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GERMANY "OVERT ACT" CREATING WAR

In the Sinking of Three Unarmed American Merchant Ships by Submarines Without Warning

WERE SUNK WITH UTTER DISREGARD FOR LIVES

All Doubt is Dispelled as to Whether Germany Really Intends Sinking All Ships Which Enter Prohibited Zone, Whether Neutral, Passenger or Belgian Relief—President Wilson May Act Before Assembling of Congress—In Official Washington the Belief Prevails That the Crumbling of Turkish Power in Mesopotamia and Persia, the Unexpected Advance of the British and French in France and the Pro-War Revolution in Russia Indicate the End of the War is Near.

Washington, March 18.—With the announcement of the ruthless destruction of three unarmed merchant ships by submarines, it was officially admitted here tonight that virtually a state of war exists between the United States and Germany.

Technically the United States remains in a position of armed neutrality. Whether this shall be changed before April 16, the date fixed for a special session of congress, the war-making branch of the government, President Wilson has not decided.

One step the president is contemplating is a call for an immediate session of congress to hear an address asking for authority to adopt aggressive measures against the submarine menace. Already American ships are being armed to defend themselves; the next move must be to send warships with orders to seek out submarines and clear the trans-Atlantic lanes.

Some of the highest officials of the government have declared that a state of war exists and to proceed with aggressive protective steps pending the assembling of congress. There is no indication, however, that the president will follow that course.

Of the three ships destroyed, two of them were unarmed and homeward bound, and all were American-built, American-owned and officers and manned largely by American citizens. Messrs. dispatches indicate that all were sunk with complete disregard for the safety of those on board and that some of the crews of the crews may have been lost.

Definite Policy Now Ready. Today's developments brought the government face to face with the problem of formulating a definite policy for the state of armed neutrality. This possibility was mentioned by the president in his inaugural address March 4.

All of the conditions outlined by the president in his message announcing the diplomatic break with Germany as leading to a state of armed neutrality have now been fulfilled. The "overt act" described by him then has actually come; if the fact it has been announced by the president went before congress again. Since then he has established a state of armed neutrality without the specific authority of congress.

President Wilson Informed. President Wilson was out automobiling when the first Associated Press despatches telling of the three disasters came in quick succession. Through Secretary Tammily he was given all available facts immediately on his return. In the meantime Secretary Lansing and other state department officials, as well as cabinet members, were given the information.

Several hours later officials reports came from Consul Frost at Queens-town and another from the British consul at London, telling of the sinking of the City of Memphis, the Vigilancia and the Illinois. These despatches contained press reports, but few added details.

Declare President Has Authority. International lawyers and constitutional experts here showed no hesitancy tonight in saying that President Wilson has full authority to interpret this as a state of armed neutrality and that this country considers that an actual state of war exists by reason of Germany's flagrant assault on American shipping. Such action would be subject to the approval of congress.

Despite the unwarned sinking of big passenger liners like the California and the Laocina, the jeopardizing of Americans on nearly a score of other vessels, and the sinking of other ships, the Housatonic, the Lyman M. Law and the Algonquin, since the unrestricted warfare began some officials, inspired by the president's announced reluctance to believe that Germany would carry through her threat to sink desperately to the hope that some slight respect for international law might still be shown.

German sea warfare may be fairly stated, however, to have surpassed even the most pessimistic forecasts here. That also actually means to send every vessel to the bottom that dares venture within her forbidden zone, now accepted as a fact. Neutral, passenger, Belgian relief, appear to be all the same category.

Soaring News From War Fronts. With the practical certainty that this country will become involved in hostilities with Germany even if only for the keeping open of the sea lanes to Europe, officials are scanning the news from the various war fronts with the closest scrutiny. A direct, intimate interest has succeeded the rather academic attention of days when America seemed far distant and isolated. An advance on the west front or in Mesopotamia is now studied with the keen

eagerness born of a realization that it may directly effect a may have a direct effect on America's future history.

Kaleidoscopic Developments. The kaleidoscopic developments of the last few weeks' history has been followed most keenly. The apparent crumbling of Turkish power in Mesopotamia and Persia as shown in the capture of Van today by the Russians, following the fall of Bagdad to the British, the unexpected advance forward of both British and French in a wide swath in the west front, the pro-war revolution in Russia, threats of internal trouble in Germany and China's severance of relations, have served to convince many observers that the beginning of the end is near.

IMPORTANT GAINS MADE BY BRITISH AND FRENCH

Three Important Towns of Peronne, Chaules and Neale Taken. Further important advances over a front of about a hundred miles by the British and French armies in France, and additional gains by the British in Mesopotamia, the British in Turkish Armenia, Persia and Mesopotamia are the outstanding features in the war news.

The important towns of Peronne, Chaules and Neale and more than sixty villages have been taken by the British troops on a front of some thirty-five miles and King George's men are continuing their pursuit of the retreating Germans. At some points through the German positions toward Berlin, and attempts by the entente troops to gain an advantage north of Monastir also failed. Austrian attacks, which met with failure, are reported in the Italian front by the Italian front by the Italian front.

It is unofficially reported that the laws of Mesopotamia and Persia have gone over to the new Russian government.

GRAND DUKE NICHOLAS RELEASES POLITICAL PRISONERS

Calls Upon Soldiers and Sailors to Await the Will of the People. London, March 17, 11:30 p. m.—Grand Duke Nicholas has ordered the release of political prisoners who have been incarcerated at Baku, in the Trans-Caucasus. Reuter's Tiflis correspondent telegraphs.

The grand duke appointed senior and junior officers to advise the soldiers and sailors, now that the throne has been renounced by Emperor Nicholas, that they should quietly await an expression of will from the Russian people. It is their sacred duty, the grand duke said, to continue to obey the laws of Russia and defend against their enemies and by their exploits to support their allies.

There has been some uncertainty as to the whereabouts of Grand Duke Nicholas, who is reported to have been elected to chief command of the Russian armies. The foregoing despatch shows that he is still in command on the Caucasian front.

Italian Deputies Vote Confidence. Rome, via Paris, March 18.—After discussion of economic questions the chamber of deputies adopted a resolution of confidence in the government by a vote of 360 to 43.

Three American Steamships Sunk

CITY OF MEMPHIS, ILLINOIS AND VIGILANCIA

MANY SEAMEN MISSING

Former Czar Leaves Petrograd. Petrograd, March 18, 2:30 p. m., via London, March 19, 2:37 a. m.—Nicholas Romanoff, the former emperor, is now designated, left with his estates at Livadia on the southern coast of the Crimea.

CHINA REQUESTS SUSPENSION OF BOXER RISING INDEMNITY. Foreign Minister Calls Meeting of Ministers of Neutral Countries. Peking, China, Friday, March 16.—After announcing the severance of diplomatic relations between China and Germany, Foreign Minister Wu Ting Fang called a meeting of the ministers of the entente nations and later a meeting of the ministers of neutral countries. He presented an ultimatum at both meetings requesting suspension of payments of indemnity for the Boxer uprising, consent to an increase in import duties, and modification of China's undertakings which will permit her to station troops at Peking-Tientsin along the Peking-Tientsin railway and at the legation quarter as a protection against Germans.

The Dutch legation is protecting German interests and guarding the German legation. The German minister and his staff probably will leave Peking for Shanghai within a few days. Denmark is looking after Chinese interests in Germany.

In the light of previous despatches from Peking, the action taken by the Chinese foreign minister indicates that the government is preparing to enter the war with the entente. It was said that the despatches that negotiations to that end were under way and that China hoped by joining the entente to obtain suspension of the payments of indemnity and permission to increase import duties.

BERLIN'S REPORT OF SUBMARINE ACTIVITIES. Merchant Ships Aggregating 781,500 Tonnage Destroyed During February. Berlin, Friday, March 16, by Wireless to Saville, March 18.—Merchant ships destroyed in February, 781,500 were destroyed in February as a result of war measures of the central powers, the admiralty announced today.

The statement follows: "In February 468 merchant ships of an aggregate gross tonnage of 781,500 were lost by the war measures of the central powers. Among them were 292 hostile ships, with an aggregate gross tonnage of 64,000 tons, and neutral ships of an aggregate gross tonnage of 137,500. Among the neutral ships 61 were sunk by submarines, which is 16 per cent of the total in February, as compared with 29 per cent, the average of neutral losses in the last four months."

There is a wide disparity between the official German figures of the destruction of shipping in February, the first month of unrestricted submarine warfare, and the figures given out in England. It was said authoritatively in London on March 3 that in February German submarines sank 400,000 tons of shipping. No mention was made of ships destroyed by mines.

RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY GUARANTEED SAFETY

Emperor Nicholas Had Made Request to General Ruzsky. London, March 18.—What most perturbed Emperor Nicholas, says the Petrograd correspondent of the Times, was that sufficient guarantees should be given that his life and those of his family be spared. It is said he was reassured by General Ruzsky, who would in the name of the whole army under his command, that no harm would befall any member of the imperial family. The first request made by the emperor was that his wife and children be spared, but this was refused pointblank. There are reports that the emperor contemplated suicide but eventually was induced by his confessor to accept his fortunes calmly and submit to the inevitable. His last wish was that he be buried in the same place as his wife and children, but this has been refused.

The Times correspondent says he has been told the former ruler will have to reside in the Crimea with his family, but eventually will be allowed to go abroad to some allied country, probably Italy.

SYSTEMATIC RETIREMENT OF GERMAN TROOPS. They Are Abandoning Many Strategic Points in France. Berlin, March 18 (By Wireless to Saville).—Systematic retirement of German troops between Arras and the Oise, on the French front, is announced by the war office today. Peronne, Noyon, Bapaume, Roye and several other towns have been abandoned by the Germans.

The Peronne was one of the strongholds of the Germans on the Franco-Belgian front. It is a town of about 4,000, on the Somme, and is of strategic importance on account of its railway and high road connections. It was invested on three sides and the retirement of the Germans to the north of this town made the abandonment of the town inevitable.

From Arras to the Oise, where Berlin reports the withdrawal is being made, is about 60 miles. The capture of Bapaume and Roye was announced yesterday. Noyon is a town of about 6,000, 67 miles northeast of Paris.

Hindenburg at Headquarters. Berlin, Thursday, March 15, by wireless to Saville, March 18.—Field Marshal Hindenburg has gone to great headquarters to make a report on the situation to Emperor William.

Steamship Arrivals. New York, March 18.—Arrived: Steamer Saugus, London.

Three American Steamships Sunk

CITY OF MEMPHIS, ILLINOIS AND VIGILANCIA

MANY SEAMEN MISSING

Fourteen of the Missing Men Were On the Vigilancia, Which Was Torpedoed Without Warning—Memphis Was Sunk by Shellfire. London, March 18, 7:44 p. m.—The sinking of the American steamships City of Memphis, Illinois and Vigilancia was announced today. Fourteen of the missing men from the City of Memphis, the crew of the Illinois was landed safely. The City of Memphis, in ballast from Cardiff for New York, was sunk by gunfire. The second officer and fifteen men of the crew had been landed. A patrol boat has gone in search of the other members of the crew. The Illinois, from London for Arthur, Texas, in ballast, was sunk, at three this morning.

The Vigilancia was torpedoed without warning. The submarine did not appear. The captain, first and second mates, first, second and third engineers and twenty-three men of the crew were landed at the Scilly Islands. The fourth engineer and thirteen men are missing.

48 AMERICANS AMONG CREW OF THE MEMPHIS

Vessel Had Weathered Many Adventures During European War. New York, March 18.—Forty-eight men who were Americans by birth or by naturalization and nine others, several of whom were believed to be naturalized Americans, comprised the crew of the American freight steamship, City of Memphis, reported from London today as having been sunk by shellfire. The vessel, built in New York and valued at \$600,000, had weathered safely many adventures in European waters on previous voyages since the war began.

Owned by the Ocean Steamship Company, commonly known as the Savannah Line, the City of Memphis, of 2383 tons, was chartered to the United States on January 23, carrying 3453 bales of cotton valued at \$600,000. This she delivered at Havre, France, and was on her way home in ballast when sunk.

Officers American-Born Except One. Her captain was L. P. Borum of Norfolk, Va., where he was born of American parents. Her other officers all were American born. First officer, C. G. Laird, Savannah; second officer, A. Carroll, born in North Carolina, naturalized American; third officer, M. Dierland, address unknown; here: W. I. Percy, chief engineer, Savannah; G. Bevil, first assistant engineer; Savannah; F. McPherson, second assistant engineer, New York; and W. Thompson, third assistant engineer, address unknown here.

On board the ship's surgeon, Dr. F. Shea, lived at 7 Van Ness place, New York, and the wireless operators, J. Welch and P. J. Donnelly, lived in New York, as did also the following: all negroes, one white.

Negro Seamen. H. Canty, baker; D. S. Jackson, chief cook; G. M. Clean, second cook; J. Lewis, messman; J. Cooke and C. Cooke, mess boys; R. W. Wain and J. Mitchell, mess boys. All of these were American born or naturalized Americans.

This category also were H. O. Boville, stewards of Savannah; C. A. Phillips, electrician; F. Montero, J. Hobbs and J. August, water carriers; M. Rumber, address unknown; Walker, oiler; N. P. Clausen, boatman.

(Continued on Page Two, 5th Col.)

MAN KILLED IN AUTO ACCIDENT AT BRIDGEPORT. Arthur V. Phillips of New Haven—Machine Skidded and Overturned. Bridgeport, Conn., March 18.—Arthur V. Phillips of New Haven was killed and James T. Patterson, Jr., of Milford and his wife were seriously injured in an automobile accident here early today. They were returning in Patterson's car from a dance at the Brookfield, where the machine skidded and overturned. Phillips was almost instantly killed.

Phillips was at one time battalion adjutant in the Second infantry, Connecticut National guard, and was the son of Rev. Dr. Watson L. Phillips, formerly of New Haven, and for many years resided in Bridgeport. At the hospital tonight it was said that Mrs. Patterson, whose spine is fractured, would probably die. Her condition is such that physicians have not been able to operate. Her husband, who also is suffering from injury to the spine, as well as at the base of the skull, has a chance for recovery.

The accident occurred at Brooklawn and Woodward avenues, the car skidding as it turned the corner, against the curb, striking a telegraph pole, overturning and pinning the occupants under it.

Mrs. Patterson is the daughter of George M. Gunn, a prominent banker in Milford, former representative in the state legislature and widely known in state political circles. Patterson is secretary and treasurer of the Cornwell & Patterson company of Bridgeport.

Mrs. Phillips, wife of the man killed, had gone ahead with another automobile to another town, but did not learn of the accident until she reached home.

To Enter Evangelistic Rev. Danbury, Conn., March 18.—Rev. Alfred H. Boutwell, for four years pastor of the Baptist church here, today tendered his resignation, to become state evangelist in Massachusetts, with headquarters at Boston. The resignation will take effect April 15.

Russian Cabinet Ministers in Office

CABLE MESSAGES SENT TO RUSSIAN DIPLOMATS ABROAD

RUSSIA IS NOW UNITED

Portraits of the Imperial Family Have Been Removed From Walls of Government Offices—People Accept New Regime With Sobersness. Petrograd, via London, March 18.—With the final cementing of the elements concerned in the construction of the new government upon the ruins of the old, the new cabinet ministers, relieved of the heavy grind of the endless conferences of the last few days in which they suffered many anxious hours, have assumed the posts to which they were assigned. Professor Paul N. Mikuloff spent yesterday at the foreign office. In the afternoon he received the diplomatic representatives, which will be entered upon long cabinet conference.

Cables to Russian Diplomats. One of the first acts of the minister was to send a series of cable messages to the Russian diplomats abroad to the effect that Russia was united in the desire to fight out the war with the allies, the determination to continue the struggle until the victory is achieved being stronger than ever. The armies in the field have advised that the abdication of the emperor has been entirely unimportant, according to a foreign office official. Telegrams from virtually all the commanders have been received assuring the support of the government by the army in advance by General Michael Alexieff, chief of staff.

Last Vestiges of Empire Disappearing. Meanwhile the last vestiges of the empire are disappearing. Portraits of the erstwhile members of the imperial family, once seen upon the walls of almost every government office have been removed. The national colors with their eagles have given place to plain red flags, one of which floats over the famous winter palace.

Assembly Will Include 600. The proper designation of the new government appears to puzzle even officials. "Government constituent" is the term used in foreign office despatches abroad. Although temporary, it is permanent compared with the first duma committee, although it is contemplated that the cabinet heads shall continue to govern only until those elected by a constitutional assembly shall replace them. The assembly will be composed of approximately 600. It will be the business of the assembly to determine the form of the future government and draft a new constitution.

Confidence Everywhere. Confidence is everywhere expressed that under the direction of the new government the military and industrial forces of the country will be enabled to carry on operations upon a much more efficient basis. The cabinet speedily magnify their efforts towards a speedy termination of the war. Endless friction between departments and the fear of the old government that too complete organization might result in the sudden growth of popular power have left a great part of the resources of the country idle and useless. Every effort at the mobilization of these resources, each plan to organize and expedite the transportation of supplies, meet with the most stubborn opposition.

People Have Sobred Down. Probably no event of similar magnitude ever had a less colorful aftermath. The new government was not vitally affected with less demonstration. With the exception of a few parades, chiefly in the district of the duma, people went soberly about their business yesterday as if satisfied with a good task well performed.

Several factories resumed operations for the first time in more than a week.

141ST ANNIVERSARY BRITISH EVACUATION OF BOSTON Was Observed Saturday With Exercises of Exceptional Impresiveness. Boston, March 18.—The 141st anniversary of the evacuation of Boston by the British troops was celebrated by the South Boston district yesterday in accordance with arrangements to make this year's observance one of exceptional impressiveness. For the first time, aviators had been secured to direct the aeroplane over the route of march of the customary parade of troops and civilian organizations, which was reviewed by Governor McCall.

RUSSIAN BALTIC FLEET JOINS REVOLUTIONISTS. Fortresses at Viborg and Svborg Also in the Movement. London, March 18, 7:50 p. m.—The entire Russian Baltic fleet and the fortresses at Viborg and Svborg have joined the revolutionary movement in Russia, says a despatch to the Exchange Telegraph company from Copenhagen, which is based on reports received from Haparanda, Sweden.

OBITUARY. John S. Hyde. Bath, Me., March 18.—John S. Hyde, one of the most prominent ship builders in Maine, died at St. Augustine, Fla., last night, according to a message received here today. Mr. Hyde was president and owner of the Bath Iron works, where many government warships have been built.

Munitions Plant at Cologne Blown Up. Copenhagen, March 18, via London, 7:06 p. m.—A large munitions plant at Cologne blew up on Tuesday, according to information received from German sources by a newspaper at Kolding, near the frontier. Several hundred workmen are reported to have perished.

Indicted for Murder of His Daughter. South Paris, Me., March 18.—Albert E. Bean of Waterford was indicted yesterday for the murder of his daughter, Inez Bean, 18 years old, whose death is alleged to have been caused by an illegal operation.

Condensed Telegrams

Great Britain has agreed to loan Romania \$200,000,000.

The Senate confirmed Thos. G. Patton as postmaster of New York. Japan has prohibited the importation of coins of all kinds in the regular mials. Daniel Sheehan was nominated by President Wilson as postmaster at Elmira, N. Y.

The Senate rejected the nomination of L. A. MacGowan as postmaster at Providence, R. I. The Philmore Motor Truck Co. was incorporated at Dover, Del., with a capital stock of \$10,000,000.

The Norwegian steamship Davangor, which left New York Jan. 22 for Rotterdam, has been sunk. Gold coin to the amount of \$500,000 was withdrawn from the Sub-Treasury for shipment to Argentina.

The resignation of Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Andrew J. Peters was accepted by Secretary McAdoo. President Wilson issued a proclamation designating April 21 a day for corded women to the relief of 1,000,000 Athenians.

An expenditure of \$2,500,000 for improvements will be made immediately by the Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co. Felipe Gomez, 20 years old, was executed by a firing squad in Agua Prieta, Mexico, after being convicted as a Villa spy.

William P. Dickey, who had been engaged in the hardware business at Bangor, Me., for 53 years, is dead. He was 79 years old. A bill designed to give women the right to vote for presidential and vice-presidential electors was killed in the New Jersey Assembly.

Governor Whitman signed the Kelly bill which provides for the repeal of Penal Code relative to punishment for desertion of the flag. Assemblyman Larrey has prepared a bill providing that all uniforms for city employes shall be furnished free and renewed once in each year.

A bill to demote existing French gold coinage was introduced in the French Chamber of Deputies by Deputies Lenoir, Bouquand and Eymondy. A battalion of the U. S. infantry now stationed in Porto Rico will be sent to reinforce the Panama Canal to reinforce the guard of that waterway.

The French Line steamship Perouse arrived at New York from Havre with 15 of the crew of the steamship Georgetown, which founded at sea Feb. 27. Herman Miller, Clinton Miller and Curtis Rockefeller, of Chevrolet, were killed when struck by a mail train near the New York Central station at Germantown.

Gen. Pershing reported to War Department that the last of the National Guard units on the Mexican border were sent for their home stations by March 21. Capt. Charles A. Polack, of the General-Lloyd steamship Kronprinzessin Cecilie were summoned to appear before the United States District Court at Boston April 2.

Dr. E. M. Funk, manager of the Swanton, Vt., plant of the International Explosives Company, who was injured Tuesday by an explosion in the fuminate dry house, is dead. Gov. McCall, of Massachusetts, announced the resignation of Brig. Gen. Gardner W. Pearson as adjutant-general and the appointment of Brig. Gen. Leroy Sweetser as acting adjutant-general.

The French military authorities have designated the French officers to proceed to the United States to act as military instructors in certain American universities, at the request of the United States. Chancellor of the Exchequer Law, in the Commons, appealed to all Irish members to join in the negotiations designed to effect a settlement of the Irish question.

Fears were expressed at St. John's, N. F., that the fishing schooner Nina, which left the South Coast some weeks ago for the fishing ground, had been lost. The schooner carried a crew of twenty-one. Edgar B. Ward, former second vice president of the Prudential Insurance Company and one of its original directors, died at his home at 410 Orange N. J., aged 68 years. He retired seven years ago.

Col. H. S. Berry Notified. Memphis, Tenn., March 18.—Col. H. S. Berry, in command of the First Tennessee infantry, which arrived here today from East Point, Tenn., was advised tonight that orders had been issued suspending the mustering out of national guardsmen "until further orders." There Were No Casualties and the Material Damage Was Slight.

London, March 18, 11:27 p. m.—German torpedo boats shelled towns along the Kentish coast early Sunday morning but did not succeed in accomplishing an official statement issued tonight. "Some enemy torpedo boats and destroyers approached the Kentish coast at 12:45 o'clock Sunday morning. They fired a number of shells at certain coast towns. There were no casualties. The men on duty were unharmed. One occupied and two empty houses being hit."

PRESIDENT POINCARÉ CONFERS WITH PRESIDENT OF SENATE In Regard to the Situation Created by Resignation of Briand Cabinet. Paris, March 18, 8:20 p. m.—President Poincaré conferred today with the president of the senate, Antonin Dubost, and the president of the chamber of deputies, Paul Deschanel, in regard to the situation created by the resignation of the Briand cabinet. The president then received M. Briand for further consultation.

Railroad Strike Has Been Called Off

ANNOUNCEMENT MADE AT 12:45 THIS MORNING.

SECY LANE'S STATEMENT

Regardless of the Decision of the Supreme Court on the Adamson Law, the Basic Eight Hour Day Will Go Into Effect—Result of National Crisis. Magnates Make Concessions.

The formal letter in which this authorization was made, signed by Elisha Lee, chairman of the managers' committee, was as follows: "The national crisis precipitated by the strike of the railroad men, the national conference committee of railroads joins with you in the conviction that neither at home nor abroad should there be fear or hope that the efficient operation of the railroads of the country will be hampered or impaired.

"Therefore you are authorized to assure the nation there will be no strike; and as a basis for such assurance we hereby authorize the committee of the council of national defense to grant to the employes who are about to strike whatever adjustment your committee deems necessary to guarantee the uninterrupted and efficient operation of the railroads a an indispensable arm of national defense."

Victory For Brotherhoods. The decision reached by the managers at their midnight conference means that the Brotherhoods have won an important victory. It does not bring them all their original demands. By the agreement, it is assumed, they will be awarded pro rata share for postal changes, but the hour day which they have been assured. Their original demands called for time and a half for overtime on the same basis for eight hours' work under the agreement. These concessions on the part of the managers are virtually what the employes contended they would gain under the Adamson law if it were declared constitutional.

Immediately after Secretary Lane had made his announcement, the Brotherhood leaders sent telegrams to all the general chairmen informing them that the strike had been declared off.

DEPORTED BELGIANS ARE IN REAL DISTRESS

Belgian Government Informed That Some of Them Are Starving. Have, via Paris, March 18.—The Belgian government continues to receive information concerning the fate of Belgian railroad employes. According to reports by the Belgian men which are in the possession of the Belgian government, they are in real distress, some of them begging that necessities be expedited, as they are starving. Parcel post packages such as are sent to prisoners of war have been forwarded chiefly to the prisoners' camp at Guben, but the Germans are said to have refused to deliver them.

The Germans are charged with having refused to put these men in the category of military prisoners or in that of interned civilians, to whom the German regulations permit the sending of parcels. It is said that the Belgian railroad men still refuse to work for the Germans.

ORDER FOR MUSTERING OUT OF GUARDSMEN SUSPENDED. Adjutant General of North Carolina Has Been So Notified. Raleigh, N. C., March 18.—Orders received at the adjutant general's office here today suspended the order for muster out of the Second and Third North Carolina regiments of the national guard and brigade headquarters and directing that they be held under arms after arrival. The Third regiment is on its way to accept, having been sent here from Texas for muster out. The Second regiment has not yet started from El Paso.

Mystery Surrounds Murder of Mrs. Elsie Lee Hilair. Strangled in Her Room in the Hotel Martinique, New York. New York, March 8.—Little progress was made today by detectives seeking to solve the mystery back of the murder of Mrs. Elsie Lee Hilair, who was strangled and apparently robbed in her room in the Hotel Martinique, where her body was found Friday. Many persons were questioned today, but no one was learned, detectives said, that no one was seen to enter or leave the room occupied by Mrs. Hilair after she had been strangled. The woman's husband told the police she wore \$2,500 worth of jewels when she left home Thursday after receiving a telephone call which has not yet been traced. The gems were missing when the body was found, and it is believed they will supply a clue sooner or later, as it is believed an effort will be made to dispose of them.

OLD PEOPLE'S HOME BURNED IN A SUBURB OF CHICAGO. One Woman Burned to Death—Three Men Believed to Have Perished. Chicago, March 18.—One woman was burned to death and three men are believed to have perished in a fire which early today destroyed the Scotch old people's home in Riverside, a suburb. Each was an inmate of the institution. Thirty-three inmates were rescued from the roof of the structure.