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DIPLOMATIC BREAK WITH GERMANY CAME SATURDAY WAR'S BRINK AMBASSADOR GERARD ORDERED TO QUIT GERMANY

PRESIDENT WILSON CALLED CONGRESS TOGETHER AT TWO O'CLOCK AND TOLD THEM OF HIS DECISION TO SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT

Two Years of Diplomatic Negotiations, Marked With Fervent Crises, and Attended with the Loss of More Than Two Hundred American Lives On The High Seas, Have Culminated With An Act Which All the History of The World Always Has Led to War—Every Agency of the American Government Has Been Set in Motion to Protect the Country Against Acts of German Sympathizers—These Moves are of Necessity Being Kept Secret.

The severance of Diplomatic relations with Germany was formerly announced to the country and the world by President Wilson at a joint session of Congress Saturday at noon.

In his address to Congress the President announced that he had ordered all diplomatic relations with Germany severed.

Ambassador Gerard ordered to withdraw from Berlin.

German Ambassador von Bernstorff is handed his passport.

President Wilson, Secretary of War Baker and Secretary of the Navy Daniels in conference discuss disposition of the military forces of the United States.

White House and State Department aroused over reported sinking of American steamship Housatonic off the Sicily Islands, in view of the President's statement that he would again address Congress if Germany "sacrificed American" lives or ships.

Government buildings in Washington and Government plants brought the country are closed to the public and placed under heavy guard.

Municipal and Federal authorities throughout the country are called on to aid in protecting Government property.

Congress clears the way for National appropriation bill with authorization for the President to take over all industrial plants needed if emergency arises.

Secretary of the Treasury Mc Adoo and Senator Simmons, chairman of the Finance Committee, confer and determine that the finance of the country are ready for any strain.

Austria delivers note to the State Department which may be an endorsement of Germany's submarine policy.

With the notice of severance of relations, the United States sent to Berlin a demand for the immediate release of sixty-four Americans taken from ships captured by German raiders in the South Atlantic.

Wave of support of President's decision comes from all over the country.

MILLIONS OF POUNDS OF BEEF AND OTHER FOODSTUFF IN STORAGE WILL BE RELEASED.

Ambassador Bernstorff has been handed his passports. American takes a giant stride nearer the vortex of war.

Believing the situation created by the Kaiser's effort to dictate the terms on which America's shipping might sail the seas, President Wilson, with the advice of his cabinet and the leaders in Congress, has formally notified the Imperial German Government that friendly relations with it are no longer possible.

This act may bring war. It does not necessarily mean war. Whether formal war shall follow will depend entirely upon the actual injuries received by American shipping at the hands of German submarines, and the manner in which our own Government shall choose to treat such injuries.

Having been re-elected President of the United States by men and women who believed him pre-eminently qualified to defend the nation's honor without entering into war until war should become inevitable, President Wilson is doubtless conscious at this grave moment that his fellow citizens rely upon him to move with redoubled caution through the dark waters that have suddenly risen.

What might be termed as the one bright spot in the prospective situation is an immediate and substantial lowering in the price of living. The reason is plain. Millions of pounds of beef and immense quantities of all other kinds of foodstuffs have accumulated in storage for shipment to the European markets at war prices, and these stored products will have to be released upon a lowered market. The holders could better afford to sell at cheaper rates than to continue holding in storage for an indefinite time. In the event of war it would be impossible to ship these supplies out of the country. The storage people would be compelled to hold them at a continued heavy cost, or liberate them to the markets of this country. This would mean a breaking of the backbone of the high cost of living.

OUR NEW CHIEF OF POLICE

OFFICER HOBGOOD PROMOTED TO HEAD OF DEPARTMENT.

Heavy Responsibility Rests on the Shoulders of the New Chief—Too Much Territory for One Man to Cover.

On the first of February Officer I. H. Hobgood, for several years high private in the ranks of the police squad, was elevated to the head of the department and is now wearing the insignia of the office. He has assumed a responsibility few men would care to shoulder. The town is large and the back alleys are dark, and should he blow his whistle for an hour no blue coat would go to his rescue, for he alone constitutes the entire police force.

Chief Hobgood is a good and fearless officer and he will do all in his power to keep down crime, but the town is entirely too large for one man to cover, especially at this period of the year when there are so many thieves, burglars and highway robbers. Should they organize and invade Oxford at the bewitching hour of midnight, the one lone policeman would not amount to more than a bee in a tar bucket.

The report that two plain clothes men have been imported to assist Chief Hobgood during the winter months is neither denied or confirmed at the police headquarters. The best we can learn is to the effect that the city fathers regard Oxford as being rather too large for one policeman to handle, but whether they will decide to put on a night watchman, or a "plain clothes" man or one with brass buttons and a billy is problematic.

We commend the Town Commissioners for elevating Officer Hobgood to the head of the department. We know Chief Hobgood very well; know that he has done his best to see that law and order prevails. But Chief Hobgood is like all the rest of us. He is human and he is likely to make mistakes. Every man who ever held a public office is always subject to criticism. But we can honestly say that we believe Chief Hobgood is doing his duty and trying out the law as he sees it.

Fire Alarm Turned In.

The chimney of the home of Mrs. H. O. Furman on College street caught fire last Friday night. The alarm was sounded at 9:15 and the firemen responded in double quick time, and stood guard until the blaze died down.

COUNT VON BERNSTORFF SAYS BERLIN KNEW WHAT WAS COMING WHEN WAR RENEWAL WAS ANNOUNCED.

The Breaking of Relations Came With a Crash, Despite the Fact That It Had Been Discussed and Practically Determined Upon—The President Returning From His Friday Night Conference With Senators, Determined That a Break in Relations Was the Only Act "Consistent with the Dignity and the Honor of the United States."

Shortly after ten o'clock Saturday morning, Count Von Bernstorff received a correspondent of the Associated Press in his study at the Embassy. As the talk drifted to the prospects of peace and the Ambassador expressed the personal opinion that it was not improbable, even if relations were broken off, that the United States might continue efforts in the direction a telephone bell twinkled. The Ambassador picked up the receiver, smiling. He was quiet for a moment, then the expression on his face changed.

"You say relations have been broken and that the President is going to Congress—Are you sure? Well, maybe that's so. No, I have no comment to make and nothing to say. If that is true then I am a private citizen again."

The Ambassador turned to the correspondent and asked that verification of the report be obtained. This was done, and the Ambassador quickly walked into the next room to carry the news to Countess von Bernstorff.

When he came back into his study his eyes were moist and he said:

"So, it is really true. I'm so sorry. However, as you know, I expected it. I never expected anything else. There was nothing left for the United States to do. I wonder how I am going to get home?"

"I suppose I will get my passports anytime now. But I certainly am not surprised at the action that has been taken. My people in Berlin will not be surprised either. They knew what was coming when they declared unrestricted submarine warfare."

At eleven o'clock Saturday morning it became known in Washington that Ambassador Gerard had been ordered home and that passports had been handed to Count von Bernstorff. While apparently deeply moved, Count von Bernstorff was not surprised. His first act was to ask Dr. Paul Ritter, the Swiss Minister, to inform his wife, an American-born woman, of the developments and likewise told the Embassy staff.

The question of conveying American ships through the submarine blockade has been taken up, and is being considered as one of the next moves by this Government.

Neutral Governments have been notified of the action of the United States, and have openly been invited to follow its action if the new submarine campaign violates their reports.

NAME POSTMASTER NEXT WEEK

Correspondent Believes Mr. Lassiter Will Be Appointed.

The Washington correspondent of the Greensboro Daily News on February 3rd says:

"One week from today Major Stedman will name a postmaster for Oxford to succeed Mrs. Osborn, who died a few days ago. There are three candidates for the place, Ben. K. Lassiter, F. W. Hancock and J. J. Parish. While Major Stedman has declined to say whom he will name, because he probably does not know just now, the chances are that Ben Lassiter, who is one of the most popular Democrats in Oxford, will get the place. Young Lassiter has been a lifelong Democrat; has been chairman of his county committee, a firm and devoted supporter of President Wilson and has always stood ready to aid progressive democracy. His friends believe that he will be appointed and if so that he will make an ideal officer."

NOTE—In the above report the correspondent had it "John Hancock." We take the liberty of correcting the mistake and stating that Mr. Hancock is a highly esteemed citizen and he also is a life-long Democrat and voted for Mr. Wilson.

THE BOY SCOUTS.

Rev. Lewis N. Taylor Will Address the Stovall Camp.

(Correspondence Public Ledger)

Next Thursday is the natal day of the Boy Scouts, and at half-past seven o'clock that evening Rev. Lewis N. Taylor will preach to the local camp at St. Peter's Church, Stovall. This meeting was formerly announced for Friday night, but that was a mistake. The indications are that the meeting next Thursday night, as scheduled, will be largely attended. Everybody, and especially parents are invited to be present.

Some one circulated the report in the northern part of the county to the effect that the meeting next Thursday night was for the purpose of enlisting the boys in the army. Far from it, the Boy Scouts stand for peace and happiness. They are not permitted to carry guns.

Immediately after the services a reception will be given the Scouts at the home of the Scout master, Mr. Luther C. Wilkerson.

NO SCHOOL MONDAY.

Heating Apparatus Was Out of Order.

On account of the water pipes or the furnace being out of order, the Oxford Graded school was closed on last Monday. The snow covered the ground to about the depth of one inch and the children were as happy as larks.

The Woman's Club.

The Woman's Club will meet this Wednesday afternoon in the Oxford Library at 3:30 o'clock. A full attendance is desired.

SHERIFF CAPTURES STILL.

Blockaders Convert Gasoline Tank Into a Kettle.

In response to a wireless message Sheriff Hobgood made a hasty trip to the northern part of the county Friday morning and returned with one of the most oddly constructed distilling kettles ever seen in this section.

The blockaders procure from some source not known to the public a large gasoline tank with a capacity of perhaps 120 gallons, through the top of which they bored a hole for the purpose of leading the steam into the cap and thence into the evaporating worm.

Sheriff Hobgood found the still on a stream within a couple of miles of Grassy Creek church. The rocks were warm and the indications were that the blockaders had recently finished a "run" and departed with the liquor. There was sufficient sour mash on hand to recharge the boiler. This was destroyed and the plant dismantled by Sheriff Hobgood. The oddly constructed rum mill created a great deal of curiosity when the Sheriff arrived in Oxford with his trophy.

A FINE PROPOSITION.

Encourage The Young to be Frugal

The Oxford banks made a strong campaign to strengthen their Christmas Savings Clubs and they could engage in no better business. The Savings Clubs has shown in this town what it can do. It has put hundreds of young men and women on the Savings Route and before they know it they will have money enough to buy a lot or build a home. Last December several thousand dollars were turned loose for Christmas shopping—a great sum of money which would never have been in evidence but for the interest the banks took in the matter.

While perhaps the banks get some little profit from this savings idea they certainly do the town and the individual much good. Therefore, the citizen who has tried the savings plan should insist that his neighbor try it. Let us not be selfish. Let us help the banks in their campaign. It is perhaps not too late yet to join a club. At any rate, the habit of saving is most commendable.

COMING TO THE ORPHEUM.

"The Life Of Our Savior," the World's Greatest Drama.

The managers of the Orpheum Theatre have secured for March 5th Pathe's "Life of Our Savior," a dramatic masterpiece in seven reels. The work represents a life time of careful study and an immense financial outlay.

Miss Billie Burke in "Gloria's Romance," is announced for February 9th, afternoon and night. This picture has its sitting at Palm Beach.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Much Good Being Accomplished in Oxford.

In years not long gone by the Sunday school was considered an institution for children only, with just enough grown people on the roll to act as officers and teachers, all of the scholars being youngsters from say five to fifteen years of age.

In the last few years there has come a change, and now the Bible students in the adult classes in a majority of the Sunday schools of the country equal the number of scholars in the children's classes, and in some schools outnumber the little ones. Probably no city in the South the size of Oxford is doing a finer work than the Baptist Baraca Class. The personal touch of Gen. B. S. Royster has much to do with the success of the class. An invitation to come up to the Sunday school and hear General Royster expound the lesson never fails to land the man.

This class is composed of merchants, bankers, lawyers, mechanics, manufacturers, clerks, bookkeepers, stenographers and all kinds of business men, varying in years from twenty-five to seventy-five years. The total membership is about 160, and notwithstanding the fact that quite a number are elderly men who cannot go out in all kinds of weather, the average attendance on Sunday morning is in the neighborhood of 95 or 100.

The annual report of this class was read last Sunday morning, and it is indeed a pleasure to note that the class donated \$500. for various causes during the year, only \$12 of the amount being spent for class purposes.

CAUTION.

The Oxford Water Company asks us to announce that its pumps and pipe lines are frozen up and several important parts burst and broken. It will be impossible to pump any water at all for some hours until they are thawed out and such temporary repairs made as are possible. You are warned to take every precaution against fires and also with regard to your steam heating plants and ranges with hot water backs. Consumption of water must be reduced to only such as is absolutely necessary until the broken parts can be replaced. All broken and leaky service pipes must be cut off absolutely. Failure to get water through the pipes may not mean that they are frozen but may only indicate that the standpipe is cut off, as it will be most of the time for several days to come.

W. Z. MITCHELL, Mayor
R. C. M. CALVERT, Water Co.

Kings Daughters Meet.

The Kings Daughters will meet at the home of Mrs. C. G. Elliot Thursday morning at 1 o'clock.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEET

The National Highway Holds Their Attention.

The County Commissioners did a fine day's work here Monday and adjourned late in the evening and went home.

They allotted \$75.00 per mile to the National Highway and enjoined the Government to put on two additional patrolmen—four in all—and purchased a road machine for the work.

Heretofore the county allotted \$60.00 per mile to the National Highway and two patrolmen did all of the work. It appears that there was too much ground for them to cover successfully. The additional \$15.00, two additional road men and a machine will keep the road in better condition.

ZERO WEATHER.

The Blizzard Here the Worst Since 1899.

The temperature of two degrees above zero was registered here at 8 o'clock Monday morning. This was the coldest record here since the memorable cold spell which reached its worst stage on February 14, 1899, when the mercury fell to two degrees above zero, the same as Monday. Four year before that time on February 8, 1895, the thermometer dropped to one degree above.

The rapid drop in the temperature began shortly after 9 o'clock Sunday night, when snow of the small, misty kind, began to fall. In a few minutes after it started, the flakes almost the size of tiny balls of sleet, turned into a fall so dense that objects twenty-five or fifty yards away could hardly be seen. Wind, which at times reached a velocity roughly estimated at between thirty-five and fifty miles an hour, accompanied by the snow, and completed the requirements of a genuine northwest blizzard. In less than two hours there was approximately two inches of snow on the ground. The fall began to decrease about 10:30 o'clock, and soon after 11 stopped entirely. The snow was scattered about in drifts, great piles being driven up in some places by the wind, while in others the ground was perfectly clean.

The lines of the Carolina Power & Light Company were broken several miles north of Raleigh, and the current went off about 10:30 o'clock Sunday night. The city was in darkness for the rest of the night. The current reached Oxford at 11 o'clock Monday morning.

Fido's Kiss

No, little doggie must not kiss The fairy cheek of pretty miss, Though great be his affection; For 'till outside dog must know That at one swipe would surely go Girlie's drugstore complexion.

—It is easy to adopt one's self to new conditions. Uncle William can talk automobile just as volubly as he use to talk "hoss."