

BRIDGEPORT, CONN., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1916

PRESIDENT PREFERS WAR TO PEACE AT SACRIFICE OF OUR NATIONAL HONOR

'No Nation Has Right to Alter or Disregard Principles of War and if Rights of American Citizens Should Be Abridged, We Should Have No Choice in Course.'

President Wilson's Letter to Senator Stone Announcing His Stand on Armed Liner Issue

Washington, Feb. 25.—The President last night made public this letter to Senator Stone, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations:

The White House, Washington, Feb. 24, 1916.

My Dear Senator—I very warmly appreciate your kind and frank letter of today and feel that it calls for an equally frank reply. You are right in assuming that I shall do everything in my power to keep the United States out of war. I think the country will feel no unreasonableness about my course in that respect. Through many anxious months I have striven for that object, amidst difficulties more manifold than can be described.

But in any event our duty is clear. No nation, no group of nations, which all nations have agreed upon in mitigation of the horrors and sufferings of war; and if the clear rights of American citizens should ever unhappily be abridged or denied by any such action we should, it seems to me, have in honor no choice as to what our own course should be.

For my own part, I cannot consent to any abridgement of the rights of American citizens in any respect. That honor and self-respect of the nation is involved. We covet peace, and shall preserve it at any cost, but the loss of honor. To forbid our people to exercise their rights for fear we might be called upon to vindicate them would be a deep humiliation indeed.

It is important to reflect that if in this instance we allowed expediency to take the place of principle, the door would inevitably be opened to still further concessions. Once accept a single abatement of right, and many other humiliations would certainly follow, and the whole fine fabric of international law might crumble under our hands piece by piece.

The President's letter leaves no doubt that he would be willing to go to war with Germany, and that he would uphold that principle of international law which makes the high seas free and assures safety for the lives of non-combatants at the hands of belligerents.

But more important, the President's letter to Senator Stone is virtually an ultimatum to the governments of Germany and Austria that they must not carry out their armed merchantmen orders at the expense of the lives of American citizens. If they do so the United States will join in the great European contest; that is obvious from what the President tells the chairman of the Senate committee on Foreign Relations.

'For my part,' declared President Wilson to Senator Stone, 'I can not consent to any abridgement of the rights of American citizens in any respect. The honor and self-respect of the nation is involved. We court peace and shall preserve it at any cost but the loss of honor. To forbid our people to exercise their rights for fear we might be called upon to vindicate them would be a deep humiliation indeed.'

In his letter the President expresses confidence that he will continue to succeed in his efforts to keep the United States out of war. The course of the Central Powers 'seems for the moment to threaten insuperable obstacles,' but the President holds that its apparent momentum is so inconsistent with previous pledges that he believes explanations will put a different aspect on it. He declares that no nation or group of nations can change international law while war is in progress.

Congressmen will know by the President's letter in the newspapers that it will be useless for any such resolution on the armed merchantmen question. The President will not be influenced in any way in the conduct of the negotiations with Germany by his adoption of any such declaration. Today it was being predicted in the House that if the President took a firm stand it would be impossible to get a majority of members to vote for a measure warning American citizens that if they traveled on armed merchant vessels they would have no protection from their government.

It is expected that some of those Congressmen who were panic-stricken yesterday when they supposed was the near prospect of war will see in the President's letter to Senator Stone an even more critical situation. But it is believed here that the attitude of the President will have a greater effect in preventing a break between the United States and the Central Powers than in accentuating the prospect. Officials said today that while they had no official information on the subject, they were satisfied that the German and Austrian governments would postpone until April 1 at least the execution of their armed merchantmen orders.

The House heard that President Wilson stood firm. He had not been moved by the clamor in the House, and, to some extent, in the Senate, of those who would have him modify the government's dealing with Germany to the extent of sanctioning the sinking of German submarines, without warning, of merchant ships armed with torpedoes. Preservation of the freedom of the seas, the right of any American citizen to take passage on any merchant vessel, belligerent as well as neutral, armed for defense or unarmed, is as much the President's object now as it was when members of the House became alarmed over the international situation and endeavored to force him to declare that an American who took passage on an armed merchantman would do so at his own risk.

Washington, Feb. 25.—President Wilson has picked up the gauntlet of battle thrown down by the House of Representatives. In a letter ringing with determination, he made clear last night that he would go to war with Germany and Austria rather than surrender the inalienable rights of American citizens to traverse the high seas.

The President placed honor above expediency, and showed that he was determined upon no halfway measures in dealing with the situation. That is his answer to those members of his party who will call upon him today and endeavor to persuade him to yield to the clamor that international law be changed to the extent of tolling American citizens that they have no right to travel on merchant ships armed for defense.

This ringing letter was written to Senator Stone, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and given to the press by the White House late last evening. The President received a note from Senator Stone setting forth the critical aspect of affairs in Congress with respect to the armed merchantmen question. In his response, phrased in sentences with a thrill to them, the President placed national honor above political or any other expediency, and declared that he intended to insist that the rights of Americans on the high seas be preserved without abridgement.

The President's letter leaves no doubt that he would be willing to go to war with Germany, and that he would uphold that principle of international law which makes the high seas free and assures safety for the lives of non-combatants at the hands of belligerents. This is the position which the House of Representatives, no matter what its effect may be upon his political fortunes, as well with the Central Powers, if need be, no matter what its effect may be upon the future of the United States.

An Ultimatum to Germany. But more important, the President's letter to Senator Stone is virtually an ultimatum to the governments of Germany and Austria that they must not carry out their armed merchantmen orders at the expense of the lives of American citizens. If they do so the United States will join in the great European contest; that is obvious from what the President tells the chairman of the Senate committee on Foreign Relations.

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FIVE HUNDRED BOYS TAKE PART IN OBSERVANCE OF WASHINGTON BIRTHDAY AT PROTECTORY HOME

Music, Drama and Oratory Mingled With Practical Tests Combine to Make Pleasing the Natal Day of the Great American.

Washington's Birthday was celebrated on a large scale as anywhere at the Catholic Protectory at Westchester. Five hundred boys took part in the artistic program of music, drama and oratory mingled with practical memory tests, spelling, etc. Every boy who was left standing at the end of the spelling contest was awarded a one dollar bill besides the prizes given for the orations and to the amateur players.

George B. Robinson who has been identified with the Protectory for nearly forty years in well chosen words complimented the boys who entertained, saying it was a wonderful program particularly when taking into consideration the fact that nearly all of the boys were inmates of the institution. The good brothers here who have done so much to make the success of this institution possible, who have done so much to bring about the wonderful reputation that it enjoys, even in these days of investigations, feel that they are doing all for the boys. Yes, we will admit that; but I want to ask them if they do not feel in their own hearts that the profit their work brings to them in the dividends of happiness as the boys go out of this splendid institution with the accomplishments of citizenship, are not worth ten times more than the profit that goes to the boys themselves.

Before closing his address Mr. Coulter encouraged the boys to do well whatever their work might be picturing to them the nobility of the humble Lincoln and the patriotic Washington. He drew a very apt picture of the mighty railroad president and the uniform-bedecked lesser official comparing them to the greasy trainman whose devotion to duty guards the lives of his fellow man. The speaker touched on the national question of preparedness. In finishing he said: 'The very thing that you have seen here to-day is the best sort of preparedness. In service to humanity lays profit, and the profit runs most of all to the state.'

The Protectory at Westchester is one of the oldest Catholic institutions of its kind, in fact one of the first of its kind to be established upon any foundation in this section of the country. It is one of the institutions where the teachers really consecrate themselves to the social uplift of young America,—these teachers being members of the 'Catholic' Order of Christian Brothers, whose raison d'être is the boy, whose salary is naught, and whose pension is love's labor won.

Besides a practical education in the fundamentals the boys at Westchester receive a most thorough course in vocational training, and are even encouraged to the point of producing excellent results in such diverse fields as wireless telegraphy and advertising posters, not to mention the weekly paper printed by the institution. In this same weekly paper there is always a paragraph which states the fraternal spirit that must exist in the Institution, for this paragraph reads as follows: 'Boys who wish to confer with Rev. Brother Director may do so whenever they so desire.'

TOO YOUNG TO FIGHT, WORK IN CARTRIDGE SHOPS

British Youths Turn To Making Ammunition Till of Age.

Woolwich, Eng., Feb. 25.—Ten thousand boys too young to fight are doing what they consider the next best service for their country—turning out munitions in the government arsenal here. In ordinary times many would have become office boys, clerks, or telegraph messengers, but today the majority come from points miles from the factory and help the older men make the shells and guns needed by the men at the front.

The pay is attractive. A smart boy can earn \$7.50 a week, or even \$10, if he has a row of machines and can keep steadily at work for as long as 12 hours a day. Parents who have to choose between putting their boys to learn a trade at \$2 or \$2.50 a week and allowing them to go into the arsenal at the higher remuneration are naturally inclined to decide on the work which not only brings in the quickest return, but seems to be in the national interests as well.

Social workers who have boys' welfare at heart are inclined to lament that so many should be entering what may not perhaps prove a permanent occupation. They say that their future is not unlikely to become a problem after the war and that the country might well remember then that the great army of boy munition workers played no small part in the difficult time.

The daily life of these boys shows what sacrifices they are making. Thousands like an hour's journey from the factory, and some have to leave home as early as 6:30 in the morning and cannot get back till 9:30 in the evening. All work twelve hours a day, starting at 8 and finishing at 8. They take the night shift too, also for twelve hours, and often a boy may be seen asleep from sheer exhaustion on his way home in tannercar or train.

Every effort is made by the Ministry of Munitions to safeguard the health of the youngsters, but the problem is a difficult one. Eight shifts are being urged and efforts are being made to improve the transportation facilities to and from the arsenal. One of the latest suggestions and the one most likely to be carried out is to build miles of high close to the arsenal where the boys could live while engaged in shell-making.

JAPAN SHIPS' WARSHIPS. Tokio, Feb. 25.—The Japanese navy department announced that four warships are being sent to the Indian Ocean to replace other Japanese units there. The report that a Japanese fleet has been sent to the Mediterranean is stated to be unfounded.

Spain has placed an order with the Western Cartridge Co. of Alton, Ill. for 50,000,000 eleven-millimeter cartridges, at an estimated cost of \$1,500,000.

Caesar Misch Stores CASH OR CREDIT Main, Golden Hill and Middle Streets. PRICES CUT DEEPER THAN THEY EVER WERE BEFORE For Saturday the FINAL DAY of the Great C.-M. CLEARANCE SALE. Final day bargains are greatest. We must wind up this sale at once and get ready for Spring arrivals. Can't afford to hold over a lot of this stock—against our rules to do it and we haven't the room if we wanted to—so we'll stand a loss and quote you for the final day. Prices That's Next To Giving Merchandise Away. Final Day Prices Cut In Women's Suits. Final Day Prices Cut In Women's Coats. Clearance Specials In Women's and Misses' Wear. Final Day Cut in Men's and Young Men's Suits and Overcoats. Women's and Misses' NEW SPRING MODEL SUITS. FUR COAT CLEARANCE. Girl's and Children's Clothing. Men's Furnishings Clearance. Boys' Clothing Clearance. Caesar Misch Stores CASH OR CREDIT Main, Golden Hill and Middle Streets.