

Rain and warmer tonight and Wednesday. Northwest winds becoming strong.

TEUTONS PROPOSE PEACE CONFERENCE AT ONCE

Reply Made to President Wilson's Note and Now On The Cables.

DISCUSS MOVE TO PREVENT WAR

Declares This Can Only Come With End of The Present Strife—Washington Officials Surprised at The Manner of Giving Out The Answer.

Berlin, Dec. 26 (By wirelessto to Sayville).—Germany and her allies—Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey—today replied to the note of President Wilson, in which he asked that the belligerent nations state the aims for which they are fighting.

The answer says: "The high-minded suggestion made by the President of the United States of America, in order to create a basis for the establishment of a lasting peace, has been received and considered by the Imperial government in the friendly spirit which is expressed in the President's communication."

The President points out that which he has at heart and leaves open the choice of the road. "To the Imperial government an immediate exchange of views seems to be the most appropriate road in order to reach the desired result."

"It begs, therefore, in the name of the declaration made on December 12, which offered a hand for peace negotiations, to propose an immediate meeting of the delegates of the belligerent states at a neutral place."

The Imperial government is also of the opinion that the great work of preventing future wars can be gained only after the end of the present struggle of the nations. It will when this moment shall have come be ready with pleasure to collaborate entirely with the United States in this exalted task."

The answer of the central powers concludes with the usual diplomatic terms of politeness.

The text of Germany's answer was transmitted today to the American ambassador.

Officials Surprised.

Washington, Dec. 26.—Officials here are surprised that Germany's answer to President Wilson's peace note was given out before reaching this country in official form. It is pointed out that in sending his note President Wilson allowed two days before its sending and making public, so that it might first reach the German government. In the absence of the official reply formal comment was withheld at the White House and the State Department.

The direct proposal for a conference of delegates at a neutral place is regarded as a further step in the German proposal, although officials consider it as having been defined in the first proffer as it had been repeatedly mentioned in the authorized statement at the German embassy, where the opinion had been freely expressed that once the delegates were gathered around a table for the purpose of discussing peace the result would be an arrangement of terms.

The Berlin dispatches containing the German reply were read by President Wilson and Secretary Wilson with great interest. Some of details compared the reply with President Wilson's note and professed to see some conflict between the German statement that the work of securing future peace of the world should be delayed until the present struggle is over. Others were of the opinion that it was not entirely out of harmony.

President Wilson's purpose has repeatedly been expressed as making prevention of future world war as part of the settlement of the present conflict, but it is admitted that the subject is broad enough to allow some variation when the final conference comes.

This afternoon the official text of the note had not been received at the state department.

Count Bernstorff, the German ambassador, has gone to New York and so far as has been learned the German embassy's only information was in the Associated Press dispatches.

DEATH OF WELL KNOWN CITIZEN

Mr. Robert T. Rivenbark Died at Home in Willard This Morning.

Many friends will learn with deep regret of the passing of Mr. Robert T. Rivenbark, one of the most beloved men of this section. Death came at the ripe old age of 76 years and just after Mr. Rivenbark, with his children and grandchildren gathered around him, at the old home in Willard, had enjoyed a happy Christmas. It was hours after the festivities had ceased that Mr. Rivenbark was taken ill, due to the infirmities of old age, and the end came at 4:30 o'clock this morning at Willard, where the deceased had lived, was honored and greatly beloved. He had been postmaster at Willard for years and was the Atlantic Coast Line agent there, but some time ago retired from active work. He was a man who was always interested in the welfare of his community and section and had done noble work for both. He was admired and loved by all who knew him and his death will be mourned by hundreds.

He is survived by three daughters, Mrs. T. G. Covington, of Clio, S. C.; Mrs. T. J. Joyner, of Lakeland, Fla.; and Mrs. C. D. McGowan, of Willard; and four sons, Mr. R. J. Rivenbark, freight agent for the Atlantic Coast Line at Jacksonville, Fla.; Mr. J. W. Rivenbark, Jr., also of Jacksonville; Mr. D. Y. Rivenbark, of Clio, S. C.; and Mr. Council Rivenbark, of Willard. Four grandchildren of the deceased reside in Wilmington, Misses Edith and Louise Walker and Messrs. W. A. Walker, Jr., and A. M. Walker, and also two nephews, Dr. G. H. Croom and Mr. A. B. Croom, Jr. The deceased was a devout churchman and belonged to the First Baptist church of Willard. He was also a prominent Mason, being a member of St. John's Lodge of Burgaw. The funeral will be held tomorrow, at an hour to be announced later.

DOUBLE MATCH MAY BE ARRANGED FOR

Greece to Meet Italy While Albright and Hanson Stack Up Friday Night.

If Fritz Hanson is able to carry out plans that are now in the formative stage mat fans will be treated to a double exhibition of the indoor game at Woolvin hall Friday night and either of the matches will be worth the price of admission. Mr. Hanson is desirous of making the two matches in order to give the fans a little more for their money during the holidays than they get ordinarily. Complete arrangements have not been made as yet, however the local favorite stated this morning that he believed he would be able to turn the trick and if he is successful fans will be treated to all the wrestling they care for for one night. The double match will prove an excellent substitute for the Olin-Drask match, which had been planned, but which was called off because the heavyweight champion refused to work during the holiday season.

The idea is to match a Greek answering to the name of Sarvos against a big Italian named Massimo, whom Joe Turner will send down. The Italian styles himself the middleweight champion of the world, but weighs 180 pounds. Little is known of the Greek, but he has sent his picture, and if one is to judge by it, he is a good wrestler. He is well put up and appears strong as a bull. Joe Turner is vouching for the Italian, which satisfies fans that he is worth while.

The other match will probably be between Con Albright and Hanson himself and this should prove interesting. Albright is favorably known here and has quite a following, who will want to see him stack up with Hanson. As was stated above nothing was stated in the day Mr. Hanson stated that he thought he would close the deal. Massimo is now drawing \$1 an hour for posing in a Washington studio. He is a powerfully muscled man and should prove a big

MORE RUMANIANS ARE CAPTURED

No Important Developments on Other Fronts, Paris Reports.

Berlin, (Via Sayville), Dec. 26.—In Rumania 5,500 more prisoners have been taken by the Teutons, the war office announced today.

On Other Fronts. Paris, Dec. 26.—The following official announcement was made today about the Macedonian campaign: "There is nothing to report from either side except artillery fighting, which continued in the Cerna bend and in the region of Mnoastr."

"There was nothing to report last night, except rather lively artillery fighting in the region south of Lihens," says today's official statement from the French front.

HURRY TO AID OF THE SHIP

Cutter and Steamer On The Way to Answer The Maryland's Call.

New York, Dec. 26.—The coastwise steamer, City of Savannah, and the coast guard cutter Acushnet, today hurried to the assistance of the steamship Maryland, which yesterday afternoon sent out wireless messages that she was sinking. The messages gave the Maryland's position as being 380 east of Sandy Hook.

The City of Savannah's position was 150 miles south of Sandy Hook when the Maryland's distress message was received. The Acushnet was at Woodshole, Mass., when she was ordered to proceed to the assistance of the Maryland.

Since the first call for help was received by wireless stations in this city and the naval station, at Newport, R. I., no word has been received from the Maryland. It is thought that the vessel's wireless is out of commission caused by flooding of the engine room and the consequent lack of power.

Although there are two steamships listed in the Maritime Registry as the Maryland, one a British vessel of 2,962 tons and the other an American steamer of 1,892 tons, it is believed that the latter vessel is the one in distress off the coast. The American steamer left Philadelphia on December 23 for London.

INSTITUTION SERVICE.

New Rector To Be Given Charge of St. John's Church

Institution services of Rev. R. E. Gribben as priest and rector of St. John's Parish, will be held at St. John's Episcopal church tomorrow morning, beginning at 10 o'clock. The services will be conducted by Bishop Thomas C. Darst and Rev. William H. Milton, D. D., rector of St. James' church, will deliver the institutional sermon.

The services will last a little more than an hour. They will be very impressive. Mr. Washington Catlett, senior warden of the church, will turn over the keys to Rev. Mr. Gribben, who will accept them with a pledge to render a faithful shepherdhood over the parish. Dr. Milton's sermon will be in the nature of what the new rector will expect from his parishioners and the minister's duties toward his flock.

The institutional service at St. John's tomorrow will be particularly appropriate as the day is St. John's Day, commemorated in memory of the Apostle St. John. A cordial invitation is extended to the entire public to attend.

drawing card. Hanson may meet the Greek and match Albright against the Italian. That part has not been decided as yet, but an effort will be made to please the fans along this line. The one idea is Hanson's mind is to give the fans something extra in the way of a Christmas present.

AWAITING ACTION OF CARRANZA AS TO PROPOSAL

Unless Mexican Head Agrees Commission Will be Dissolved.

MEETING TODAY IN NEW YORK.

Answer Will be At Once Forwarded to Secretary Lane For Decision.

Washington, D. C., Dec. 26.—Unless General Carranza returns a favorable answer today to the last communication made by the American representatives a week ago, at Philadelphia, the negotiations will come to an end. The Mexican commissioners meet in New York today and if Carranza has sent to them his answer it is expected that Luis Cabrera, chairman of the Mexican delegation, will forward it immediately to Secretary Lane, chairman of the American commissioners.

No Reply as Yet.

New York, Dec. 26.—The members of the joint commissioners had received no word from General Carranza regarding the American communication up to 1:15 o'clock this afternoon, it was stated by the chairman of the Mexican commissioners.

THREE VESSELS WENT AGROUND

Northwest Storm Hurdled Ships On Shore—Crews of Two Rescued.

Nantucket, Mass., Dec. 26.—The schooner Roger Drury, was sunk off Great Point; the schooner, Daniel McLeod, was stranded on the northern end of the Rip, off the point, and the British schooner, Ravola, was wrecked on the southern end of the Rip in a northwest gale today.

When the Roger Drury struck the crew launched a small boat and landed safely. The crews of the other vessels were brought ashore by a coast guard cutter.

LIVELY TIMES EXPECTED BEFORE END OF CONTEST

Candidates Should Make The Most of The Five Remaining Weeks of The Contest—Thousands of Votes Can Be Had For The Asking.

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THE PRIZES.

- \$685 Overland Automobile. Ford Automobile. Carolina Beach Lot. \$100 in Gold. \$75 Victrola. \$50 O. K. Mystic Range. \$40 Sellers Kitchen Cabinet. \$25 Wrist Watch. Two \$60 Diamond Rings.

"You might as well deliver the Overland Automobile to me, now. Of course, I've got to go through the process of winning it, but that is a mere matter of formality with the right kind of work."

So spoke one of the candidates in the race for the prizes offered by The Dispatch in its voting contest. One thing is sure—this candidate ought to come very close to winning. Any contestant who enters the conflict with such a spirit of cheerful confidence is sure to accomplish excellent results.

There are a number of other contestants, however, and the two automobiles and the other prizes which The Dispatch is giving away, look just as good to them, as they do to the young lady who made the joking remark about an immediate delivery. These candidates will not be less active in their campaign for votes, and the ones who succeed will realize that they have been in a contest by the time the competition ends.

Lively times may be looked for from now on, and if there are any in the list that are still undecided what

BIG FIRE SWEEP HENDERSON AT EARLY HOUR TODAY

Damage About \$25,000 Done in The Business Section by Flames

ORIGIN OF THE FIRE IS NOT KNOWN.

Henderson Furniture Company a Large Loser—Bank and Other Places Damaged.

Henderson, N. C., Dec. 26.—Fire of unknown origin early today completely destroyed a furniture store owned and occupied by the Henderson Furniture Company, a candy kitchen and light lunch establishment, on South Garnett street, and inflicted heavy damage on adjoining buildings and stocks of goods on hand. The total loss by the blaze is estimated at approximately \$25,000 with \$18,000 insurance on all properties destroyed or damaged.

A large hardware store, a big mercantile establishment and the First National Bank were also heavy losers.

FIVE SUSPECTS ARE BEING HELD

Jailed In Connection With Killing of An Entire Family.

Minden, La., Dec. 26.—Five negro suspects are under arrest here today in connection with the killing of four members of the family of John Nelson Reeves, at his home about nine miles from Minden, Sunday night. The negroes are held in jail here, but the authorities have nothing definite on which to base a charge against any of them. Minden is quiet. There is no fear of mob violence.

EDITOR TO BECOME BICKETT'S SECRETARY.

Raleigh, N. C., Dec. 26.—Sanford Martin, editor of the Winston-Salem Journal, today accepted the appointment of secretary to Governor-elect Bickett.

HOLLAND GOING UNDER THE WATER

In Years to Come Skill of Engineers May Be Finally Baffled

The Hague, Netherlands, Dec. 26.—It may not materially affect the present generation or the next, but if the land level of Holland continues to sink there is danger of the subsidence becoming so great that, despite all the progress of engineering science, it will be impossible to much longer continue the present ceaseless struggle with the waters. That is the view expressed before the Geological Mining Society for Holland and its colonies by Professor Molengraaff, of the Polytechnic University of Delft, who is the foremost Dutch geological authority.

A large part of the Netherlands, particularly the western and northwestern provinces, lies some feet below the level of the sea, which is only kept from overflowing hundreds of square miles of land by the natural barrier of the long line of sand dunes that fringe the coast, reinforced at two or three points by artificial means. The level of rivers and many of the canals in such regions are likewise higher than the surrounding country, being held in check by the dikes and embankments that are maintained at great pains and correspondingly high cost by the nation. Naturally, therefore, the question of the continued, if very gradual, fall of the land level bears an important aspect in the eyes of the Dutch people, and it has recently been the subject of discussion among expert geologists and hydrographical engineers.

"It," declares Prof. Molengraaff, "the subsidence is of such a nature that within measurable time a position of equilibrium comes about, then the cost of keeping the land drained will become so high that there will no longer be much advantage attached to its possession, albeit there are always historical and sentimental arguments for that. If, however, the total expenditure should exceed the total income, then the common sense of the Dutch people would lead them to withdraw to higher regions."

Opinions differ on the question of whether the ground is still sinking, and what influences are responsible for such a phenomenon. Some experts, like the civil engineer, D. H. S. Blaupot ten Cate, suppose that the fall is a consequence of what happened in the middle tertiary period. Mr. ten Cate's theory is that Holland is built up on alluvial mud flats, which still participate in various movements of the soil. Some authorities believe that a material subsidence is still taking place, while others, again, are of opinion that the phenomena observed is still taking place, while of consequence to certain movements of the sea level, whereby various influences of another nature play a role; that the sea level alters, but that the land itself does not sink.

Another civil engineer, J. C. Rammer, is convinced from the results of water gauge observations that there has been a subsidence of the land of Holland, as well as of that of bordering countries and the greater part of the British Isles. He says it may be deduced from the entire list of such observations that there has been an average subsidence of 30 centimeters per century, declining farther inland to 15 centimeters. That a very considerable subsidence is taking place at the present time in the polders or drained basins of the Netherlands is his opinion and undeniable.

STORM OFF THE ATLANTIC COAST

Hight Northeast Winds Prevail Off South Atlantic Tonight.

Washington, Dec. 26.—Storm warning for the Atlantic Coast from Fort-res Monroe to Jacksonville, Fla., and for the East Gulf Coast from Bay St. Louis, Miss., to Rockwell, Fla., were issued today by the Weather Bureau here. The announcement said that disturbances over east Texas were moving east and would cause high northeast winds on the South Atlantic Coast and southeast to south winds on the east Gulf Coast this afternoon and tonight.

Mr. Charles Burnett is here from the University of Cincinnati to be with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Burnett, during the holidays.

Mr. Kenneth McKenzie is here from Raleigh to spend the holidays. (Continued on Page Seven.)

OTHER NEUTRALS MAY FOLLOW LEAD OF UNCLE SAM

Expected That President Wilson Will Receive Strong Support.

SWISS MINISTER TO SEE WILSON.

President Continues to Receive Word of Commendation From People and Societies in Europe.

Washington, Dec. 26.—Indications accumulated in official quarters here today that the action of Switzerland, in support of the present peace move of the United States, may be followed by similar action on the part of other European neutrals. Holland, Spain, the Scandinavian countries and the Pope, it was said, are expected to take some action in the near future.

Dr. Paul Ritter, the Swiss minister here, will see President Wilson in a few days to discuss the peace situation. He called at the White House today to gather information on how the Swiss peace note had been received in this country, in order that he might send a report to his government. Dr. Ritter is concerned over newspaper representations that the action of the Swiss government was construed as support for the cause of the central powers. He told Secretary Tumulty that the action of his government was solely in the interest of peace.

Communications from orders and individuals in Holland and other neutral European nations continue to arrive at the White House today in large numbers. All commend President Wilson for the recent note and indicated that strong pressure will be brought to bear on the governments of European neutrals to take action. While the United States will continue to act alone, supporting action by other neutral nations, it is said, will be welcomed by President Wilson.

The Spanish ambassador conferred with Secretary Lansing today, but both refused to discuss the meeting, beyond saying that the ambassador sought further information as to peace. Spain, the ambassador said, has not yet sent a reply to President Wilson's note and there has been no indication yet whether it will follow Switzerland as the third intermediary in endorsing President Wilson's proposal for peace.

JUNIORS' APPLY FOR A CHARTER

Corporation of Wilmington Files Application—Also Whiteville Drug Co.

Raleigh, N. C., Dec. 26.—The Junior Order Corporation, of Wilmington, capitalized at \$20,000, of which amount \$5,000 is paid in, filed application for charter with the Secretary of State here today.

The Whiteville Drug Company, of Whiteville, Columbus county, capitalized at \$5,000, with \$1,500 paid in, was chartered today.

GREAT BRITAIN'S REPLY SENT TO GERMANY.

Washington, Dec. 26.—The present statement sent this government by Great Britain saying the British ship, Arabic, sunk by a German submarine without warning, was not at the time and had not been in the Admiralty service, was sent on today to Germany.

SNOW FALLS IN LOS ANGELES.

Los Angeles, Cal., Dec. 26.—Snow fell today over part of the city for the sixth time in forty years, the weather bureau has been established here. It melted as rapidly as it fell.

STORM WARNING.

Washington, D. C., December 26, 1916. Observer, Wilmington, N. C. Hoist northeast storm warning 11 a. m. Fort Monroe to Jacksonville. Disturbance over East Texas, moving east with marked high pressure on Atlantic coast, will cause strong northeast and east winds this afternoon and tonight, with rain. FRANKENFIELD.