

WILSON FACES FIGHT UPON SHIP PROGRAM Sharp Debate Due in Congress on War Risk and Vessel Purchase Measures.

By JOHN SNURE. The Administration and Congress are getting into deep water in their efforts to establish an American merchant marine in short order. Sharp debate on several phases of the shipping situation is expected to mark this week in Congress, both in the House and Senate.

The strongest kind of pressure is being brought on the Administration and on Congress to have the bill for the Government purchase of ships halted. Thus far, it has not succeeded in shipping interests are getting lobbies busy here and conservatives and reactionaries in Congress, who fear any form of Government ownership, are denouncing the plan and opposing it on one ground and another. Among other things, the argument is made that the declining state of the revenues will not warrant it.

Not only this, but opposition has cropped out on the war risk insurance bill in the House. This bill has passed the Senate. It will be forced through the House this week under a rule, according to predictions of Leader Underwood.

The situation with respect to the war risk insurance bill and the Government purchase bill is much the same. The war risk insurance bill contemplates that the Government shall go into the business of insuring vessels and their cargoes only in case adequate insurance at reasonable rates cannot be had of private concerns.

Following the outbreak of the European war, insurance companies raised their rates on war risks to what are declared to be unreasonable heights. The war risk insurance bill is intended to force the private companies to hold their rates down to reasonable figures or lose the business by having the Government do the insuring.

Just as the insurance interests are alleged to have sought to hold up shipping owners on insurance, the shipping owners are said to be trying to hold up the Government. As an inducement to invest in foreign-built ships, American capital is insisting on the Government guaranteeing the bonds of corporations and American registry.

The Administration balks at this, and Congress will have none of it. The President and members of Congress evaded the plan of Government purchase when it was seen that the ship owners' interests and capital intending to go into shipping were bent on holding up Uncle Sam in an emergency.

At a conference Saturday afternoon at the White House, attended by Senator Clarke, Congressman Alexander, Senator Simmons and others, opposition to Government purchase cropped out. Mr. Alexander is against Government purchase. The White House and Congress are deluged with protests against Government purchase.

But the President, though willing to drop Government purchase if private capital is willing to go ahead on reasonable terms, insists on the Government's entry into American registry. It is not ready to drop it yet. Senator Simmons' view is that the Government should be armed with the legislation, in order to act if need be, and not be left helpless.

Senator Clarke expected to press the bill to passage in the Senate. In other words, the Government apparently will have to take its chance in the form of the war risk insurance bill and another in the form of the Government purchase bill.

That a considerable number of American owned vessels will fly foreign flags will enter American registry under the new law is shown by the fact that the United Fruit Company already has practically completed arrangements to put a large part of its fleet, amounting to about twenty vessels, under the American flag.

NEW YORK, Aug. 22.—The captain of one of the largest German ships now in port—himself a German navy reservist—today gave the following resume of many conditions to the officers of the Chamber of German-American Commerce.

"It has been England who declared war against Germany. Where is England now with her fleet? The English fleet has been expected to wipe the German fleet off the North Sea. What has the English fleet done in these six weeks since her King dispatched her with the proud order, 'capture or destroy Germany's fleet'?"

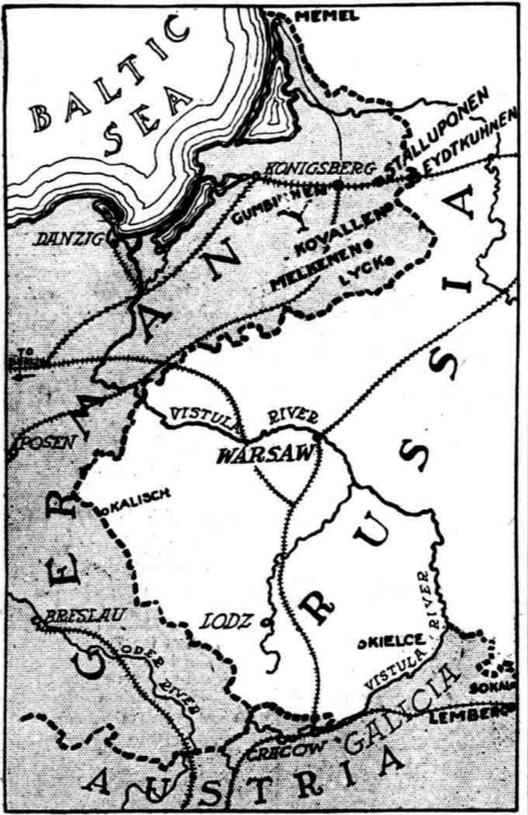
"The English fleet has been victorious since that time England most probably would have pressed upon Denmark to land troops at Esbjerg and invade Germany from the north."

"For years it has been rumored that the harbor of Esbjerg, occupied by the Danish to twenty-eight feet, had been opened through English influence. It is a place just fit for a Russian fleet, ready for an invasion of Germany. That nothing of this sort has happened is still controlling the Danish and German coast of the North Sea, as well as the whole eastern part of the North Sea itself."

"As far as the present activity of the German fleet is concerned, it is very probable that the older ships are scattered all over the Baltic Sea, for two reasons: In the first place, to bombard the Russian harbors and to harm the Russian Baltic coast, then to guard the Sund, the small and the big Belt, the three straits leading from the Baltic Sea into the Baltic between Denmark and Sweden, in order to prevent the slipping through of English torpedo boats and an English attack on Kiel and the Kaiser Wilhelm canal and to keep the trade open with Sweden, Norway and Denmark."

"The newer ships are presumably near Heligoland awaiting a possible attack. The Far East German fleet appears to be intact."

WHERE RUSSIA IS ACTING



While the Germans have been making their great sweep into Belgium, the Russian mobilization, which it was said would take until the 21st to get under way, has reached a stage that the movement into east Prussia over the Russian frontier, north of Poland, is said to have begun with the penetration of the Russian forces to Gumbinnen, along the railroad toward Königsburg and also to Lyck, south of the main line of travel between St. Petersburg and Berlin.

From a German Point of View

The Times prints a resume daily of what the Staats Zeitung, of New York, and other leading German newspapers of the country, have to say each morning in regard to the situation on the war chess board in Belgium and in Alsace and on the Russian frontiers.

The Germans have reached the straits of Dover, and are but four hours (by steamship) from London. The Staats Zeitung rejoices over this achievement in the face of an allied army numbering something like 500,000 men.

But that paper voices its surprise over the cable news that the American minister at Brussels, Brand Whitlock, in the name of the United States, had declared that this Government had taken the city of Whitlock under its "protection" to see that all the international rules of warfare would be observed by the conquerors.

No doubt such a dispatch was received, and Mr. Whitlock, perhaps, was present at the first meeting of the German commander and the mayor of Brussels. But that this Government should so far forget its neutrality as to interfere so flagrantly with the laws of neutrality what to do, seems not possible, according to that paper.

All that this piece of news amounts to is, perhaps, that our representative in Belgium stood up for fair and square treatment of the many Americans who frequent the Belgian capital and who, no doubt, are there also at this moment in large numbers.

The appeal of the German chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, prompts the Staats Zeitung, again to point out many alleged discriminations on the part of the London and Paris dispatch centers toward Germany. As a matter of fact all that the German government asks is a fair deal as long as direct news is so difficult to obtain from the Fatherland.

The Staats Zeitung points out in this respect that now that the veil is beginning to lift, permitting a clearer view of the war situation, matters in the field of news service soon will rise to their proper level.

The editor distinctly states that he never had any such idea as to impute to his Anglo-American brethren of the press a deliberate attempt to create a wrong impression as to the true state of affairs abroad. He thinks only that they had been misled by cables which on their face appeared to be truthful.

According to the German embassy here the battle between the Vosges and Metz resulted in a "telling" victory over the French, 17,000 of whom were said to have been captured, besides cannon, etc. It is pointed out that this event has opened an entirely new phase of the war, as thus far the chief interest had been centered upon the happenings in Belgium, while now the scene is being shifted to that section of the war region where the memorable Franco-Prussian war of 1870 had been fought out.

The birth of Belgium, according to German advice, is rapidly being transformed into a German province. At Ostend all preparations are under way to make the port an open one. The Belgian militia has promptly been disbanded, and the 4,000 volunteers who comprised the troop, left the city unmolested by the Germans, who did not even exact an oath not to carry arms against them during this war.

London, adds the Zeitung, at last is awakening to the true state of affairs and is throwing off the profane, verbal lethargy. Dispatches are quoted calling attention to the fact that the "enemy" was but a few hours from the British shores, and the London Express intimates it would be an easy matter for a Zeppelin dirigible to soar over London and drop bombs upon them. This, adds the paper, does not sound quite as optimistic as the London press uttering this station. Britain, not only reiterates that England could have stopped the war by using her great influence over France to force her ally to remain neutral in the differences between Austria and Serbia, but that jealousy of the vast strides forward, which Germany had made in the world's commerce, had urged her to get their country embroiled. The Zeitung remarks in this connection that in lighting this international conflagration Britain not only cast a shadow over all of Europe, but is in a fair way of also casting over the United States. It adds: "Let us not delude ourselves with the idle thought that we can alone shelter amidst the great collapse. The international world is bound together too closely, we de-

pend too much one upon the other for us to stand aside and not feel the reaction upon our economic life. The chain has snapped and the world's business will stop until the broken links are replaced. We suffer for unjustly among the universal sag of commerce. Our importers already have closed their offices, awaiting a restoration of normal trade conditions. Our manufacturers must prepare for new fields to dispose of their products."

The Staats Zeitung tears this country somehow will find itself involved in the trouble and that our losses will not be those of commerce alone; through no fault of our own, but by being carried irresistibly into the maelstrom of disaster, brought upon the world by nations not one of which can claim a monopoly of right in this terrible slaughter.

Americans were wise enough to quit Ostend at the beginning of the trouble, but some 500 fugitives arrived in London late last night, mostly well-to-do Belgians, who voice their belief that the objective point of the conquerors was England and that preparation for the crossing of the English Channel already were under way. This fear, of course, but not the German general staff really knows what may happen, consisting the exceedingly fast advance of the invaders, now that they are once actually started. A wireless, via Bayville, L. I., reports brutalities on the part of the Cossacks on patrol duty on the Russo-Prussian frontier.

The American consul at Königsberg reports that the Russians so soon as they enter the village, set fire to it, not allowing the Russian inhabitants even to leave their homes. Among the dead are to be found many women and children. More horrible still is the fate of German soldiers who are unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. The Cossacks, it is alleged, burn their eyes out.

The Zeitung has direct advices from Vienna that the situation in Serbia, and the estimates of it, is unaltered, and that, hence, all reports of a battle, ending in the annihilation of three Austrian army corps, are pure invention. Early this morning a cable via London brought the intelligence that ever since Saturday morning a fierce battle was in progress between Namur and Charlerai, with the center leaning upon the latter city, near the French boundary, where the Germans have attempted to cross the river Dender, a tributary of the Scheide. This seems to be confirmed in a laconic dispatch from Berlin to Copenhagen stating that the Germans have won a great victory. But all details are lacking.

Returning Americans are authority to the Zeitung for having seen 6,000 French prisoners at Frankfurt, and nine long trains conveying 12,000 more near Coblenz. Among them was General Leman, the commander-in-chief of the Belgian forces. An Austrian troop, numbering some 7,000 men, has reached Luxembourg and aid in the Alsace campaign. A. D. J.

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