything that officials have seen of her. She has a lot of responsibility upon her, and measures up to it to the last notch.

Mincher, convicted of whipping convicts, is under sentence of a year to the county jail. He would be serving his time had not the Governor very considerably relieved him, pending an investigation. The Supreme Court found no error in Superior Court's judgment. Chairman of Commissioners R. F. Churchhill, Commissioner D. W. Wood, Attorney G. V. Cowper and Sheriff A. W. Taylor went to Raleigh Tuesday in the case, carrying petitions and affidavits and other things to the Governor, and asked for a pardon for Mincher. His Excellency intimated or said that he would take no action except upon recommendation of Judge Bond, say members of the party. He was very courteous and cordial to the Lenoir men, in keeping with his disposition. Afterward they saw Judge Bond, who gave them a long hearing, took the papers in the case and assured them that he would give the Governor his views in a few days. The party dwelt upon the fact that the testimony in the case of an ex-convict named Benton should not be considered. Benton's character, they contend, eliminates him as a responsible witness. Solicitor H. E. Shaw was in Raleigh. He, the county administration members say, opposed a pardon or commutation. There is no hope, Attorney Cowper says, for a recommendation for clemency coming from the State's attorney.

The county commissioners maintain that the responsibility for the whipping of prisoners was not Mincher's. Attorney Cowper states that Judge Peables, now dead, holding court here held that whipping of insubordinate convicts was essential to discipline; that the commissioners, acting upon his construction, empowered Supt. Bryant Taylor to use the lash in moderation, and that Taylor, there is ample proof though the latter off-

(Continued on page 5)